

ALEXANDER HAMILTON VANGUARD/SCHOLARS NEWS

November 2009

Greetings from Vanguard/Scholars

Welcome to the 2009-2010 Alexander Hamilton Vanguard/Scholars Program. We have grown so much that we've had to assign a dean to each grade level. Ms. Erika Carter is over 6th grade with Ms. Cassie Campuzano as her assistant, Mr. Aaron Dominguez is over 7th grade with Miss Vanessa Benitez as his assistant. Ms. Kimberly Fletcher is over 8th grade with Mr. Richard Arroyo as her assistant, and Ms. Angela Melendez oversees the VG/SC program with Mr. Ruben Pineda as her right hand. Though the program has grown, we still work to keep our family feel, so here are a few tips in getting in touch with the right person. We encourage you all to first contact your child's teacher for matters regarding classroom assignments, grades, and behavior. We ask that you give us all 48 hours to return phone calls

or emails. For all other matters related to the overall success of your child, please contact your grade level dean. For matters that affect the program as a whole, please contact Ms. Melendez. If you would like to meet with any one of us, you may wish to call ahead of time because of our active duty schedules before and after school. Each team meets for planning and conferences on White Days. Department meetings take place on Blue Days. We function as one big team, parents, students, teachers, and administrators, all working together to promote the positive growth and achievement of our students. Pulling together, we will have another successful year at Hamilton Middle School.



Mark your Calendar! Important Dates

NOVEMBER 2009

Real Men Read 10:00 a.m.	11/06
PTO Workday 8:00 a.m.	11/07
Math/Science Night 6:00 p.m.	11/11
8th Grade VG/SC Parent Meeting	11/11
Magnet Open House 9-12 a.m. HMW	11/14
Magnet Awareness Week	11/16-11/20
Thanksgiving Holidays	11/25-11/27

DECEMBER 2009

HS Magnet Tour	12/09
Fine Arts Program	12/15
Winter Break	12/21-01/05

JANUARY 2010

School-Wide Science Fair	01/12 & 01/13
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Duke TIP, SureScore, and HISD Partnership

HISD began an initiative to produce college and career ready students upon graduation from HISD high schools. As part of this initiative, HISD select 7th graders have been targeted to receive SAT preparatory courses in math and reading. SureScore identified the top 7th grade students from high TAKS scores, students scoring at 95% or higher in either math or reading TAKS. Students scoring at 94% on TAKS, who had PHS designa-

tions on the Stanford Exam for math or reading, scoring a 12 or 13 PHS rating, also qualified. Mr. J. Eyles and Ms. W. Molcilio will teach the courses and will receive extensive training in order to prepare the students to take the SAT Exam. Preparatory courses begin in December. More detailed information is forthcoming. The following students will receive the preparatory course free of charge because of their high scoring achievement: Hudson Alt, Felix Alvarez, Jessica Arrazolo, Vanessa Balleza, Ariel Batiste,

Julia Beyer, Andrew Blose, Jackson Borja, Kenndi Brunson, Guadalupe Cabanas, Pable Calderon, Jared Carrell, Nicholas Cooper, Lillian De Michele, Domonique Deleon, Brandon Dixon, Jessica Dominguez, Jamila Dorsey, Emma Dreiss, Fritz Eagleton, Ashley Espinosa, Steffany Fishcher, Sydni Fowler, Isabella Fullelove, Turner Givens, Seth Gonzales, Reginald Gonzalez, Reyvan Gray, Jose Guerrero, Anthony Hernandez, Joey Hernandez, Priscilla Hernandez, Samuel Herrera, Rachel

Hibler, Arayeah Johnson, Chase Lapeyrouse, Nicolette Loisel, Rafael Lopez, Lizel Maldonado, Samantha Maldonado, Aaleeyah Moffett, Manuel negrete, Antonia Nunnally, Gabriella Ortiz, Eleshia Pena, Jamie Pena, Samantha Perez, James Pierce, Marc Pina, Arturo Prieto, Matthew Readeaux, Elmer Rivera-Palacios, Jesus Rodriguez, Jasmine Salazar, Valeria Solis, Sydney Tucker, Ariana Vasquez, Andrea Villegas, Anna Waters, and Tristian Wells. Congratulations to you all!

Transportation

Safety is number one at Hamilton. Our students should feel just as safe on their way to and from school. If you have concerns or questions related to transportation, please contact Mr. Pineda, Ms. Carter, or Ms. Melendez and we will get you answers. We work closely with the Northwest Transit Center to resolve routing and scheduling issues, and with the Central Motor Pool, where our busses are dispatched from. Mr. Rickey Thomas is the Central Motor Pool Terminal Manager and can be reached at 713-676-9432. Call this number if your bus is late for pick up or drop off or if you are concerned about the safety of your child while on the bus. Also, report any and all incidences that occur on the bus to Mr. Pineda, Ms. Carter, or Ms. Melendez and we will conduct a thorough investigation into the matter.



On that note, SAFETY in Pick Up and Drop Off

In an effort to make pick up and drop off as smooth as possible in terms of traffic flow, WE NEED YOUR HELP. Twenty-second street is the place designated for student pick up and drop off for both AM and PM. Pick up and drop off on 20th street is discouraged.

You can help in the mornings by:

1. Having your student at AHMS no later than 8:10am.
2. Sign all papers/forms/agendas at home.
3. Have your student prepared for exiting the vehicle with backpack closed and ready, lunch or lunch money in hand or pocket, and goodbye hugs and kisses taken care of before stopping for drop off.
4. Use the second square pavement after the opening of the entrance gate on 22nd street as the place to stop your vehicle for drop off. We cannot help students cross safely if you are blocking the crosswalk area with your vehicle.
5. Use 20th street as the drop off after 8:15 am. We lock the back gate after the tardy bell.

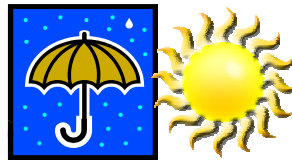
In the afternoon, we turn 22nd into a one way street by barricading the entrance from Harvard so that we have only an eastbound flow of traffic.

You can help in the afternoons by:

1. Parking on the north side of 22nd street only if you arrive by 3:25 p.m.
2. Slowly driving eastbound on 22nd street.
3. Watching for Officer Derry for traffic direction if buses are parked two by two along 22nd.
4. Picking your student up in front of or just passed the crosswalk.
5. Not making a U-turn on 22nd street.
6. Not blocking residential driveways or using their driveway to make U-turns.
7. Watching for students crossing the street before driving off.

If you do your part, drop off and pick up time is safer and better for everyone concerned. Thank you.

Safety Every Day but especially on RAINY DAYS



Parents, as an extra precaution, and not just on rainy days, after your child has made it out of your vehicle and is walking or running on to the campus, make sure you look both ways before driving off. We have had far too many close calls with drivers not looking to the left and right before driving off. This has been especially true on rainy mornings. Please look both ways before accelerating.

After-school Round Up

Students who have not been picked up by 4:15 p.m. are taken to room 102 to await a parent. Parents must enter the building to sign their child out. We apologize for the inconvenience this may cause, but it is your child's safety that we are thinking of. Parents, your child can take part in tutorial opportunities as well as different clubs and organizations we offer after school. Please see your grade level dean if you would like your child to take part in after school activities or Exemplary Zone, our after school tutorial program.

Commended Zone

Each VG/SC grade level offers tutorials that are geared toward Commended Performance ratings. If you have been contacted that your child is in need for tutorials, please make sure that he or she is attending. Contact your grade level secretary or dean to find out the tutorial schedule for your student. Remember that for VG/SC, TAKS is the floor, not the ceiling. We work hard to prepare our students for college and career readiness, and commended performance ratings are an early indication of this.

Academic Intervention Plan-AIP

AIP is a third chance opportunity to make up work that was not submitted on time. Each grade level runs their AIP program a little differently, but the premise is the same. Parents, we truly need your support. Too many of our students are simply not turning in assignments. Our students must do their part and be responsible for turning in their work in a timely manner and held accountable for the grades they earn. PS Connect is a valuable tool. Please use it.

School Policy-Dress Code, Backpacks/Lockers, Cell Phones, Attendance

Dress Code-Students must wear a grey, dark blue, or white polo style shirt, plain without emblems or embellishments. You may purchase Alexander Hamilton school shirts in room 200 for \$13.00 to take the guess work out of whether or not your child is wearing an approved shirt. Hamilton "Sprit" shirts may be worn during the school week. Bottoms must be either dark blue jeans, black jeans, or khaki pants, shorts or skirts without embellishments, no visible logos, beading, or sequins. Shorts and skirts must not be shorter than 3 inches above the knee.

Backpacks & Lockers-Students may carry mesh or clear backpacks while on school grounds but must place them in their lockers once the bell sounds to report to class. Backpacks and gym bags are not allowed in classrooms or gym. Lockers have already been assigned. If the student has a problem with opening a lock or if the locker has become stuck, contact a teacher or the VG/SC Office ASAP for assistance.

Badges-Student badges are free for the first issuance and were processed at about the third week of school. We take pride in the safety of our campus where badges play a key role. It is the student's responsibility to wear a badge every school day, visible to school personnel. Anyone on campus without a badge is subject to questioning. If a student should loose or forget a badge, it is his/her responsibility to get a replacement, either permanent or temporary. Temporary badges can be purchased before school in the cafeteria for \$1.00. Permanent badges, if the original badge is lost or severely damaged, will cost \$5.00. IOUs are given to students who do not have money to purchase a badge. Failure to pay debts will result in revoking school function/event privileges such as field trips, dances and free dress days.

Electronic Devices & Cell Phones-Parents, this is a big campus, and there are over 1300 students attending this year. If your child carries his/her cell phone, I-Pod, or other electronic device, and it is left unattended, chances are

these items may be taken. Please check to make sure that your child only carries what is absolutely necessary for the school day. We will not investigate lost or stolen electronic devices, including cell phones. For many of us, cell phones are an important and essential tool, but if your child is seen using a cell phone or pulls it out in class or in the hallway during school hours, or if it goes off during the school day, it will be confiscated, and a \$15.00 fee will be paid to get it back. This is true for all confiscated electronic devices. We take instruction time seriously, and it is a big part of the reason why Alexander Hamilton Middle School is a school of choice. Should you need to contact your child, during the school day, please call the office and we will relay to message to him or her immediately. If the phone is confiscated more than once, other discipline measures will result.

Absences and Tardiness-Attendance is essential to academic success. It is so much harder to catch up when you

are behind, especially with the level of rigor we have in our program. If your child is ill, of course he or she should remain at home, but upon return to school, it is the child's responsibility to get the assignments he/she missed. Students have 5 working days in order to make up missed assignments due to absence, **but this does not include projects or assignments given prior to the absence.** major assignments that have been marked on the calendar well in advance. Such assignments are due upon return. We know that there are sometimes extenuating circumstances, so teachers will handle these issues on a one to one basis with the parents and student. **Tardiness**-In the third 6th week of school, everyone has reached their comfort level in getting from class to class in a timely manner. If your child is tardy, he or she will be assigned detention. We round the students up at the end of 8th period every Tuesday and Thursday. Can't make after-school detention due to HISD transportation? Lunch detention is assigned instead.

Report Card/Progress Report Dates

Listed below are the progress and report card dates. Students will be given their report card during a second homeroom on or around the dates listed below. It is always advisable to check your child's agenda daily, **but even more convenient is the utilization of PS Connect from the Parent Portal of the HISD website, or from a link on our school's website.** You can see your child's grades 15 minutes after they've been posted, and you can activate a trigger that will notify you via text or email when your child's grade drops below the score you can program into the system. You can email your child's teachers straight from PS Connect as well. Please contact teachers **2 weeks prior** to reporting dates to make sure that homework and projects have been completed and there is satisfactory progress on tests and quizzes. Please call us if you have any questions or concerns, or if you need assistance with using PS Connect to its fullest. It truly is a valuable tool for our student's academic achievement.

Six Weeks Grading Period

Cycle 1	October 14, 2009	Cycle 4	March 3, 2010
Cycle 2	November 18, 2009	Cycle 5	April 21, 2010
Cycle 3	January 13, 2010	Cycle 6	May 27, 2010

Progress Report Dates

Mid-cycle 1	September 16, 2009	Mid-cycle 4	January 27, 2010
Mid-cycle 2	November 9, 2009	Mid-cycle 5	March 24, 2010
Mid-cycle 3	December 9, 2009	Mid-cycle 6	May 27, 2010

Report Card Dates

On or Around

Sixth Grade

Hey Hamilton Indians! Show your school spirit! Sixth grade Vanguard / Scholars tee-shirts are on sale in the Vanguard office—room 207. Shirts are only \$12.00 each, and profits from the sale benefit 6th grade Vanguard and Scholars end-of-year celebration and field trips. Students can wear these shirts any day of the week. They also look absolutely adorable in them (See picture for proof of adorability.) Lastly, I would like to thank Mekayla Chevalier and Reanah Coates for modeling our team tee shirts so beautifully! I am sure that you agree.



6th graders modeling our two team tee-shirts in front of the Vanguard office mural...Order one today!

SMASH Book Club

Sarah Pope, Children's Librarian at the Heights Neighborhood Library (1302 Heights Blvd.) is starting a new book club directed at tweens (ages 9–13). They will meet monthly. The club is called SMASH—Smoothie and Milkshake After School Highbrows. You can sign up by going to the reference desk at the library or by calling 832-393-1810. The first book is "Diary of a Wimpy Kid" by Greg Kinney. The first meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 18th, right after school. Be there or be square!

Commended Zone

Sixth grade Vanguard and Scholars students have specialized enrichment and tutorials tailor-made just for them. Mondays and Tuesdays are set aside for Scholars Math with Ms. Benn, Mr. Marek, and Ms. Valentine. Wednesdays are strictly for Vanguard with Ms. Villegas, Ms. Valentine, Mr. Marek, Mr. Turner, and Ms. Wilson. Thursdays are reserved for a

team make-up day. Students can use this day, if needed to make up any homework, classwork, project, or even tests and quizzes. Students should report to Ms. Villegas in room E-6 on Thursdays to get the extra help. On all days, students should report to their perspective classrooms, no later than 3:55pm. They will not be allowed to enter after that time. Feel free

to contact Ms. Carter or Ms. Campuzano in the Vanguard office for more details or questions and concerns.



Taking a Bite out of The Big Apple?

This is just a little reminder that the deadline for signing up for the June trip to New York City is approaching. There is still time and space available to all Vanguard and Scholars students to attend. We will be flying out



New York City,
Here We Come!

June 7th thru the 10th for a fun-filled four days in NYC! Please feel free to call or email Ms. Carter with any questions @ 713-802-4732 or ecarter3@houstonisd.org. It's never too late to start planning for a

great summer! For more details on signing up or for an itinerary, please visit www.SmithsonianStudentTravel.com. Our tour # is 982079, and our GL# is 3221575. You can also find FAQs and parental and student testimonials about previous trips.

Seventh Grade

Greetings seventh grade parents and students! The beginning of the year has been fast and furious and the Christmas break is fast approaching. Please stay abreast to your child's progress in his/her classes and help us assure that his/her assignments are in on time. Report cards for the 2nd six weeks will be going home November 18th. Progress reports for the 3rd six weeks will be sent home December 9th.

7th Grade VG/SCH T-shirts have just arrived in the vanguard office and are available for \$11. Please stop by



7th Grade VG students Emily Figueroa and Hudson Alt sport their brand new 7th grade VG/SCH T-shirts!

room 207 and see Ms. Benitez to pur-

chase one of the "longhorn burnt orange" T-shirts that read, "Back by Popular Demand!"

Duke TIP Talent Search

Apart from the qualified 7th grade group mentioned on page 1 of this newsletter, all seventh grade students are encouraged to take part in the Duke TIP Talent Search. It's a great way to get exposure to the ACT and SAT exams and send information to major U.S. colleges and universities. Students who have taken part in Duke TIP, who have earned high

scores, have been contacted directly by institutions of higher learning for the purposes of recruitment. It's a way to possibly get academic scholarship offers from colleges or universities you may be interested in. The deadline to register online for testing in January and February is December 1, 2009. If you are interested, please see Mr. Dominguez or Ms. Melendez

for registration information or visit www.tip.duke.edu.



Real Men Read!!

Hamilton Middle School has been selected to participate in the Houston Real Men Read program this year. We are looking for men volunteers to commit to reading and discussing a book in a 7th grade class for 1 hour each month. Readings will take place the 2nd Thursdays of each month from 9 -10 a.m. beginning in November 12th.

The fundamental principles of

the program are: Reading is fun! The community cares! A commitment to education can ensure success!

Please email Mrs. Christy Leflar at cleflar@houstonisd.org if you would like to volunteer.



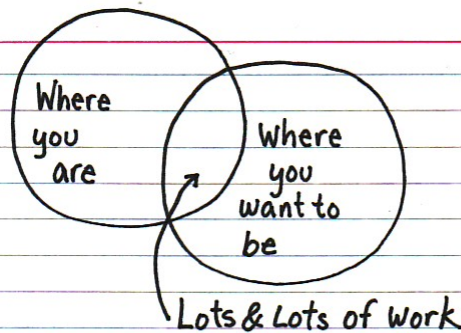
Real Men Read volunteers pictured with some of our HMS students.

Eighth Grade

Decisions, Decisions, Decisions

High school preparation has already begun, not just in our classrooms, but throughout the district. Phase 1 of the application process begins on November 16. The 2010-2011 applications have not yet been released by the district, so please wait for your child's paperwork. We will host an application orientation on Wednesday, November 11, at 6:00 p.m. in the library, the same day as our Family Math and Science Night. At that time, you may pick up a copy of the necessary paperwork your child will need in order to apply for high school. On Saturday, November 14, you will get the first chance to see every HISD Magnet high school and Carnegie, the one HISD Vanguard high school, at Hattie Mae White from 9 to noon. Your second chance will be during Magnet Awareness Week, Monday, November 16-20. Tours begin at 1:00 p.m. **HISD is discouraging parents from taking students out for tours during the school day.** Each high school should offer an evening Open House or weekend event so that your student can see what each campus has to offer. You have a third chance to talk to these schools on Wednesday, December 9, 2009 from 8:30 am to 10:00 am when the HS Magnet Tour visits our campus.

The Vanguard Office will continue to hand out the necessary paperwork to 8th grade Vanguard/Scholars parents if you are unable to attend the meeting on the 11th. Beginning November 12th, handout times are from 9 am to 11 am and then from 1:30 to 3:00. Please adhere to these times. You will need to make extra copies if you will be applying to more than one magnet high school. Carnegie Vanguard requires a different application. Both the Magnet and Vanguard applications can be found on the HISD website beginning November 14th. IF applications are available by our meeting time, we will provide copies to you on the 11th.



Mid-Term Exams

Algebra	Thurs, December 10
Spanish	Mon, December 14
Keyboarding	December 10 and 14



8th Grade VG/SC Parent Meeting

Wed. November 11, 2009

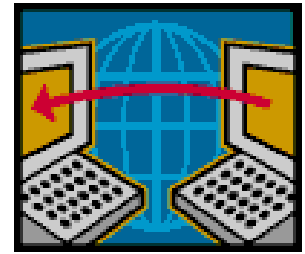
AHMS Library

6:00 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.

High School Application Process

Open lines of communication

Please feel free to contact your child's teacher by email with regard for all things pertaining to his/her classroom procedures, assignments, grades, etc. Teachers should respond within 48 hours. If you do not receive a response by that time, please email or call your grade level dean. Also, you may call or email a teacher to set up an individual conference between you and that teacher. If you would like to meet with the entire team, please call or email your grade level secretary. Don't forget that you can contact your teachers directly from PS Connect.



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Vanguard/Scholars Dean
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Cassie Campuzano
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Cooper, Patrisha
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Daniel, Clyde
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Eyles, Jonathan
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Gill, Hiawatha
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VG/SCH Parents

Parents, you are encouraged to attend the Vanguard/Scholars Parent Meetings and register your e-mail address to receive e-Blast news. Important information is disseminated in these ways. Being well-informed opens up doors for your child.



HISD

Alexander Hamilton Middle School
139 E. 20th Street
Houston, TX 77008
713-802-4736 phone
713-802-4731 fax

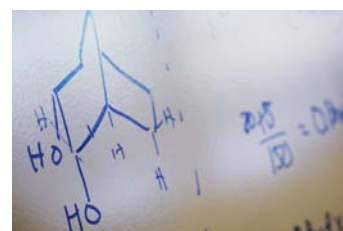
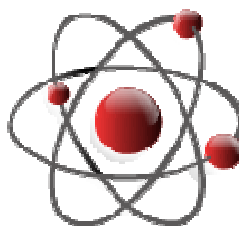
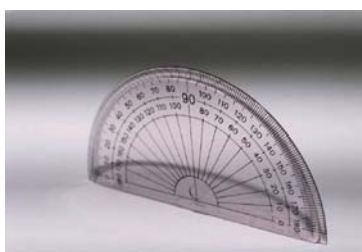
A Great Place to Learn.

Family Math and Science Night

Wednesday, November 11, 2009

6-8 pm in school cafeteria

Everyone's invited!



R. Bunnell

Principal

Rose Myers

Dean of Instruction

A. Melendez

VG/SC Coordinator-Dean

E. Carter

Sixth Grade VG/SC Dean

A. Dominguez

Seventh Grade VG/SC Dean

K. Fletcher

Eighth Grade VG/SC Dean

J. Sada

School Secretary

L. Rodriguez

Administrative Assistant

R. Pineda

Administrative Assistant

C. Campuzano

6th Grade Secretary

V. Benitez

7th Grade Secretary

A. Arroyo

8th Grade Secretary



It is the policy of the Houston Independent School District not to discriminate on the basis of age, color, handicap or disability, ancestry, national origin, marital status, race, religion, sex, veteran status, or political affiliation in its educational or employment programs and activities.