



# *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

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## Principal

Brian O'Connell

April 1, 2009

## Principal's Report

Mr. O'Connell regrets not being able to attend. It is his wedding anniversary.

### **1. Budget:**

*Title I Issue:*

- Due to Federal Bail Out the poverty threshold was lowered and the Scholars' Academy may be eligible for Title I funds.
- We will be asking the parents to vote, secret ballot for **one of two options, A or B Below:**

#### A) Targeted Assistance:

- This only focuses money on Special Education, English Language Learners, or Level 1 and 2 students typically. Since we do not have many, if at all students, who fall into this category, this options severely compromises the school's ability to spend any potential Title I money that we receive. However, if this is the option selected, any money we receive may only be spent on the few students who may fall into these poverty or at-risk academic categories. This would mean for example, that only these students would be able to use any laptops we might purchase.

#### B) Schoolwide Programs:

- This options enables us to use any Title I money to assist all students. This essentially makes the funds more "liquid." This option allows us to invest more easily in materials or personnel which or who can service any at risk student regardless of income status.
- It is the School Leadership Team's position that Schoolwide Programs is in the best interest of the school. The Teachers (UFT) have to vote on it with a 60% for SWP and the PTA has to vote on it at any meeting with the majority of attendees voting for SWP. Both the UFT and PTA would have to submit a letter to me indicating the vote outcome and a statement of support for Schoolwide Programs

**Status for us to be able to apply. This will enable us to apply for SWP so that we have greater flexibility in using these funds which could be very helpful to a school like ours in tight budgetary times.**

### **Contract For Excellence and TEAL Classroom Development:**

- **Budget Changes:** Due to Budgetary Rules, we had to redeploy Contract For Excellence Funds, which were originally slated for Saturday Per Session for our Regents Prep and AIS classes as well as Summer School Classes. We are currently using tax levy, other funds, to continue our Saturday Program, adding science regents prep courses to the offering. We must wait to see our 2009 2010 budget in order to finance summer school. 2008 2009 budget was not permitted to finance summer school since fiscal year starts anew July 1. Contract For Excellence Funds have been used and approved to finance the creation of a TEAL Classroom. TEAL stands for Technology Enhanced Active Learning. This is an MIT Model Classroom. Mr. O'Connell has been in contact with Professor Belcher of MIT as well as the Windward School in Los Angeles which worked with MIT to collaborate on a grade 7-12 model of the TEAL classroom. This classroom would at a minimum include a smartboard for each cooperative learning group to utilize, a Senteneo student response system, airliner, and many animations. The room will be used by high school primarily and will be positioned in the vicinity of the 3,000 square feet of science labs. This high tech room may also be used by middle school classes for special lessons, projects, etc.
- **Books:** We are in the process of ordering \$20,000 of library books and \$5,000 of novels to widen the range of literature we use in the classroom. We thank the PTA for their support, \$5,000 of PTA designated funds given to the school are going toward the library book order. We are waiting for several issues to be resolved so that we can reinhabit our library. The science lab above the library is still under construction. Furniture is being installed now.
- **Musical Instruments:** We are in the process of ordering approximately \$8,000 in additional band instruments for both middle and high school bands.
- **Budget Rollover:** We rolled over \$40,000 to next year's budget to help us deal with the anticipated fiscal crisis.

### **2. Grants:**

- \$200K Booth Ferris Grant is complete and ready for submission.
- \$5,000 Sprintahead Character Education Grant was submitted.
- \$3,000 Citizens For NYC Grant, Scholars' Sweep Event was submitted.

### **3. Sports:**

#### **Current Sports:**

- Middle School coed Tennis
- MS Girls' Crew
- MS Boys' Basketball. MS boys have a game at MS 302 at 3:15pm this Saturday
- HS Boys' Varsity PSAL Basketball, Record is 4 Wins and 2 Losses. This Saturday the team is playing Mr. O'Connell's brother's Long Island Team at 7:30PM. Come one come all. The cheerleaders and the Step Team will be performing as well as the pep band.
- MS and HS Girls' Basketball: There is a MS Girls' Game this Saturday at MS 217 at 2pm.
- HS PSAL Golf
- MS/HS Wrestling
- MS Lacrosse
- MS Cheerleader Squad
- HS Cheerleader Squad

#### **Forthcoming Sports:**

- HS Softball for the Girls
- HS Crew Girls to practice with BCHS
- The Boys Baseball team is out for this year

### **4. Trips Taking Place this Month:**

- Grade 6 Brooklyn Museum
- Select Students to 3 local elementary schools to read their Ezra Jack Keats Books
- Math Team (Mathletes) competing in Pi 5 NY Tournament against other schools
- Grade 6 Hall of Science

### **5. April Events**

- Outstanding Scholar (HS) Assembly April 3rd
- Student Government Bake Sale and Dress Down Dollar Donation Day
- Report Cards go home April 3
- Middle School Talent Show is scheduled for periods 8 and 9 on April 8th
- Spring Recess begins April 9-19th
- College Admissions Workshop 6:15pm sharp, Presentation by Brother David
- Scholar of the Month April 24th
- Parent Learning surveys are due April 24th
- Week of April 27th Grade 6 Spirit Week
- Grade 6 Spirit Multicultural Party and Dance takes place periods 7, 8, and 9 on April 30th.
- (Note Grade 7 and 8 spirit weeks take place later in the year)

## 6. April Exams

April 2, English grade 9 Predictive Assessment

April 6, Grade 8 Science Mandatory Field Test

April 22, 23, and 24th, Grade 8 NYS Science Hands On Exam

April 30th, Grade 8 NYS Science Written Exam

## 7. Recent Events

- Over 45 staff members attended the March 14th professional development at Broadridge Financial Solutions. We are very grateful for all parent donations. The teachers learned and felt professional and appreciated both by Broadridge's hospitality and the parents' generosity. Many thanks also are in order to Mr. Rich Daley, CEO of Broadridge and his staff who hosted the event.
- Our Thrift Sale to benefit Blake Jackson was a huge success as was the blood drive. Many thanks to Janet Brady, Parent Coordinator and our guidance department with the help of numerous student and parent volunteers.
- March To College Week was a huge success: Sophomores visited five different colleges and competed against one another as the 9th grade students voted. The event was informative as well as fun. Students are buzzing about their future. More college visits/trips are being planned.
- Interviews of incoming middle school students have been completed. Such are being scored and analyzed. Decisions about acceptances will be mailed out, according to the OSE timeline, during the first week of May.
- Insideschools.com visited us and was blown away by our school's organization, teaching, learning, spirit, and energy. We anticipate a very favorable write-up. To quote our guest..."This school accomplished what *one of the specialty HS's* envisioned, but did not quite pull off." We respect the *specialty HS* referenced and take great pride in the compliment.

Thank you for listening to this month's Principal's Report.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact [Jbrady4@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:Jbrady4@schools.nyc.gov) for assistance.

Respectfully,

Brian O'Connell  
Principal