

PASSAGES POST

Principal's Message

Provided by Yvette Baxter-Sweet

Greetings to the Passages Academy Community! Our theme for the month of October will be change, expansion and reorganizing. As we are all now aware, Limited Secure Placement has provided a hard date for opening as of October 26th, 2015. I have had the pleasure of visiting all the sites, and can report that all sites are 90% ready to open their doors. These sites will be servicing very special populations of students. But what is most important about these sites is that they provide proximity for families and caregivers to support their children while they are court involved. Our support in this process is very clear. We are here to continue the students' educational services that they require. Our mission as a school is to provide all of our students with the academic, social/emotional competencies necessary to continue their progress as a student while they are with us. As well as planning with all student support networks to provide transition plans that will support each students continued success on their pathway to graduation. A modified preference sheet has been distributed. Please read it carefully, and do consider the opportunities that are being offered. I had the privilege of being a founding member of a staff that started a small school, this work can be very rewarding.

Often times the work that we do to provide educational and social/emotional services to our students come under great scrutiny. This is why it is so important that we work towards meeting the needs of our students. We must use data to drive the decisions that we make towards student achievement. I would like to thank all the staff members that participated in the recent learning walks. Learning walks are vital tools used to move schools forward in meeting student needs. They provide pivotal data that can be used to drive professional learning, which then drives instruction which ultimately leads to student achievement.

Next, the week of October 19th, 2015, we will be holding our first Curriculum Nights. Many of you may have already attended similar events at your own children's school - better known as Open School Night. Each site has selected a different date for the event. During this event we will be introducing the school to parents and caregivers, and explaining the curriculum that we provide to their children. We also want to provide information on transition planning and resources about the curriculum that can support their conversations with their children about school. The goal here is to begin the steps for parent/caregiver involvement with Passages Academy. I want to thank all staff that will be taking part in this inaugural event around parent and community outreach.

Lastly, I would like to share an article I recently read about educational services for court involved youth in Maryland/Washington DC. area - David Domenici, Headmaster of the School of Hard Knocks. This article is very insightful to the issues that we face with this particular task. Also, I think that it is always good to know that we are not alone in our efforts to support court involved youth.

Belmont Highlights

Provided by Patrick Dorfer

We are excited to have our student government up and running and recently had our first meeting of the year. These students are selected based upon academic and behavioral success demonstrated in the school building and residence. Here are the "takeaways" from our student government representatives after our recent meeting.

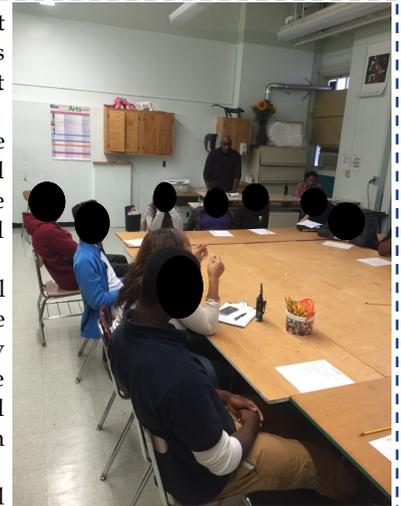
Academic Work and Assignments: Many of our students, especially those in placement, are advocating for more advanced instructional programs since we have some who have passed multiple regents. It is a good idea to reach out to me or the students' counselors regarding where they are programmed, what they have passed, etc. Most of the students are letting us know and the transcript checking is backing this up.

After-School: Our student government leaders are especially excited about our after-school opportunities. One of the points I stressed is that the after-school experiences are essential for the students to not feel isolated in their current setting and receive that "real-school feel" that they naturally complain about often. Also, many of the boys were frustrated that they cannot be in the same classes as the females and it was stressed that this is their time to display their talents and intermingle with their peers. It will also be used as a motivator as repeated poor behavior can disqualify students from after-school.

Dress Code: The students want to wear their own attire to school, but many of the liaisons feel that issues such as hats, hoodies, etc. can become an issue. It was decided that we can work on having a "casual Friday" system where students can dress in their own attire once per week. This is in the works.

Upcoming Activities: We are excited to be planning for future educational programs regarding Hispanic Heritage Month, Halloween, and Native American Heritage Month. Those programs will be included in future post articles.

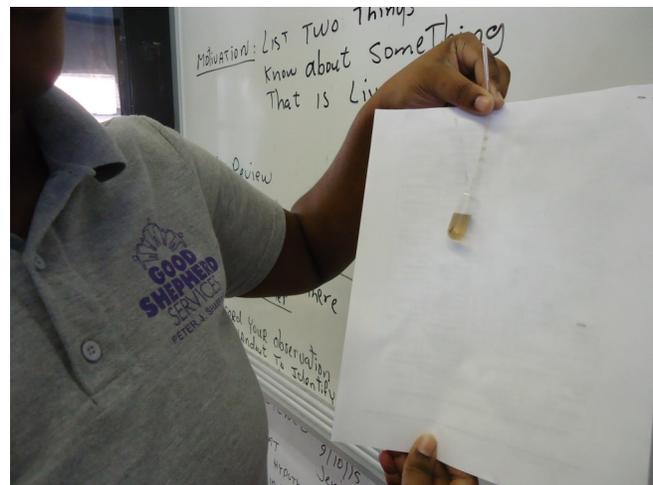
Our student government leaders are aware that they are the representatives for their houses and the school as a whole. They are expected to model the appropriate behavior for those in their group and bring group concerns directly to their counselors, teachers and other supervisors.



Bronx Hope Highlights

Provided by Allison Trevaskis

Bronx Hope has started the 2015-2016 school year with robust interdisciplinary lessons. The students have been actively engaged in learning about characteristics of living organisms in Science class while writing about their experiences in ELA and applying Math skills. Pond water was utilized from several locations including Central Park and a farm in the Poughkeepsie area for students to observe and then examine under a microscope. Collaboration between the participating teachers was essential in the success of the lessons for NSD Sharp House, Beach, Carpenter, NSP SCO and White Plains houses.



Crossroads Highlights

Provided by Erica Addy

Crossroads started off the year with their annual student teacher meet and greet in the gymnasium. Each hall came downstairs to meet both the new and current teachers of the Crossroads teaching and school support staff. After introductions, teachers had time to chat with students and spread the excitement of the new school year. In addition, students had an opportunity to learn about the new initiatives at Passages Academy. Mr. Rashid took the time to explain the new Advisory period while Ms. Stewart explained the transition services now offered at Passages Academy. This event was a great start to the school year!



In addition to the new initiatives, the math focus group has started in full swing! Ms. Lin and Mr. Johnson have paired off with students to engage in a teacher/student battle. Mr. Johnson and Ms. Lin have been using factorization of 24 to strengthen student's mental math problem solving skills.



On September 30, Crossroads celebrated their first birthday luncheon of the year! Happy birthday to Ms. Cotton, Ms. Hart, Ms. Mack, Ms. Stewart, and Ms. Whitaker!



Facts, Thoughts, and/or Questions for the Week

The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically.
Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Staten Island Highlights

Provided by Adrienne Pritchett-Dames

Staten Island Promise is off to a great start. We have begun a partnership with Co-op Tech, and one of our young ladies is attending classes there in the afternoons. We are also preparing for our Hispanic Heritage Month celebration, as well as a Transfer School fair in November to help with our students' transitions once they leave Passages.



Passages Academy Library News

Provided by Claudio Leon

Welcome to a new school year! With a new year comes many new changes, and we would like to welcome to the Passages Academy Library team two new members. Allison Trevaskis has been with us for many years, and will now be providing library services at Bronx Hope. Elaine Roberts is new to Passages Academy and will be providing school library services at Crossroads. We are happy to have them on board and look forward to continuing to provide you with the seamless services across Passages' four largest sites.

Upcoming Programs

October 28-October 29: Papertoy Monsters at Horizon Nov. 5: Paul Griffin and Gayle Forman author visit at Belmont
October 29: Papertoy Monsters at Belmont November 20: MoMA Outreach at Horizon

What's Good?

With the short stories unit well underway, we would like to suggest that ELA teachers see their site librarian for recommendations on short stories. Here are some titles that have already been reviewed on our blog:

Sudden Flash Youth: 65 Short Short Stories Edited by Christine Perkins Hazuka, Tom Hazuka, and Mark Budman

Who Am I Without Him? Short Stories About Girls and the Boys in Their Lives by Sharon G. Flake

Sudden Fiction Latino: Short Short stories from the United States and Latin America

Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark collected by Alvin Schwartz

Flight Volume Six edited by Kazu Kibuishi

Don't forget to check out our blog for more PAL reviews and news here: <http://whatsgoodinthelibrary.blogspot.com/>

Upcoming Events

- October 20:** Belmont Curriculum Night
- October 21:** Horizon Curriculum Night
- October 22:** Bronx Hope Curriculum Night
- October 22:** Crossroads Curriculum Night
- November 3:** Election Day – Staff Attends, No Students
- November 11:** Veterans Day – Schools Closed
- November 18-19:** Parent Teacher Conferences
- November 26-27:** Thanksgiving Recess – Schools Closed



*"I am what I am today
because of the choices
I made yesterday."*

Stephen Covey

Important Links

- Passages Academy Public Website: www.PassagesAcademy.org
- Passages Academy Staff Website: <https://sites.google.com/a/passagesonline.com/staff/>
- Passages Academy Handbook: <https://sites.google.com/a/passagesonline.com/staff/documents>
- Passages Academy Library Website: www.passagesacademylibraries.org
- Passages Academy Library Blog: www.whatsgoodinthelibrary.blogspot.com
- Chancellors Regulations: <http://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/ChancellorsRegulations/default.htm>
- ELA & Math Middle School Testing: <http://engageny.org/content/just-released-2013-test-guides-for-ela-mathematics>
- Online Textbook Codes: <https://sites.google.com/a/passagesonline.com/staff/textbook-online-access-code>
- ACS Online Policy Library: http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/html/home/policy_library.shtml