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# QAHS NEWS BULLETIN

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## CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

The National Governors' Association for Best Practices in Washington, D.C. defines the achievement gap as: **“a matter of race and class. Across the U.S., a gap in academic achievement persists between minority and disadvantaged students and their white counterparts.”**

We are certainly aware that some of the students are affected by a number of factors outside the control of the school environment. While we can do our best to support our students through a difficult situation, we may not be able to change the students' life conditions that may impact academic success.

Students' attendance, level of motivation, missing basic skills, level of parental involvement, all have a major impact on academic achievement. We have discussed these factors on a number of occasions and have implemented strategies to address some of these concerns. We recognize these areas still need significant attention and we will continue to work on them.

In the meantime, we need to turn our attention to what we can do every day in our school to close the achievement gap. We can significantly impact students' academic success by addressing the factors that are within our control.

It is critical that we all understand that there is urgency in moving our students beyond their current level of performance as students are with us for a very short period of time.

We can best influence student learning by beginning:

- Holding students, others, and ourselves accountable to high expectations.
- Providing a climate in which students feel they can succeed.
- Providing strong, challenging curricula.
- Providing effective instruction that uses best practices.
- Engaging students in high levels of dialogue.
- Participating in professional learning communities whereby teachers engage in ongoing discussions about teaching and learning to improve their instructional practices.

This is the direction which we must take for our students to have an equal opportunity to be academically successful. It starts with us.

## CODE BLUE

While we hope that we will never have to use the AED (automated external defibrillator), we need to be prepared just in case there is a need to save the life of a person in cardiac arrest, or having a heart attack. Several staff members (Amy, David, Ruth, Dan, Thomas, Brandon, Corey, Frank) trained in CPR and AED are called first responders. They are responsible for responding to a “code blue,” which is a signal that informs the responders and the rest of the staff that someone needs CPR and/or AED assistance.

Should an emergency situation arise, you will hear in Flushing (PA system) and in Jamaica (bullhorn), **“there is a code blue in room \_\_\_\_.”** At that time, responders will go to the location and take emergency action. All other staff should be on alert as they may be needed to cover a class of a first responder or manage students.

Each classroom will have a poster with the steps that must be taken to possibly resuscitate a person before an ambulance arrives. This information is for trained personnel to use as a guide.

We also realize that it is very possible that there may be only one adult in a classroom or office and you may have to rely on students for assistance. Therefore, we will make students aware of the protocols should someone need CPR and/or AED assistance. We are going to create a protocol for students and inform you very shortly of the procedures.

If a student or staff member has a medical condition, it would be advisable to inform the main office so we have this information on file in case the person is incapacitated and unable to provide important medical information.

If you are interested in being trained in CPR/AED, please speak with Derek Phillips or Bill Manolios, Assistant Principals.

*Save a Life  
Become CPR/AED Trained*

## SIDEBAR

**NY Cares** is Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. This is great service learning –community service opportunity for students. All are invited. Please submit to Jen or to one of us the quotes you would like the artists to put up on your classroom walls on NY Cares Day.

**PEP Rally** – a special thanks to all staff, parents and students who organized and attended our first pep rally. It was a great way to bring both campuses together.

**Portfolio Conferences** – need to be consistently conducted in the classroom. It is an excellent way to meet with students to discuss their progress and how to make improvements in a subject area. These conferences are scheduled for Fridays. Please make sure they are conducted each Friday in your class.

**Student Goals** –at this time all students who have been with you from the beginning of the school year should have a student goal action plan. If you need assistance in executing goals with students, please let me know. Bill, Derek, and Beverly will be visiting your classes to see how you are implementing such goals.

### Good News Phone Calls

Let's work on recognizing students' efforts and make those calls. If you have been making good news calls, thank you for making a difference in a student's and parent's day. If you have not made calls, please stop by my office this week.

### Hispanic Heritage Month

If you did an activity with your classes to celebrate our students' Hispanic Heritage, please submit a brief synopsis to me by Friday, October 16<sup>th</sup> so it can be shared with the entire school community.

### Notebook Check

Please submit names of students who are unprepared to Derek and Bill on the notebook form in your mailbox.

**HIV LESSON 1 PLEASE  
SUBMIT A CERTIFICATION  
FORM IF YOU HAVE NOT  
ALREADY DONE SO.**

**Suggestion Box** is now available in Flushing. **Thank you Amy.** Jamaica's is coming this week. Please place your questions, ideas or suggestions in the box in the main office. Responses will be made via the news bulletin.

## Questions, Answers, and Suggestions

### • What rules should be taught to students about sexual harassment?

Students should be familiar with the Chancellors' Regulations on Peer to Peer Sexual Harassment, specifically what constitutes sexual harassment. Student-to-student sexual harassment is conduct and/or communication by a student directed against another student. It consists of unwelcome and uninvited sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical conduct and other verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature which is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent to: (1) substantially interfere with a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program, school-sponsored activity, or any other aspect of a student's education; or (2) create a hostile, offensive, or intimidating school environment; or (3) otherwise adversely affect a student's educational opportunities. Such behavior can constitute sexual harassment regardless of the gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity of any of the students involved.

In addition to understanding what defines sexual harassment, students should also know the reporting procedures. Corey Vandiver, Alexandra Joseph, and Sandra Fabre are designated staff members whom students can report student to student sexual harassment. If the student feels uncomfortable making a report to a staff member, s/he can make a complaint of student-to-student sexual harassment verbally or in writing using the attached "Student-to-Student Sexual Harassment Complaint Form" (see Attachment No. 1). This form is also available online at:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/ronlyres/AA3CFE45-E55E-4D58-9F47-CB6D7625AA69/30368/ChancellorRegulationA831AttachmentA12208.pdf>

### • What is the response when a staff member is felt to be discriminating against students?

Chancellor's Regulations A-421 states that verbal abuse is ...discriminatory language based on race, color, national origin, alienage/citizenship status, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, or sexual orientation which tends to cause fear or physical or mental distress.

If you become aware of a staff member who appears to be discriminating against students, you must report this information to the principal or designee as per Chancellor's Regulations. The principal or designee will then report this information to the Office of Special Investigations.

Failure to report may lead to disciplinary action.