

Seven Hills Charter Public School

Save the Date:

- **Jan 23:** 8th grader fundraiser starts "Mixed Bags"
- **Jan 25:** **NO NAME CALLING DAY**, SHCPS McDonalds Night Fund-raiser, Lincoln Street
- **Jan 26:** DESE Site Visit
- **Jan 27:** DDD \$1.00
- **Jan 29:** Show Choir performs in Shrewsbury
- **Jan 30:** Be Like Brit Assembly 8am in gym
- **Jan 30:** PA Model Citizens Celebrations
- **Feb 2:** JA Showcase at 3pm
- **Feb 3:** Ronald McDonald Mobile 8am-12noon
- **Feb 4:** Bob Marley Birthday Bash



*Be kind.
Be safe.
Be responsible.*

Dear Families,

It was great to see so many of you at last week's Elementary Academy Student Work Showcase. Parents were wonderfully invested and supportive not only of their own children but of the school as a whole. We thank you for that!

So, with the probationary status looming over us, parents are beginning to wonder about the prospects for next school year. To answer your questions, YES, we will be open! However, our spring 2011 MCAS results are critical to the sustained success and viability of the school. Our probationary conditions give us until December 2012 to meet our academic requirements. That means that this year's results will determine whether we will be able to fulfill the final three years (School Years '13-'14, '14-'15, and '15-'16) on the term of this new charter.

We feel strongly that we are poised for success and here is why:

Accountability Plan Goal	Last Year's Spring (2010-2011) Results	December 2011 Mid-Year Results
Each year, at least 70% of students in kindergarten and first grade will meet nationally normed end of year benchmarks on the AIMSweb Tests of Early Literacy and the Tests of Early Numeracy.	In the Spring of 2011, 73% of our K & 1 students met the end of year benchmark on the ELA test. 63% of the students met the math benchmark goals. We were almost there!	As of November 2011, 34% of the K, 1 students already met the June 2012, benchmark goals in ELA (compared to 14% in August) and 41% met the June 2012, math benchmark goals (compared to 14% in August).
In the aggregate, the Seven Hills' Student Growth Percentile (SGP) for ELA will meet or exceed 40%.	In the Spring of 2011, the aggregate SGP for ELA was 37. (Grades 5, 6, 7 far exceeded the 40% threshold!)	45% of the students did better on their December SBA than they did on the 2011, ELA. This is measuring mid-year performance against end of year performance. Therefore, students are further along at the midpoint of this year than they were at the end of last year. The average aggregate score on the December SBA was 60% for ELA. The state proficiency threshold for the March math test is 65% so we are almost there!
In the aggregate, the Seven Hills' Student Growth Percentile (SGP) for Math will meet or exceed 40%.	In the Spring of 2011, the aggregate SGP for Math was 53. (Grades 5, 6, 7 far exceeded the 40% threshold!)	34% of the students did better on the December SBA than they did on the 2011, Math MCAS. Again, this is measuring mid-year performance against end of year performance. Therefore, students are further along at the midpoint of this year than they were at the end of last year.
The percentage of students scoring in the warning and failing categories on the Math MCAS will decrease from 33% (2010) annually and, by 2016, by at least 1/3 (23% or fewer students remaining in the warning or failing category).	The percentage of students failing the math MCAS went from 33% in 2010, to 26% in the spring of 2011. We've already almost met our 2016 goal! (Of course, our <u>personal</u> goal is to have NO students score in the warning category!)	The average aggregate score on the December math SBA was 52% for and the state proficiency threshold for the May math test is 70%. With five months between now and then, we can do it!



In the aggregate, the ELL / Former ELL subgroup Student Growth Percentile will meet or exceed 40% or the Composite Performance Index will improve from the prior year.

In the Spring of 2011, in ELA, the ELL/Former ELL SGP was 44.5 and in math, the ELL/Former ELL SGP was 67.0. We did it once so we can do it again!

Although we still have work to do, if we continue along the path that we have been taking this year, we know that we can not only meet but exceed our Accountability Plan goals! However, we can't do it without you! Please continue to bring out the best in your children by talking with them each day about what they are learning in school, checking their homework, keeping in close communication with their teachers, supporting the school's discipline code and showing a commitment to supporting the school's mission to prepare children for success as students, workers and citizens. Let's help our kids aim for the stars from "kindergarten to college, career and beyond!" **The future begins today!**

Sincerely,
Krista Piazza, Superintendent

Dear Parents/Guardians of the Greatest Kids in the World,

I am pleased to share with you a mid-year update on student achievement and academic growth during this most critical 2011-2012 year at Seven Hills Charter Public School. As you know by hearing from your children and talking with your child's teachers, there is a lot happening at our little school to ensure ALL students are learning and being prepared for the upcoming MCAS tests. To this end, we must continually focus on data from many areas to build a school culture of high achievement.

On Dec. 12-13, all students in grades 4-8 took the Standards-Based Assessment (SBA) in both ELA and Math. This gave us a good snapshot of the extent to which students will be ready for the MCAS tests in March and May. Upon close examination of this SBA data, we are thrilled to share with you that students are much further along this year than at the same time last year, and in some areas the average level of proficiency met end of year goals even though there are several months remaining of instruction this year. The next round of SBA's will take place in February (more details to follow), and will be given in Grades K-8. We look forward to seeing even more growth and achievement when those results come in. The SBA data also shows areas of weakness where teachers and administrators across the building are working hard to target these gaps on an individualized or small group basis. One major support is the addition of Mr. Justin Duffy, our highly motivated and experienced Math Specialist Intern, to the Seven Hills family. In the Junior Academy mainly (with some crossover to the Elementary Academy), Mr. Duffy will be working with individual and small "pull out" groups of students directly based on the areas where students need the most help in Mathematics.

Another way we measure growth and learning is through our benchmark and "progress monitoring" assessments. Students do these tests in all grades, but in grades K-1 students also take the TENS and TELS tests that measure "early numeracy" (Math concepts) and "early literacy" (ELA concepts). We have also seen high growth on these measures since the beginning of the school year. Like the SBA's, all students will take the next round of these assessments in February.

In sum, while there will continue to be difficult challenges ahead, the great things we are doing with your children is working. And we also thank you - our parent community - for the important lessons you are teaching and reinforcing at home that are support learning goals in school.

Sincerely,

Mike Barth and Krista Piazza

T-shirts for sale: We have some very fabulous and very pink SHCPS t-shirts (short sleeve, 100% cotton) available for \$5 in the office. These shirts were created to help us celebrate the Understanding by Design - UBD, for short - teaching model that all Seven Hills teachers are utilizing in their classrooms this year. We have small, medium, and large adult sizes available for purchase. Furthermore, these awesome t-shirts can be worn as the uniform!!



Primary Academy–Ms. Ambrose: Read, Read, Read! Oral reading fluency is important for your child to develop and practice comprehension skills and strategies. To increase Oral reading fluency, all students must read out loud every evening! Please be sure that your child reads nightly. Our end of the year **goal for second graders is to read 100 words per minute**. Our end of the year **goal for third graders is to read 117 words per minute by the end of the year**.

This month's **Model Citizen Celebration is Chinese New Year and will be held on Friday, January 27, 2012**. Please remember, students must complete homework, class work, and demonstrate the Core Values and Code of Conduct each day to earn a celebration invitation.

With our SBAs (February) and MCAS (March) fast approaching, it is important that your child review Test Talk strategies daily. These strategies help our students to better understand the structure of these tests and also remind them of important techniques that can help them to better understand what is being asked.

Test Taking Strategies-ELA

Use these strategies for each selection:

- **Active listening** (relisten)
- **Write your brain dump**
- **Activating Schema** (background knowledge: "Hey brain, what do I know about ___?")
- **Make a prediction** (what do you think the story will be about, what is the genre)
- **Identifying and Following Directions** (circle the directions and underline the verbs in the directions)
- **Read the questions & cover the choices**
- **Locating Author's Clues** (bold, italics, all capitals, sequence words, words in a box)
- **Reading Actively:** make a prediction, circle unfamiliar words, wonder, connect, notice, guess, picture, figure out, identify main idea and details, identify characters, setting, plot, summarize **and** take notes
- **Rereading** (didn't understand, distracted, context clues, confirm, clarify, make connections)
- **Eliminate answers that don't match** (best or stupid answers).
- **Understanding Test Genre** (Directions, italics, bold, all caps, questions, several stories, text in box, numbered paragraphs and lines, sessions)
- **Stamina** (take short breaks, stretch, Brain Gym exercises, drink water, calm breathing)

Test Taking Strategies-Math

Use these strategies for each question:

- **Active listening** (relisten)
- **Write your brain dump**
- **Identifying and Following Directions** (circle the directions and underline the verbs in the directions)
- **Read the questions & cover the choices**
- **Locating Author's Clues** (bold, italics, all capitals, sequence words, words in a box)
- **Rereading** (didn't understand, distracted, context clues, confirm, clarify, make connections)
- **Eliminate answers that don't match** (best or stupid answers)
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Primary Academy Weekly Question: Congratulations to last week's Primary Academy Weekly Question Winner **Altresa Daniels!** Answer the following question, cut it out, and return it to the envelope located outside of Ms. Ambroise's office. Students who correctly answer the weekly question will be entered into a weekly drawing.

Read the sentence from the story in the box below, then choice the correct answer.

His friend sat on the train in a tangle of people.

- Ⓐ There were many passengers on the train.
- Ⓑ There were not enough train tickets.
- Ⓒ Henry's friend got on the wrong train.
- Ⓓ Henry's friend could not find his seat on the train.

Elementary Academy-Mrs. Nelson: The following is taken from Math.com:

"Math in the Home- Your home is full of opportunities to explore math with your child and, at the same time, build his or her self-confidence and understanding of mathematical ideas. This is a chance for you and your child to "talk math" that is, to communicate about math while discovering relationships between numbers. Being able to describe mathematical patterns and relationships, such as those between "addition and subtraction" or "odd and even numbers," is important to later success in math.



Newspaper Search (Grades 3-5)

What you'll need : newspaper, calculator, pencil, paper, and graph paper (can be hand-drawn)

What to do:

1. **List it.** Give your child the grocery section of the newspaper in order to make up a list of foods that will feed the family for a week and also meet a budget of a certain amount of money. Have your child make a chart and use mental math or a calculator to figure the cost of a few items. If the total for the groceries is more than you have budgeted for, talk about which items can be eliminated. Could the list be cut down by a few items or by buying less of another item? What will best serve the needs of the family?
2. **Shop around.** Have your child search for advertisements in the newspaper for an item they have been wanting, such as a piece of clothing or tennis shoes, in order to find the lowest price for the item. After your child finds the best buy, have him or her compare the best buy to the rest of the advertised prices. Are this store's prices lower for everything or just items in demand?
3. **Highs and lows.** Have your child search the newspaper for daily temperatures and create a graph showing weekly trends. Ask your child for the differences in temperature from day to day.

Parent Pointer: This activity helps children see how much math is used in everyday life. It also helps in a variety of ways in which math is used to tell a story, read a timetable or schedule, plan a shopping list, or study the weather."

For more information about supporting your child's math learning, visit:

<http://www.math.com/parents/helpyourkids.html>



Junior Academy-Ms. Wright: As we enter the second half of the school year and are quickly approaching the MCAS testing season, it is more important than ever that every student arrive to school on time and ready to learn. We have made huge strides in attaining our academic goals and we do not want to stray from the success we are achieving. We need to keep our focus and demonstrate our best each and every day, both academically and behaviorally.

Word of the Week: This week's word is hesitant. Please research the definition and use this word in the most creative sentence possible, and place your responses in the envelope outside my office. Kennedy Godwin was the weekly winner for 7 weeks in a row before we left on winter break. He needs some competition. Time for all the JA students to step up and try to take his throne. I can't wait to read those sentences!

Be Like Brit is the Junior Academy charity focus group for the 2011-2012 school year. Our very own Ms. Gengel lost her cousin in the Haitian earthquake two years ago. She was there doing missionary work when the earthquake hit, and never made it back. Her family has since started a charity organization called Be Like Brit (for Britney), in which they are currently building an orphanage in the shape of a "B", in Haiti, for orphaned children. Brit's mother will be presenting her story to the JA students on January 30th from 8:00-8:30 in our gym. She will also have Be Like Brit t-shirts (\$10), and bracelets (\$3), that the students can purchase to support the organization, and also wear as school uniform. We hope the students will purchase t-shirts to support the cause and to increase awareness of the charity in our community. Parents, you are welcome to come and join the students for the Be Like Brit assembly. We would love to see you there!

Mrs. Bryan is still holding her monthly writing contest! Please take a look at the bulletin board outside her room, and see if you'd like to enter the contest. Amazing opportunity and prizes!!

Congratulations to my Student of the Month (January), Angelic Diaz! You demonstrate the Seven Hills Core Values and Code of Conduct on a daily basis, assert yourself academically in all content areas, maintain a positive attitude and have set some amazing goals for your future that you will most certainly achieve! Please take a minute to read Angelic's responses to my interview questions on the bulletin board right outside my office. She is going places! Will you be my next student of the month?

Two thumbs up go to this next group of students, who have been nominated by their classroom teachers to attend the Betty Curtis Young Writer's Conference in March with me. Nathan Paris, Meggan Mwangi, Shyanne Temple, Alix Chelnavich, Sharleen Fearon, Maureen Kamaru, and Venus Twum have been chosen either for their outstanding writing abilities or for their in-depth love of writing. We will attend St. John's High School on Saturday, March 3, 2012, for a day of writing workshops, "meet the author" groups, and lectures by guest speakers who have built their lives around writing. This is a tremendous opportunity that these students should be proud they have earned. I am looking forward to spending the day with these inspiring writers! Remember to always be kind, safe and responsible and MAKE a great day!

Early Learning Academy-Ms. Cox: Hello Families and Friends of Early Learning Academy, This past week, we celebrated the 100th day of school - family projects came in and they are looking GREAT! We'll post them all over the school to remind everyone how far we've come. Thank you to all the family members who helped their kindergarten or first grader with this project!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN ROOM 205 -

all of the students in Ms. Slarsky and Ms. Czyzewski's class can count to 100 from memory!

We look forward to studying our unit on Patterns and Layers in first grade, where we will get to dig and discover the layers of the earth. In this process, we will look for patterns all around us. As a mathematician, look for patterns in shapes and numbers. As a scientist, look at patterns of behavior and outcomes. As a historian, look for patterns of events. As a reader, look for patterns in words and sentences. See what you can predict based on these patterns you notice!

Are you eager to participate in your child's education? Have some time to devote to learning activities or preparations? We want YOU! Please contact Ms. Cox if you are interested - 508 799-7500.

Host Families: We are currently looking for host families for 1 week in March for our visitors from China. Please contact Ms. Holton for details at kholton@sevenhillscharter.org or 508-799-7500.