

THE ESSENCE

May 2009
Volume 9, 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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"Leaders who win the respect of others are the ones who deliver more than they promise, not the ones who promise more than they can deliver."

(Mark A. Clement)



Let's Talk!!!

A message from your ...

PTA Leadership

Kudos

Middle School ELA grades are in:

99.4% of our Middle School students are meeting and exceeding the standards.

Queens Gateway is one of the only four (4) schools in District 28 with no Level 1 student. And "Yes" we had the highest percentage meeting and exceeding the standards. Congratulations to our 7th and 8th grade students, parents, and staff for a job well done!

Community and Citywide Council Election:

The election process is over.

Straw Vote (Advisory Vote) Result: Monica Ayuso won the advisory vote to represent Queens High Schools on the Citywide Council for High School. The PTA President, Recording Secretary and Treasurer took your advise and cast our vote for the candidates of your choice. We are waiting for the results of the election to be announced.

Title 1:

Our parents, administration and staff elected to spend the Title I funds Schoolwide rather than spending the funds on selected students only. The proposal was signed by the members of the School Leadership Team and submitted to the Department of Education for approval. The Queens Gateway Schoolwide Program Planning Proposal has been approved. We will continue working as a team to align the budget with our educational goals for the next two years.

Bylaws Review:

At our last meeting, parent members voted against the executive board's proposal to include term limits in our PTA Bylaws. Parent members also voted to leave the "T" in PTA. Our Bylaws was approved without any amendments. It was noted that due to new changes in the Chancellor's Regulations, a member running for office does not have to be present.

Nomination for School Year 2009-2010 PTA Executive Board & School Leadership Team:

The nominating committee is accepting nominations for PTA Executive Board and the School Leadership Team parent members. If you are considering to run for office, please contact the Nominating Committee. For more information, you can contact your parent coordinator. Election will take place at the June meeting, June 16, 2009.

Swine Flu

As of today (5/18/09), ten NYC public schools are currently closed including nine in Queens due to unusual high levels of flu-like illness. The Department of Education is requesting that if a child has fever or a respiratory illness, he/she should be kept home from school until they have recovered.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Human Flu	Fever
Cough	Sore throat
Body aches	Lethargy
Headache	Chills
Fatigue	Diarrhea & Vomiting

Some of the best ways to avoid getting or spreading the swine influenza is by covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing and washing your hands afterwards, wash hands often with soap and water, avoid close contact with sick people, and if you get sick, to stay home until at least 2 days or until the symptoms disappear.

The PTA outreached to the administration and offered assistance in providing Clorox wipes for each classroom. We are waiting for their response.

Guidance Grapevine

May 2009

Spring is settling in. The tulips are blooming and the excitement of end of year activities is in the air. Eighth graders are looking forward to moving into high school while twelfth graders are looking forward to attending college. There is still much to be done before the celebrations.

We are now in the final marking period of the semester. I am asking that you pay close attention to the report card you received last week. Students who have failing grades will initially be programmed for summer school. Updates for summer school will be made as we receive the final grades. There is a possibility that all students will not be afforded the opportunity to attend summer school due to DOE funding for summer school. Continue to encourage your child to be on time for classes, turn in homework and projects on time and prepare for quizzes and exams. Tutoring after school is ongoing. The Saturday Academy for Regents preparation is in full swing.

I sent a letter to all 10th grade parents inviting you and your child to attend the Parent/Student **P.S.A.T and College Readiness Workshop on Tuesday, May 26th at 6:00. PM.** It is imperative that you come out for this informative session. If you are interested in pre-registering your child for the fall PSAT prep classes, return the tear off to reserve a seat.

Congratulations to our middle school students, parents and teachers on their achievement on the standardized ELA exam. **99.4% of the students scored 3 or 4 on the exam, an increase of 1.7 %.** Keep up the great work!

As you know, New York City has been in the media due to recent reports of the N1H1 virus (Swine Flu). Last week, a number of students came down with fevers. As per DOE guidelines, parents were called, students were monitored by the school nurse and findings reported on a daily basis. There has been no evidence of any student or staff member with the N1H1 virus.

In looking at student health, it was reported last week by the Department of Health that students between the ages of 13-20, encompass the growing number of cases with the HIV virus. Many do not know that they have the virus. Hence, your assigned reading for May. Enjoy.

Sincerely,

Linda Allred a.k.a. "GG"
Assistant Principal Pupil Personnel Services



Middle School Sex

Wednesday, April 29th, 2009

| CWK Producer

"I wanted to be in the 'in' crowd and my friends. And I wanted to be able to say 'yes, I've had sex before,'" – Katelyn, Age 13

Katelyn is now 16, but when she was only 13, "I started skipping school," she says. "Having sex." "I wanted to be in the 'in' crowd and my friends," Katelyn explains, "and I wanted to be able to say 'yes, I've had sex before'."

According to a new study by the University of Texas, 12 percent of 7th graders have had sex. Nearly 8 percent have had oral sex. What's more, nearly a third aren't using protection.

Experts say one problem is instead of getting information about sex from their parents and other adults, kids are getting it from other kids.

"And a lot of the information that they are getting from each other is poor information, its misinformation, and it's not good," says sex educator, Sheena Pope-Holland.

And in a time when sexual messages are *everywhere*, parents need to have lots of conversations about sex and they need to begin when the kids are young.

"What they can expect to face in terms of pressures from their friends," explains teen counselor Marie Mitchell, "In terms of what these new feelings will mean in their lives, what the consequences of acting on those feelings might be."

She says parents also need to be pro-active: Get to know your child's friends. Know what they're doing and where they're going and when they're supposed to return. And make sure your rules are age appropriate.

"You don't allow a 13-year-old to go out on a date by herself, because she's not mature enough to handle those situations," says Mitchell. Katelyn has been abstinent for over a year. What convinced her were conversations with teenage mothers. "That was I think the biggest slap in the face to me...for somebody outside of my family to tell me 'you're dumb, you're stupid, look where I am, I have nothing, I have absolutely nothing...do you want to be like this when you're my age?'"

Tips for Parents

The American Academy of Pediatrics has suggested that portrayals of sex on entertainment television may contribute to precocious adolescent sex. Approximately two-thirds of television programs contain sexual content, and adolescents who viewed more sexual content were more likely to initiate intercourse and progress to more advanced non-coital sexual activities. Youths in the top 10th percentile of television sex viewing were twice as likely to have sex as those youths who were in the bottom 10th percentile of viewing.

Adolescence is a key period of sexual exploration and development. This is the time when teens begin to consider which sexual behaviors are enjoyable, moral and appropriate for their age group. Many teens become sexually active during this period; currently, 46 percent of high school students in the United States admit to having had sexual intercourse. Consider the following:

- By ninth grade, 34 percent of teens have had sexual intercourse. By 12th grade, this figure increases to 60 percent.
- On average, teens watch three hours of television every day.
- Watching a program that talked about sex was associated with the same risks as exposure to a program that depicted sexual behavior.

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Cont'd from Pg. 2

- Approximately one in seven television programs includes a portrayal of sexual intercourse.
- Television programs with sexual content have an average of 4.4 scenes per hour containing sexually related material.
- Youths who watched more depictions of sexual risks or safety were less likely to initiate intercourse.
- Watching sex on television predicts and may hasten adolescent sexual initiation. Reducing the amount of sexual content in entertainment programming, reducing adolescent exposure to this content, or increasing references to and depictions of the possible negative consequences of sexual activity could delay when teens embark on sexual activities. A quarter of all sexually active teens will contract a sexually transmitted disease each year. According to 57 percent of adults and 72 percent of teens, the media has given "more attention" to teen pregnancy prevention in recent years.

Remember that as a parent you may be able to reduce the effects of sexual content in the media by watching television with your teenagers and discussing your own beliefs about sex and the behaviors being portrayed. Most parents say they have discussed sex with their teenagers, but far fewer teenagers say they had such talks with their parents. Sixty-nine percent of teens report that it would be "much easier" to postpone sexual activity if they could have "more open, honest conversations" about sex with their parents. In addition:

- About 60 percent of teens have a television in their bedroom. The only way to keep parental control of television viewing is to not let your teen have a television in the bedroom.
- Unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases are more common among those who begin sexual activity earlier.
- Two-thirds of sexually experienced teens wish they had waited longer to have intercourse.
- Seventy-nine percent of teenage virgins are not embarrassed to tell others they have not had sex.
- Youngsters who receive little parental supervision may have more time and freedom to watch sexually based programming and more opportunities to engage in sexual activity.

References

The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation
 Medical News Today
 Pediatrics
 Rand Corporation
 Talk With Your Kids
 USA Today

Identity Theft - Final Chapter

This column is the last in the series on identity theft. This column will be relatively brief because of the space constraint of the newsletter. Whenever there is a need to elaborate or to provide examples, a link to the FTC website will be provided. At the next meeting you will be provided with a 52-page color booklet titled "Take Charge: Fighting Back Against Identity Theft".

What are the steps I should take if I'm a victim of identity theft?

If you are a victim of identity theft, take the following **four steps** as soon as possible, and [keep a record](#) (see sample at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/idtheft/idth04.shtm>) with the details of your conversations and copies of all correspondence.

1. Place a fraud alert on your credit reports, and review your credit reports.

Fraud alerts can help prevent an identity thief from opening any more accounts in your name. Contact the toll-free fraud number of any of the three consumer reporting companies below to place a fraud alert on your credit report.

TransUnion: 1-800-680-7289; www.transunion.com; Fraud Victim Assistance Division, P.O. Box 6790, Fullerton, CA 92834-6790

Equifax: 1-800-525-6285; www.equifax.com; P.O. Box 740241, Atlanta, GA 30374-0241

Experian: 1-888-EXPERIAN (397-3742); www.experian.com; P.O. Box 9532, Allen, TX 75013

Once you place the [fraud alert](#) (see <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/idtheft/idth04.shtm>) in your file, you're entitled to order one free copy (see <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/credit/cre34.shtm>) of your credit report from each of the three consumer reporting companies. Once you get your credit reports, review them carefully. Look for inquiries from companies you haven't contacted, accounts you didn't open, and debts on your accounts that you can't explain. Check that information, like your Social Security number, address (es), name or initials, and employers are correct. If you find fraudulent or inaccurate information, get it removed (see [Correcting Fraudulent Information in Credit Reports](#) at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/idtheft/idth04.shtm> to learn how). When you correct your credit report, use an [Identity Theft Report](#) (see <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/idtheft/idth04.shtm>) with a [cover letter](#) (see <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/idtheft/idth04.shtm>) explaining your request, to get the fastest and most complete results.

2. Close the accounts that you know, or believe, have been tampered with or opened fraudulently.

Send your letters by certified mail, return receipt requested, so you can document what the company received and when. If the identity thief has made charges or debits on your accounts, or has fraudulently opened accounts, ask the company for the forms to dispute those transactions: For new unauthorized accounts, you can either file a dispute directly with the company or file an Identity Theft Report with the police and provide a copy to the company. Once you have resolved your identity theft dispute with the company, ask for a letter stating that the company has closed the disputed accounts and has discharged the fraudulent debts. This letter is your best proof if errors relating to this account reappear on your credit report or you are contacted again about the fraudulent debt.

3. File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission.

You can file a complaint with the FTC using the [online complaint form](#); or call the FTC's Identity Theft Hotline, toll-free: 1-877-ID-THEFT (438-4338); TTY: 1-866-653-4261; or write Identity Theft Clearinghouse, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20580. Be sure to call the Hotline to update your complaint if you have any additional information or problems.

4. File a report with your local police or the police in the community where the identity theft took place.

Call your local police department and tell them that you want to file a report about your identity theft. Ask them if you can file the report in person. If you cannot, ask if you can file a report over the Internet or telephone. See below for information about Automated Reports. When you go to your local police department to file your report, bring a [printed copy of your FTC ID Theft Complaint form](#), your [cover letter](#), and your supporting documentation. The cover letter explains why a police report and an ID Theft Complaint are so important to victims.

Owing to the knee-jerk reaction to seek a change to one's Social Security number, the following information is being provided to help with your decision-making.

Under certain circumstances, the Social Security Administration may issue you a new Social Security number - at your request - if, after trying to resolve the problems brought on by identity theft, you continue to experience problems. Consider this option carefully. A new Social Security number may not resolve your identity theft problems, and may actually create new problems. For example, a new Social Security number does not necessarily ensure a new credit record because credit bureaus may combine the credit records from your old Social Security number with those from your new Social Security number. Even when the old credit information is not associated with your new Social Security number, the absence of any credit history under your new Social Security number may make it more difficult for you to get credit. And finally, there's no guarantee that a new Social Security number wouldn't also be misused by an identity thief.

PTA Wall of Fame

Louis Aghanwa
 Patricia Aghanwa
 Anthony Agwai
 Tochukwu Agwai
 Linda Allred
 Irene Anderson
 Rudal Anderson
 Carmencita Arizabal
 Jesus Arizabal
 Artur Aronov
 Zhanna Aronov
 Marcia Austin
 F. Bacchus
 Indira Balkaran
 Jai Balkaran
 Ann Barrett
 Asma Begum
 Shahana Begum
 Devanand Beharry
 Indranie Beharry
 Kamla Bhagwandas
 Ravi Bhagwandas
 Rhonda Blache
 Ibrahima Bocoun
 Jennifer Bocoun
 Catrina Booker
 Derek Braithwaite
 Nicole Britton
 Marlene Bryant
 Judith Calhoun
 Kenny Calhoun
 Kilpatrick Camacho
 Sally Camacho
 Nancy Carrington
 Muhammad Chaudhary
 Musarrat Chaudhary
 Andrea Collins
 Sean Collins
 Steven Cox
 Lisa Crosland
 Jude Delisca
 G. Max Delson
 Marjory Delson
 Cristina Diaz
 Dora M. Diaz
 Elso Diaz
 Hazel Dickens
 Erick Drouillard
 Dulcia Dwyer
 Cynthia Edwards
 Mabel Enabulele
 Aboy Esonwune
 Rita Esonwune
 Mr. & Mrs. Evbuonwan
 Marion Fitzgerald
 Carol Folds
 Elizabeth Gittens
 Ana Gallardo
 Suzette Gayle
 Pamela Hall
 Denise Hazel

Nalini Hendrax
 Yasmin Henry
 Eddie Herrera
 Iliana Herrera
 Lorna Higgins
 Mahmuda Hogue
 Elvadeen Huie
 Marlen Hunter
 Warren Hyatt
 Forida Islam
 Keshia Jaboin
 Anthony Jefferson
 Kim Jefferson
 Mr. John
 Anita Johnson
 Kim Johnson
 Nathaniel Johnson
 Bebi Karimbaksh
 Juanita Kelly
 Mahboob Khan
 Nazir Khan
 Cecil King
 Cheryl King
 Rakesh Kissoon
 Rookmin Kissoon
 Kayi Kudosu
 Evelyn Kupvpika
 Radeep Lalak
 Patricia Lewis
 Lyvis Linton
 Maxwell Madu
 Dhermantie Mahadeo
 Gurdath Mahadeo
 Rookmin Mahadeo
 Frances Mannino
 Audra Massiah
 Beverly Massiah
 Matjerry Mathurin
 Hilary Matthew
 Yvonne McFarlane
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 Maritza Morillo
 Miguel Morillo
 Marcia Morrison
 Maurice Morrison
 Ghandi Moussa
 Charmaine Munro Rowe
 Joy Myers-McDonald
 Indranie Naraine
 Jagat Naraine
 Devika Narainsamy
 Kellee Nazaire
 Kamini Nazirbage
 Mamzad Nazirbage
 Charlene Nicholson
 Mertland Nicholson
 Nikolay Nikolayev
 Nina Nikolayev
 Vincent Nikolayev
 Adenike Oyalabu

Dr. Bode Oyalabu
 Beth Passaro
 George Pierson
 Sherrie Power
 Ada Rampersaud
 Hansraji Rampersaud
 Jairam Rampersaud
 Eduardo Rivera
 Gitana Robertson
 Malcolm Robertson
 Lourdes Rodriguez
 Rafael Rodriguez
 Anthony Samuels
 Irma Samuels
 Maria Sanchez
 Amanda Sancler
 Debbie Sanichar
 Zakia Shaikh
 Yonette Shepherd
 Sheila Smith
 Gale Sookdeo
 Alicia Strong-Jones
 Fredricka Thelwell
 Allison Thomas
 Catalina Torres
 Jose Torres
 Agnes Toussaint
 Diana Uva
 Donette Washington
 Donnette Washington
 Clarence Williams
 Sandra Williams (1)
 Sandra Williams (2)
 Berth Yacoub
 Jeanny Yacoub

DATES TO REMEMBER

PTA Executive Board MEETS
Every 1st Monday of the Month @ 6:00 p.m.
 School Leadership Team
Every 1st Tuesday of the Month @ 6:00 p.m.

Title 1 SWP Approved

TUESDAY	May 19	PTA meeting @ 7:00 p.m.
MONDAY	May 25	Memorial Day—School Close
TUES.-WED.	June 2-3	8th Grade Social Studies Exam
THURSDAY	June 4	No School
MON.-FRI.	June 8-12	Final Exams
MONDAY	June 15	End of 3rd Marking Period
TUESDAY	June 16	PTA meeting @ 7:00 p.m.
TUES.-WED.	June 16-24	Regents Exams

Newsletter Team

Sandra Williams
 PTA President, *Editor-in-Chief*
 &
 PTA Executive Board
 Malcolm Robertson, V.P.
 Derek Braithwaite, Rec. Sec.
 Marion Fitzgerald, Corr. Sec.
 Patricia Lewis, Treasurer
 Zakia Shaikh, Fin. Sec.
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