



The Scholars' Academy

An Accelerated College Preparatory School for Grades 6-12
27Q323, A Knowledge Network Teaching and Learning Organization
320 Beach 104 Street, Rockaway Park, NY 11694
Tel: (718) 474-6918 Fax: (718) 945-8958

Principal

Brian O'Connell

Principal's Report September 10th, 2008

Welcome Parents and new PTA Co-Presidents: Helen Kilgallen and Eileen Bellettiere.

This has been the smoothest opening of our existence. Thank you for all of your support and patience.

We are growing. We have:

551 students in grades 6-8 and 190 in our high school, total approximately: 750 students.

Many organizational changes have taken place to accommodate and meet the logistical and educative needs of our students.

New Staff:

Approximately 1 in 4 staff members are new.

Social Worker, Tuesdays Only, Mr. Martin Augarten

Grade 6 Science: Ms. Elena Liotta

Grade 7 Living Environment: Mr. Alfonso Rodigelio

Grade 8 Science: Mr. Charles Hilgendorf

Grade 9 and 10 Spanish: Ms. Martha Pinedo

Grade 9 Physics, Ms. Walker became Ms. Lyons. Betrothed

Grade 10 Global Studies: Mr. C. Ross Flatt

Grade 10 Living Environment: Ms. Tara Scannell

Grade 10 Math: Ms. Wendy Nuss

Grade 6-8 Art: Ms. Mary Anne Paredes

Librarian: Ms. Ann Volk

HS Music/Band: Mr. Alexander Leicht

Dean of Operations: Mr. Peter Foti

Literacy Staff Developer: Ms. Dannielle Colleran

HS Career and College Planning Director: Mr. Steven Harris

Regents June 2008 Testing Summary:

Living Environment

Grade Average- 85%

Passing Rate- 100%

Above 85- 56%

Earth Science

Avg>- 81.25

Passing rate- 93%

% above 85- 42.66%

Physics

75% Passing Rate

75% Average Score

Several students took this exam that pulled down the statistics.

Integrated Algebra

Grade Average- 84.53%

Passing Rate- 100% passed

Above 85- 67.6%

English Regents

Grade Average- 91.53%

Passing Rate- 100% passed

Above 85-83%

US History And Government Regents

Number of students taken the test = 95

76 students scored above 90. That is = 80%

85 students scored above 85. That is = 89%

Forthcoming Testing Dates and Windows:

October 15

October 17th-24th

November 12-21

December 11-19

January 20-22

January 26-29

March 10-11

March 30-April 6

March 30- April 6

April 8-May 8

April 30

June 2-3

June 8-23

June 16-25

PSAT

Grades 3-8 ELA Predictive

Grades 3-8 ELA & Math ITA

Grades 3-8 Math predictive

Grades 6-8 NYS ELA

Regents Exam

NYS Math Exam for Grades 6-8

Grades 3-8 2nd ELA & Math ITA

English and Algebra Regents Predictive

Grade 8 NYS Science (Practical)

Grade 8 NYS Science (Written)

Grade 8 NYS SS Exam

Grades 3-8 ELA & Math 2nd Predictive

Regents Week

Facility Changes/Construction Update:

Scaffolding everywhere, roof work, brick repair, etc.

Multi-phase plan: Relocating groups of classes throughout year as exterior curtain wall and windows are removed and replaced. Each phase is typically 3-4 months. We are adjusting well to this plan and instruction has not been compromised.

Fire Drill and Evacuation Plan has been re-routed due to scaffolding, construction, and our general concern for Rockaway Freeway and under the El.

The traffic light was installed at Beach Channel Drive and B104 Street. Now we are strategizing to have input into the El side of the building. We want a suitable sidewalk between B104 and B105, a light and a crosswalk at B105. We also envision, signs that inform motorists of the speed limit and

that there is a school adjacent to the “Rockaway Freeway.” Feel free to contact your elected officials to support this safety endeavor. We had the DOT here last year and we have requested this issue to be addressed and nothing has yet happened.

New Lighting has been installed in almost every classroom.

The leaking hot water plumbing line on first floor has been disconnected and we are now on the other line. The ceiling was abated to my knowledge where the leaks were and the ceiling patched for school opening. Mr. Kearns, Plant Manager, (Custodian’s Supervisor) ensured me such was safe and that there was no asbestos risk. I have documented the necessity for plans to be made to open up the complete ceiling at a later date to completely abate and replace the disconnected line, sighting reality that there must be a reason for a back up line.

Mr. Kearns facilitated the repair of the wardrobe doors on the third floor as well in time for school.

Our plants, trees, and shrubbery have been donated to the Parks Department and the Rockaway Artists Alliance. When work is done DOE will have contractor replace the plants, etc.

Library is on wheels at moment and anticipated this way until January.

Science Labs may be completed by spring. Library is impacted by plumbing to labs.

Classroom 103 is being enlarged.

Offices 317 and 319 are being merged into a classroom.

The District Nurses have had to relocate due to our need for the office space. Ms. McNulty, our nurse is not impacted.

All work is slated to be completed by August 2009: New windows, new walls, central AC, but none slated for dining room, theatre, or gymnasium.

New Building Procedures:

1. **AM Line Up:** Starting at 7:35AM, students may enter the building. Those eating breakfast eat and then go to class or grade designated areas. _Grades 8,9, and 10 in theatre and grades 6 and 7 in dining room. At approximately 8:00AM, HS students go up to class. _At 8:05AM, the Morning Message Begins. Students are marked late if they are not in their respective HS homeroom or AM line up area by 8:05AM.
2. **Lunch Procedures:** There are 2 lunch periods. Rather than create inequity and single one grade out for division by cohort due to being able to feed 551 middle school students during one lunch period, we now feed them by cohort. The numbers worked out better this way managerially with regard to space and it facilitates students getting to know other students from other grades. On one hand, we do sacrifice some grade cohesiveness, but on the other we gain vertical building cohesiveness which is very important. Numerically however, this enables us to better supervise, feed and fit the students in the dining room. School yard size and availability constriction really impacted this situation as well. Lunch is no longer free for all students. Meals must be paid for \$1.50 per lunch. Ms. Caraccio has sent home a letter notifying such and a copy of it will be on the website.
3. **Dismissal:** Remains the same. This was smoothest opening we have had. Busing issues are being ironed out. We avoided a disaster by compelling OPT to add a bus temporarily for first two weeks of school. Now they are adjusting routes and rider-ship.

Sports:

Fitness Room, Mr. Bell donated time, energy and resources to install the new rubber flooring in our fitness room. Thank you to Mr. Bell for such.

We are awaiting delivery of the score board for installation and Mr. Lunati is pricing bleachers.

We are also adding a Smith Machine and another work out station in the fitness room.

All sports are seasonal and such updates with be seasonal.

We applied for lacrosse and fitness as our CHAMPS Middle School Fall Sports.

For High School, we have girls’ JV volleyball which already started.

We are applying for boys’ and girls’ JV basketball programs and we are optimistic.

New or Amended Courses, Electives, and Clubs taking place this year are:
General Course Offerings per week

Grades 6-8

- Humanities – 8 periods
- Mathematics – 8 periods
- Science – 8 periods

Grades 9/10

- Humanities – 6 periods
- Mathematics – 6 periods
- Science – 6 periods

Grade 6

- Visual Arts – 2 periods (last year was credited via media)
- Music – 3 periods (last year was 2?)
- Tech – 1 period
- Film / Media – 3 periods (last year was 4)
- Phys. Ed. – 2 periods + 2 periods in Extended Day

Grade 7

- Visual Arts – 1 period
- Music – 1 period
- Film / Media – 2 periods
- Phys. Ed. – 2 periods term 1 / 3 periods term 2
- Spanish – 4 periods

Grade 8

- Visual Arts – 1 period
- Music – 1 period
- Film / Media – 2 periods
- Phys. Ed. – 3 periods term 1 / 2 periods term 2
- Spanish – 4 periods

Grade 9

- Visual Arts – 3 periods
- Music – 2 periods (one keyboard; one percussion)
- Phys. Ed. – 3 periods term 1 / 2 periods term 2
- Spanish – 4 periods
- Health – 1 period

Grade 10

- Visual Arts – 2 periods
- Music – 1 periods (one keyboard; one percussion)
- Phys. Ed. – 2 periods term 1 / 3 periods term 2
- Spanish – 4 periods
- Health – 1 period
- Writing – 1 period
- Independent Global Study – 1 period

Important Points

- **Individual HS Programs**
- **More elective opportunities for MS and HS**
- **Percussion and keyboard offered as music options for HS.**
- **Experimental Grade 6 Band Homeroom:** We may build a band over time. We are in process of discussing positives and negatives regarding ideas for students moving in or out of class if seats open in other classes, etc. We are building this piece into our application process this year.
- **10th graders are beginning PSAT Prep course during period 8 on Thursday and Friday.**
- **9th grade dismisses after period 7 on Monday & Tuesday. 10th grade dismisses after period 7 on Thursday and Friday when PSAT Prep is over.**
- **We will be offering further SAT and Regents prep throughout the year.**
- **ID Card System that was promised: CAAS is being investigated as to whom in DOE failed to execute the plan promised. They are currently trying to track this down with the vendor.**
- **In meantime, HS students who finish class at 1:50pm or 2:35pm, may leave the building by signing out and returning during a specified window of time determined by the coach. The coach must currently meet them at the safety desk.**

Safety Issues:

- **We do not permit anyone to park on the perimeter of the building contrary to signs. Placard use by School Safety is not permitted for any individual's convenience.**
- **We have 4 agents and 1 Level 3 Building supervisor. They are frequently absent and a plan must be submitted to us to cover shortages.**
- **We now have a Dean who closely monitors safety and transitions.**
- **If parents drop off at the middle of B104 Street or closer to Beach Channel Drive, they should use the curbside exit of vehicle.**
- **If parents choose to drop off at Beach Channel Drive, we recommend doing so only through curbside of vehicle.**
- **If parents drop off on Seaside, students should only exit through curbside of vehicle at the entrance to the playground.**
- **I have noticed many unsafe dropping off and pick up practices under the El. I implore parents to NOT drop off under the El.**
- **I implore students to be alert and walk with caution under the El, crossing at corners.**
- **I noted vehicles speeding past vehicles turning on B104. This is a disaster waiting to happen since students walk under El and close to pillars.**
- **I have called the precinct to inquire about crossing guard. The captain did not return my call.**
- **Our student government will continue the pursuit of a better and safer arrangement under the El at B104 Street. They have already discussed plans to photograph and video tape the conditions under the El.**

Extended Day Classes

Drama
Ballroom Dancing
Art: Student Exhibition
Art II: Set Design
Band 6th & 7th grade
Band 8th grade
Fitness
Debate & Mock Trial
Film History
Yearbook
Mathletes
Odyssey of the Mind
Chess
Tech Support

HS Electives

Senior Band: 9th and 10th grades
Digital Non Fiction Storytelling
LegoRobotics: Mobile Engineering
Sculpture I and II
Figure Drawing
Fitness
Guitar
Life Drawing
Ballroom Dancing
Independent Study
Student Government

Lunchtime Clubs

MS Music Club
Library Club
Shakespeare
Film Club
Stock Market Game
Fitness
Dance
Step
HS Music Club
Student Government

Acceleration and Support:

Additional after School and Saturday Programs that will be coming online are being planned. Last year, we ran several Regents Prep sessions later in the year which were very successful. This year we are planning to space it out so there isn't a "cramming effect." We will be using our Contracts For Excellence Funds to finance this initiative.

We are planning a summer Regents Camp for Scholars' Academy during Summer of 2008 2009. It is planned to address students who want higher scores on their Regents exams, or who failed their Regents exams. Students who plan to retake Regents or who fail a Regents must attend this Summer Mini-Camp. It will only last three days per week, three hours per day, for three weeks.

Another summer college course and trip to Italy is going to be offered through the Knowledge Network and Dr. Cashin for HS students this year. Specifics will follow but there will be some costs this year and we are only entitled to 5 spots on this trip. The successful trip to Ireland this past summer resulted in 10 of our 9th graders completing a 3 credit course as well. We are also looking into mechanisms to have other major trips for high school students that would require each participant to pay his/her way.

Trips: We are increasing the frequency and quality of our trips this year.

6th grade

Cloisters - museum in Manhattan with Medieval artwork and history (Art & History Trip)

NY Hall of Science - museum in Queens with interactive exhibits from all branches of science

American Museum of Natural History - visit the Hall of Evolution (History/Science Trip)

**If possible, they would like to attend a Shakespeare play at Queens College like last year.

7th grade

Fort Hamilton - fort in Brooklyn with Veteran tour guides and Greenwood Cemetery,

Bodies Exhibit - exhibit in Manhattan with real-life preserved bodies and organs on display

Museum of the Moving Image - museum in Queens containing the art, history, technique, and technology of film, television, and digital media. Pending site construction issue. (Media)

Math Teachers want to take students bowling. They have prepared a distance, rate, time, and statistics activity to be completed both during and after the bowling alley. They would go to the Gil Hodges Lanes in Brooklyn. (Math Trip)

8th grade

Transit Museum - museum in downtown Brooklyn displaying the evolution of transportation and contains actual train cars from the beginning of train travel up to modern day (History Trip)

American Museum of Natural History - museum in Manhattan there they will visit the Planetarium or other earth science hall (Science Trip)

Grants Tomb & History Re-enactment - in Manhattan by Columbia University (History Trip)

9th grade

The MET - museum in Manhattan (Art Trip)

More to follow.

10th grade

Museum Of Modern Art - museum in Manhattan (Art Trip)

Dolan DNA Learning Center - the world's first science center devoted entirely to genetics education and provides hands-on lab experiments. **They are located in Long Island and would require chartered school buses.** (Science Trip) *There are other trips that are being considered for each grade.*

Not all have been booked yet and are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances.