

# Seven Hills Charter Public School

## Save the Date:

- **Jan 29:** JA Boys BB game at St. Mary's at 3:30pm
- **Jan 30:** Be Like Brit Assembly 8am in gym, SEPAC at 6pm
- **Jan 30 & 31:** Open House 9am to 11am
- **Feb 1:** Deadline for new student applications
- **Feb 2:** JA Showcase at 3pm
- **Feb 3:** Patriots DDD \$1.00 (must wear red, white and blue), Ronald McDonald Mobile 8am-12noon, 8th grade Mixed Bag fundraiser orders due
- **Feb 4:** Bob Marley Birthday Bash
- **Feb 5:** JA Boys BB game at St. Mary's at 2:30pm
- **Feb 12:** JA Boys BB game at St. Mary's at 12:30pm
- **Feb 15:** Parent Guild Meeting at 5pm



*Be kind.  
Be safe.  
Be responsible.*

Dear Families,

This Wednesday, over 600 students wore black and signed the "No Name Calling Pledge" as part of a statewide movement to "Black Out Bullying." Thank you for showing your support for this important initiative.

As you know, students perform at their best when they feel comfortable trying new things, learning from their mistakes and being themselves. We are committed to creating and sustaining this atmosphere at Seven Hills each and every day. Spread the word and remind your children of the importance of being kind, safe and responsible.

Krista Piazza, Superintendent

**Early Learning Academy-Ms. Cox:** What an exciting week of learning! Kindergarten classes have been learning the many ways our families interact with the community. They are reading and exploring professions and services. If you have a job and would like to come and share your expertise with our students, please let your child's teacher know. We are so excited to welcome professionals to our rooms and can't wait to learn how your job impacts the community!

First grade students continue with their unit on Patterns and Layers. You might have heard about their study of rocks, fossils, and prehistoric animals. They will be looking at patterns in math and throughout the world around them. Students will write outlines and stories from their research. Students will all work together to publish their own research website!

Stay tuned for...

February - Standards Based Assessments and Tests of Early Numeracy/Literacy

March - Model Citizens Assembly and Student Showcase!

**Primary Academy-Ms. Ambrose:** Read, Read, Read! Oral reading fluency is important for your child to develop and practice comprehension skills and strategies. Reading at home and in school will help your child to reach their goals. Encourage your child to participate in the Primary Academy Blue Ribbon Reading Contest. Classes will receive an incentive for every 20 books they read and complete a book review for. Participating in this contest will help our students to reach the end of the year goals (second grade, 100 words per minute and third grade, 117 words per minute).

Model citizenship is earned by completing homework, class work, and demonstrating the Core Values and Code of Conduct each day to earn a celebration invitation. Hope to see you at the February Celebration!



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)

**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)

### **Primary Academy Weekly Question:**

Congratulations! Last week's Primary Academy Weekly Question Winner was Gabriella Villegas.

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!

**Which of these is another way to write 9,346?**

**(Circle the answer)**

$90 + 30 + 6$

$900 + 300 + 60$

$9000 + 300 + 40 + 6$

$9000 + 400 + 3$

**Elementary Academy-Mrs. Nelson:** From Kindergarten through Eighth grade we are working to help students dig deep and engage in 'higher order' thinking which goes beyond memorizing facts or retelling information exactly as it was told to you. In order to be successful as students, workers and citizens, they have to learn how to manipulate information. According to *Thomas and Thorne (2009)*, they have to take facts and "understand them, infer from them, connect them to other facts and concepts, categorize them, manipulate them, put them together in new or novel ways, and apply them as we seek new solutions to new problems." Teachers and parents can do a lot to help students become 21<sup>st</sup> century thinkers. Here is something you might consider at home:

Answering questions - even something as basic as answering your child's questions can encourage higher order thinking. Here are a few examples of different answers to the same question, taken from an article by *Thomas and Thorne (2009)*:

Question:        *"Why do I have to eat my vegetables?"*  
Answers:         "Don't ask me any more questions." "Because I said so."  
                      "Because they are good for you."  
                      "Because they have vitamins and minerals that help you grow and become strong."

According to *Thomas and Thorne*, there are different levels of answers and the higher the level the answer is, the more it encourages higher level thinking. Here are a few levels they identify:

**"Level 2: Restate or almost restate the question as a response**

Example:

*"Why do I have to eat my vegetables?"*  
"Because you have to eat your vegetables."

*"Why is it so cold?"*  
"Because it's 15° outside."

**Level 3: Admit ignorance or present information**

Example:

"I don't know, but that's a good question."  
Or, give a factual answer to the question.

**Level 4: Voice encouragement to seek response through authority**

Example:

"Let's look that up on the internet."  
"Let's look that up in the encyclopedia."  
"Who do we know that might know the answer to that?"

**Level 5: Encourage brainstorming, or consideration of alternative explanations**

Example:

*"Why are all the people in Holland so tall?"*  
"Let's brainstorm some possible answers."

"Maybe it's genetics, or maybe it's diet, or maybe everybody in Holland wears elevator shoes, or..." etc.

When brainstorming, it is important to remember all ideas are put out on the table. Which ones are "keepers" and which ones are tossed in the trashcan is decided later.

For more information visit: <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/34655/>

**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](mailto:kholton@sevenhillscharter.org) or 508-799-7500.

**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 winner is Kennedy Godwin...again! Way to go Kennedy! The word was *hesitant* and this is how he used it in a sentence: *Every time Tim goes to the fair, he's hesitant to go on the roller coaster because of the drops, speeds and loops.* This week's word is ignite. 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 8 weeks in a row now! 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 30<sup>th</sup> 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 amazing prizes!!

I am looking for February's student of the month for JA. Congratulations to the 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 the 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. Nathan Paris, Meggan Mwangi, Shyanne Temple, Alix Chesnulavich, 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! Our next Junior Academy dance will be held on February 17<sup>th</sup> from 5:00-7:00pm. Tickets will go on sale in about a week.

**Guidance Grapevine:** This week students celebrated "No Name Calling Week" in support of Governor Patrick's law *An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools* that he signed back in 2010 after the death of Phoebe Prince. Phoebe was bullied by a group of students because she was new, pretty, popular, and different from them. She had her civil rights violated, she was physically assaulted, she was cyberbullied, and she was a victim of relational aggression almost on a daily basis. Her school became such a hostile environment that she felt she could no longer face the daily torment any longer. At Seven Hills we choose to take a stand against bullying of all forms. We learn every day in Open Circle, in morning meetings, and in our Guidance classes, that bullying, harassment, cyberbullying, relational aggression, sexual harassment, and violations of our civil rights are illegal and we have the right to come through these doors every day and feel safe. Our unique differences, opinions, and values are respected.

On Wednesday students wore black to support "No Name Calling Day." Almost every single student signed a pledge to be bully free, acknowledging that words do hurt, and promising to do their part to keep bullying out of our school community.

Attached to this newsletter are some things that you should know to safeguard your children against bullying courtesy of the "No Name Calling Week" website. It is extremely thorough and informative. You can also access the school's website and view our bullying prevention and intervention plan. If you do not have access to a computer, please call Ms. Dirsra at x1108 and she can mail a copy to you.

### Terms you should know in relation to bullying

**Aggressor:** person who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, relational aggression, civil rights violation, harassment, or retaliation.

**Bullying:** As defined by M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, is the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- i. Causes emotional or physical harm to the target or damages the target's property;
- ii. Places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his or her property
- iii. Creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- iv. Infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- v. Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

**Civil Rights Violations:** involve any acts directed at a target that cause emotional or physical harm, due to a person's protected category under constitutional or statutory rights (actual or perceived race, skin color, religion, ethnicity, age, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or housing status). Rights protected against interference include non-discrimination in access to advantages and privileges of a public school education. The term "civil rights violation" also covers bias-related and sexual harassment and bias crimes, so the term is applied generically to any civil or criminal law infractions.

**Cyberbullying:** As defined by M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying shall also include:

- i. The creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person
- ii. The knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the content, creation, or impersonation creates any of the conditions in clauses (i) to (v) listed above in the definition of bullying.

Cyberbullying shall also include the distribution by any electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions in clauses (i) to (v) listed in the above definition of bullying.

**Harassment:** consists of unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct targeting specific person(s) which is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to create an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, or offensive school environment, or substantially interfere with the progress of a student's education.

**Hostile Environment:** As defined by M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, a hostile environment is created when bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student's education.

**Relational Aggression:** is a form of emotional bullying in which students use social relationships to harm each other. Including, but not limited to, the telling of rumors, secrets, lies, gossip, taunting, exclusion, physical gestures (ie: staring, eye rolling, whispers, loud sighing) and socially isolating a student from their peer group students can create a hostile environment for their peers.

**Retaliation:** is any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

**Target:** is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation is perpetrated.

**Nurse Notes:** One of the more sensitive issues a teacher may have to deal with is a student with poor hygiene. Is it and not an issue you easily can ignore, especially if it results in a student being ridiculed and rejected by their peers. Poor hygiene can take a variety of forms, including disheveled hair, dirty clothes and body odor.

**What can you do as a parent?** Detail items and body parts that require grooming. Tell students that clothing and shoes and body parts like feet, teeth, hair and personal areas need to be kept clean. Encourage the following behaviors: showering or bathing daily, shampooing their hair, brushing their teeth, wearing clean clothes, washing hands after using the bathroom, covering their mouths when coughing and using tissues to wipe their noses. Help the student understand that poor hygiene can cause illnesses, and it can cause other children to avoid him/her.