



THE ESSENCE

September 2008
Volume 1, Issue 1

To support and speak on behalf of parents and children in the school, community, and before government bodies, and other organizations that make decisions affecting children. To assist parents in developing skills they need to acquire and to encourage involvement in the public school system.

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"Just let me go, we have to be able to criticize what we love, to say what we have to say 'cause if you're not trying to make something better, then as far as I can tell, you are just in the way."

From your PTA Leadership

Welcome to the 2008-2009 school year at Queens Gateway! We are excited about working with all of you this year to support our students and staff. We are delighted you're here and want to help you find a way to be involved.

First things first: There is NO PTA without you! You need to get involved with our wonderful PTA; our mission statement is at the top of this newsletter. We have many volunteer opportunities at Gateway, from chaperoning a school trip to helping to keep our meetings organized and focused. There are MANY opportunities for you to get involved, no matter how much time you can give. We have a need for volunteers who can offer even one hour during the whole school year, or several hours per week. We welcome and value any time you may have. Even if you are not able to volunteer your time we need to see you at our monthly meetings. One reason for attending PTA meetings is to get valuable information that our young adults

may not bring home. Information about what is happening in the school on an on-going basis, as well as programs in our community that can benefit our children. We also need you to attend and to contribute your unique perspectives and talents and enlighten us to programs that may be available in your neighborhood. Your PTA Executive Board is here to work for you. If you have any issues and/or concerns that is too much for you to handle, talk to us. We have years of experience at Queens Gateway and can point you in the right direction.

Today you will receive your parent handbook from Carola Craig, our parent coordinator which contains lot of information to help you through the school year. If your questions aren't answered in the handbook, please do not hesitate to contact us. In addition, today each parent will receive a meeting date card, please post them on your refrigerator as a constant reminder of our monthly meetings. Contact information for the PTA Executive Board is listed on the back of the meeting date card. Our meetings start on time and are streamlined. You

will know what will be on the agenda before the meetings, as discussion topics will be stated in our meeting notices and or newsletter. You will also receive our information/donation envelope. Please consider making a voluntary donation to the PTA. It is through your contributions that we are able to provide programs for parents, offer awards to students, show appreciation to our teachers as well as accomplishing our other goals. If you are not able to make a donation today, you can send it in the envelope with your son or daughter to Ms. Craig or bring it with you to our next meeting. A special thanks to the parents who have sent in their contributions.

Finally, we would like to invite you to attend our monthly PTA Executive board meetings. We meet the first Monday of every month at 6:30 pm in the school's library.

**Join us next month
October 21, 2008 @ 7:00 p.m.**

*"Preparing for
Parent Teacher Conference"*

Who is Who at Queens Gateway

PTA Executive Board

- Sandra Williams, President
- Malcolm Robertson, Vice President
- Derek Braithwaite, Recording Secretary
- Marion Fitzgerald, Corr. Secretary
- Ray Wittaker, Treasurer
- Zakia Shaikh, Financial Secretary

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- Claudette Brammer
- Badrul Chowdhury
- Lisa Crosland
- Bebi Karimbaksh
- Sandra Williams

Parent Coordinator

Carola Craig

School Administration

Cynthia Edwards, Principal

Assistant Principals

- Linda Allred
- Dr. Deborah Isom
- Ghandi Moussa



Let's Talk!!!

Guidance Grapevine

September 2008

Dear Parents,

School is back in session and we are off to an excellent start. Welcome back to our returning parents. It was a pleasure meeting our new parents at the Orientation in August.

We are planning many exciting activities this school. As plans are finalized you will be notified. Check the website periodically for activities and updates. Some upcoming activities include:

Sat., September 20 th	Citywide High School Fair 10:00 AM-3:00 PM	Brooklyn Tech. HS
Sun., September 21 st	Citywide High School Fair 10:00 AM-3:00 PM	Brooklyn Tech. HS
Tues., October 14 th	Senior Class Parent Meeting/ College Readiness Workshop 6:00 PM-8:30 PM	Queens Gateway
Wed., October 15 th	PSAT exam 9 th , 10 th , 11 th grades	Queens Gateway

"I've said to many families, we are a neutral third party who will intervene on your child's behalf. We don't have the emotional overlay. We don't have to deal with the child later."

(Excerpt from When to Get a Tutor)

*William Bolick
Director of Education
Sylvan Learning Center*

The After School tutoring Program started last week. Some students have been assigned to classes if they failed a class in June or summer school. Students who want additional academic support can attend the tutoring sessions. Each student must show a permission slip to the teacher and submit the permission slip to his/her counselor.

I look forward to reacquainting myself with you this year and getting to know our new parent family members. Last year I included an "article of interest" for your reading pleasure. I will continue the articles this year. Enjoy your reading!

Respectfully,

Linda Allred

Assistant Principal Pupil Personnel Services

When to Get a Tutor

With the competition to achieve academic success reaching new levels of intensity, parents are now looking to tutors to help their children gain an edge. But many parents do not realize what exactly is involved in a tutoring relationship.

Fifteen year-old Mary Lang thought she needed help with her school work. "I went to my parents and told them I didn't like the way my grades were going and you know, that I thought I needed help," she says. At first her parents tried to help her study, but often kids resist getting help from their mom or dad. It becomes an emotional struggle of wills.

Mary Lang needed a tutor.

William Bolick, Director of Education for the Sylvan Learning Center, says that he has seen this problem

before and that tutors don't have as many complications as parents. "I've said to many families, we are a neutral third party who will intervene on your child's behalf. We don't have the emotional overlay. We don't have to deal with the child later," he says.

A tutor is not only neutral, but often can determine exactly what kind of help a child needs. It may be one specific, immediate problem that the child is wrestling with. For instance, says Bolick, "The current concept, whether it's a math concept, a biological concept, a short story. And tutoring very often will help a student with that specific area." Or the problem could be something a little deeper ... some skill that the child never learned?

Bolick says the benefit of a good

tutor is that, "we literally go back in time and fill in specific skill gaps and needs for that student - what is in the past, which has caused a deficit or a weakness."

How can you tell if a child needs a tutor and what kind of tutor?

As with any academic issue, Bolick says, "the first resource is always the teacher. They have the greatest input really as to whether the issue is a content based one or whether it is a skill-based one."

And after Mary Lang's tutor helped sharpen her basic skills, her grades improved from C's to A's, which was well worth the effort. "Even if you think you don't need a tutor, maybe you do, because it's better to have a tutor than to fail in class," she says.

Tips for Parents

How can you determine if you child needs a tutor?

The Huntington Learning Center lists the following signs indicating that your child may need extra academic help:

- Your child's teacher or school counselor recommends it. This may happen at a parent-teacher conference. It may also occur when progress reports are issued or at report card time.
- Your child's grades start to fall independent of how hard he or she seems to be working, where before they were improving or holding steady.
- No matter how long your child spends on homework, it's neither complete nor accurate. This may indicate a lack of basic skills or a weakness in a specific academic area.
- Caught in a cycle of frustration and failure, your child shows an increasing lack of confidence and motivation.
- Your child has lost interest in learning.
- Your child experiences extreme anxiety before tests and exams.
- Your child is reluctant to go to school, fearing failure and criticism from others.
- Your child's teacher reports that he or she is acting out, becoming a behavior problem in class.
- Your child says, "I'm too stupid. I'll never understand this stuff."
- Your child says, "I give up." Or, worse, you hear yourself saying it. Even if your child is not struggling in school, you may want to consider getting him or her tutor. The experts at *FamilyFun* magazine cite the following benefits of a tutor:
 - Tutoring can provide personal attention that teachers simply don't have the time to offer. Sometimes, your child can feel lost in a room of 25 or 30 kids.
 - Sometimes your child is gifted, but advancing him or her to the next grade may be inappropriate. A tutor can offer challenges and special

assignments to keep him or her excited about learning.

- A tutor is not Mom or Dad. Children are more willing to open their minds in one-on-one academic settings when parent-child dynamics are not involved.
- Having a tutor may make your child feel special. Your child may feel that he or she deserves this special "coaching" much as gifted athletes are often privately trained. When looking for a tutor, it is important to find someone with whom your child can develop a rapport. According to the experts at Schwab Learning, a good tutor should possess the following characteristics:
 - Be well-trained in effective instructional approaches
 - Have plenty of prior experience tutoring children in a specific area
 - Be good at working with children, including establishing rapport, so that your child *wants* to go back. Keep in mind that when you find a prospective tutor,

you will need to interview him or her to determine whether or not the individual is right for the job. Consider the following questions as you prepare for your interview:

- What is your background, training and experience in teaching struggling children?
- What kind of approach to teaching do you take?
- What special training or certification have you completed?
- How long have you been tutoring children?
- Approximately how many students have you tutored over the past five years, and what were the outcomes?

References

Sylvan Learning Systems
Huntington Learning Center
Schwab Learning

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Ray Wittaker, Treasurer

Zakia Shaikh, Fin. Sec.

Carola Craig, Editor

Clarence Williams, Jr., Junior Editor

Wendy Alleyne, Teacher

Linda Allred, Guidance

Officer Jones, Safety

Do You Want to Join our Team???
Just Say Hi...Here I am

What's On Your Mind?

The PTA newsletter is your newsletter. If you have comments, questions, suggestions or ideas for the PTA and parent population, you can submit them for a future edition.

Do you have a Question for Guidance?
Do you have your own business? Talk to us!
How about placing an Ad in this newsletter?

Forward your
Ideas and/or questions to:

Queens Gateway to Health Sciences Secondary School PTA
150-91 87th Road, Jamaica, NY 11432

or e-mail them to

ptaqueensgateway@yahoo.com

Deadline for submission:

3rd Tuesday of each month at the PTA Meeting

**Before publication, comments need to be approved by School Administration and the PTA Executive Board.*

DATES TO REMEMBER

PTA MEETINGS - Every Third Tuesday of the Month
Except for February which falls during the Midwinter Recess

School Leadership Team

Every 1st Tuesday of the Month @ 6:00 p.m.

TUES.—WED.	Sept. 30—Oct. 1	Rosh Hashanah—No School
THURS	October 9	Yom Kippur—No School
MONDAY	October 13	Columbus Day—No School
WEDNESDAY	October 15	PSAT/NMSQT
TUESDAY	October 21	PTA Meeting @ 7:00 p.m.
THURSDAY	October 23	Parent-Teacher Conference—Evening
FRIDAY	October 24	Parent-Teacher Conference—Afternoon
TUESDAY	November 4	Election Day (No Student)
TUESDAY	November 11	Veterans Day (No School)
TUESDAY	November 18	PTA Meeting—Thanksgiving Celebration
THURS.-FRI.	November 27-28	Thanksgiving Recess (No School)
TUESDAY	December 16	PTA Meeting @ 7:00 p.m.
FRIDAY-MONDAY	Dec. 24 – Jan. 1	Winter Recess - No School

Communicating with your Child

Schoolwork

Trying to talk with your child about schoolwork can feel like opening a can of worms. If you feel like you're walking in dangerous territory, you're not alone. Still, parents have to find strategies for effective communication.

Let's look at a common situations:

I want to encourage my child to talk about what he/she has learned. Standard questions like "How was school today?" or "What did you learn?" often produce one-word answers with little useful information. Try asking specific questions that can start a conversation and not sound like an interrogation:

- "What was the funniest thing that happened in class today?"

- "What was the most interesting thing you did (or learned) in school today?"
- "Who did you travel with today?"
- "What was the best/worst part of your day?"

Answers to any of these questions will give you more information on which to build a real conversation. And you can contribute to the dialogue by talking about your own day, what you learned, what you did that was fun, giving lots of details so your child sees how interesting such discussions can be. Also, pick the right time to ask. Good opportunities to get a conversation going include dinnertime, bedtime or while you're walking or riding together.

Welcome Home