



# *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  
[www.schools.nyc.gov/schoolportals/27/Q323](http://www.schools.nyc.gov/schoolportals/27/Q323)  
Tel: (718) 474-6918 Fax: (718) 945-8958

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## Principal

Brian O'Connell

## Assistant Principals

MS: ToniMarie Sorrentino

HS: Michele Smyth (M, W, F)

PTA Meeting November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009

## Principal's Report

### **1. Recruitment/Outreach Open Houses:**

The school just wrapped up both High School Scheduled Tours (Open House) and Middle School Open Tours. We are very appreciative of all of our staff, parent, and student volunteers who worked at these events. In total, we hosted over 1500 guests during these events. We had a daytime and an evening session for the high school grades and two daytime and two evening sessions for the middle school grades during the past week. We do anticipate holding additional tours via the parent coordinator over the next two weeks since we are in such high demand. Feedback from the tours via surveys which were distributed was overwhelmingly positive for example:

51% surveyed said "Excellent"

30% surveyed said "Excellent & Good"

15% surveyed said "Good"

2.3% surveyed said "Average & Fair"

1.1% surveyed said "Poor"

### **2. Student Government:**

Congratulations to our newly elected student government representatives. We just conducted our elections. Mr. Coscia is running student government this year. Our new school president is Judith Wanderer

Our new HS level vice president is Sean Cummins

Our new MS level vice president is Indigo Signoretti

We are very proud of all of the candidates who ran for office and gave speeches. All of the elections were extremely close indicating the high level caliber of all of the candidates. Student government will be working to coordinate numerous service events. There are several ideas already in the works: canned food drives, potential flea market/carnival, etc. to raise money for the school. Student government will

also help coordinate recycling efforts as well as serving as an entity to provide feedback to the school's cabinet team and school leadership team.

- 3. Bake Sales/Snacks:** As per Chancellor's Regulations, snacks and bake sales are restricted. 1<sup>st</sup>, snacks may only be sold which are on an approved snack list after lunch has been served. Snacks may be sold after 6pm. Bake sales are no longer permitted except by the PTA and limited to once per month. Ice cream sales are no longer permitted. All sports teams, staff members, and school clubs as well as the PTA G.O. store have been notified in writing.
- 4. Technology Initiative:** As you know, our school's main goal this year is to investigate ways to use technology to improve student learning through increased teacher efficiency and home school communication. In short our slogan this year is: "Technology Today, Smarter Tomorrow." As stated during numerous PTA Meetings last year, we investigated several options to begin this endeavor. Thus far, we have laid the groundwork to have: 1) The internet café and College Office wired for computers and internet by leveraging the School Construction Authority (SCA) while it is completing the long overdue window and air conditioning project. This room will also be used in addition to the computer lab to conduct ARIS workshops and Edline.com workshops. Several have been done and are planned for PTC. 2) The Technology Enabled Active Learning Classroom (TEAL) on the third floor has also been set up and awaits power enhancements via the SCA as well. 3) Leveraging our business partner for consultation to learn how corporate America uses technology to conduct distance meetings, etc. They will be visiting us to survey our technology inventory and provide insight into how we can learn from them. 4) We have, after School Leadership Team consultation moved away from Infinite Campus based upon several articulated integration issues as well as the seemingly slow process to get the project moving. Moreover we were concerned about \$10,000 in licensing fees that were requested after first being led to believe this was a pro-bono/quid pro quo trial partnership. As a result we elected to purchase two tools that are integrated and which meet our needs. EZgrade pro and Edline.com. These tools proved to be much cheaper at about \$3,000, they come with phone dialing software and they are proven to integrate well with ATS (our DOE data system). 5) We have hired a Lead Teacher, Ms. Oh, who is spearheading a technology team and professional development endeavor to train our staff on how to use these technology tools. 6) We have secured \$100,000 in Reso A Funding from Councilman Eric Ulrich which will finance the replacement/upgrade of our Computer lab, enable the redeployment of lab computers to the Internet Café, while also permitting the procurement of smart boards for 11 more classrooms which will enable every teacher to have a smart board. 7) Pending the degree of anticipated budget cuts, we have set aside funding to purchase additional computers and equipment as well. 8) The library will be equipped with a 77"

smart board as well as several redeployed computers from the upgraded technology lab. The SCA has also been leveraged to provide the necessary wiring for this endeavor as well. 8) Focused our professional development with teachers on learning how to use the EZgrade pro and Edline.com to enhance instruction, communication, and grading. 9) Formed a grant team, headed by John Coscia, which has already brought in a grant for Study Island software for 8<sup>th</sup> grade regents algebra support. This team searches for other funding sources and also played a role in applying for a \$2,000,000 grant with St. Francis College. We have not learned the status of that application however.

5. **Trips:** Every class/cohort is expected to take curriculum centered trips this year. Example: a significant overnight trip is being proposed for Philadelphia and Gettysburg in April for our grade 7, while grade 11 will be going overnight to Washington D.C. Numerous local trips have already taken place and will continue to take place.
6. **Budget Cuts:** We have had to set aside over \$60,000 due to register adjustments. To offset such, School Leadership has had to raise class size in grade 6 and 7 to 32 students per class. Waiting list size prevented grade 8 class size from increasing. We do anticipate additional cuts in spring.