



The Scholars' Academy

Mission Statement: To Prepare for College and Careers of the 21st Century
"Technology Today, Smarter Tomorrow: Removing Time and Place from Teaching and Learning"
27Q323 is an Accelerated College Preparatory School for Grades 6-12
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Principal

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Principal's Monthly Parent Association and School Leadership Team Report 2014-2015

Report by Principal Brian O'Connell, October 8th, 2014

Great News:

- Scholars' Academy has earned Reward School Status from the State Education Department for our 2013-2014 data.
- The Queens County St. Patrick's Day Parade & Cultural Committee nominated Principal O'Connell as a Deputy Grand Marshal. There are two events in addition to the parade on March 7th to consider attending. Contact Felicia Williams for more information: fwilliams@scholarsnyc.com.
- Scholars' Academy recently welcomed more than a dozen educators from Shanghai, China, interested in learning how our school manages and integrates technology into the classroom.
- We were visited today by a reporter for being selected as one of the best 63 city schools by U.S. News and World Reports.
- PSAL Girls Soccer in their inaugural season is currently 5-0, PSAL Girls volleyball is 5-0.
- PSAL Coed Bowling is 3-2, Ryan T. has a 200 average.
- The Fitness Team has revamped their units of instruction to include a balance of fitness based activities and sports.

Summary of Progress Toward CEP Goals:

The Scholars' Academy is in pursuit of its CEP Goals and Instructional Focus (See September 10th Principal's Report). Thus far, our Professional Learning Calendar (**Comprehensive Education Plan Goal #3**) has been mapped out, complete with Teacher Team Lesson Study Observation Cycles. Teacher team work will center around our **Instructional Focus (Comprehensive Education Plan Goal #1)** of impacting lesson plan task design encompassing differentiated options for students based on ability, learning style, or preference, while also including questioning and discussion techniques, and assessments tailored to such purpose. **Comprehensive Education Plan Goal #2** which focuses on the implementation of a Structured Student Advisory Program, to better connect students with mentor adult staff members, had a successful launch after much planning was put in place by our Advisory Task Force. Students throughout the school met with staff members in lower student to staff ratios (14-18:1 for HS and 18-20:1 for MS). The Advisory Task Force provided staff with activities and topics with which to engage our students to help them better connect with peers and have an adult point of contact who knows them, but does not necessarily currently teach them in a graded area. These sessions will take place at six strategic times throughout the year to support our students.

Chancellor Fariña's Vision:

The chancellor has provided a capacity framework that stresses six transformative elements which drive school improvement and develop students to compete in the 21st century:

1. **Rigorous instruction** that meets students where they are and customizes inclusive instruction to drive student engagement. This instruction will align in content and practice to the Common Core State standards and strategies across grade levels.
2. A **supportive environment** that encourages students to support one another and provides for their social and emotional growth.
3. **Collaborative teachers** who are committed student success, improving their schools and developing professionally.
4. **Effective school leadership** that supports teachers, works with their school community and builds coherent instructional and social-emotional support to improve student achievement.
5. **Strong family and community ties** that incorporate families and community groups into the school and builds strong partnerships.
6. A school culture based on **trust**; where value and respect exist across the system with teachers, principals, staff, central, and families.

New School Quality Evaluation Methods:

The Department of Education has changed the A, B,C, etc. letter grading of the public schools to a grading system that incorporates student progress, student achievement, school environment (as delineated by results of student, teacher, and parent surveys), and how well schools close the achievement gap for english language learners, students with disabilities, and low performing students, and for high schools: the school's impact on college and career readiness. The school's Quality Review, which is a rubric based audit of how well the school: provides an interesting and challenging curriculum, the quality/effectiveness of teaching and learning, how well the school assesses what the students are learning, how well the school communicates high expectations, and how well the teachers work with one another.

See a mock sample of this "Snapshot" report on next page.

KEY:
 Excellent
 Good
 Fair
 Poor



QUALITY REVIEW

An evaluation of the school by an experienced educator based on a formal school visit where the educator observed classrooms and spoke with parents, students, and school leaders. This tells us about the school's potential for improvement in the future, in contrast to the rest of the School Quality Snapshot, which focuses on how the school is doing now.

Most Recent Quality Review:
 April 4-5, 2013

Principal at Time of Review:
 Jane Doe

How interesting and challenging is the curriculum?



How effective is the teaching and learning?



How well does the school assess what students are learning?



How clearly are high expectations communicated to students and staff?



How well do teachers work with each other?



SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

What it is like to be at this school. Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction based on the NYC School Survey.

93% of students feel that their school offers enough variety of programs, classes, and activities to keep them interested in school

City Average: 82% | District Average: 81%

98% of parents are satisfied with the education that their child has received

City Average: 95% | District Average: 95%

88% of students feel safe in the hallways, bathrooms, locker rooms, and cafeteria

City Average: 79% | District Average: 77%

92% of teachers would recommend this school to parents

City Average: 81% | District Average: 77%

71% of students say that most students at the school treat each other with respect

City Average: 60% | District Average: 62%

STUDENT PROGRESS

How much students at this school are learning each year. It is determined by comparing each student's test score in 2014 to the test scores of other students with the same test score in 2013 to see how much the student has grown academically.

Improvement on the State English test



Improvement on the State math test



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Student performance on the State tests in English and math; and achievement in high school after leaving this school

32% met State standards on the State English test; the average score at this school was 2.6 out of 4.5

City Average: 27% | District Average: 30%

30% met State standards on the State math test; the average score at this school was 2.5 out of 4.5

City Average: 29% | District Average: 32%

93% is the average pass rate for courses in math, English, social studies, and science

City Average: 89% | District Average: 91%

78% of this school's former 8th graders earn enough high school credit in 9th grade to be on track for high school graduation

City Average: 85% | District Average: 87%

CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

How well schools are serving English Language Learners, students with special needs, and students with low past performance. This is based on progress on the state test: comparing the 2014 test scores for each student to other students with the same test score in 2013 to see how much each student has grown academically.

Improvement by student group on the State English test compared to other students who scored at the same level last year



Improvement by student group on the State math test compared to other students who scored at the same level last year



Movement of students with special needs to less restrictive environments



Which high schools do students from this school most frequently attend?

- 12% Manhattan High School
- 10% High School for Education
- 5% New York City High School
- 5% The High School for Excellence
- 3% Manhattan Vocational and Technical HS

Meeting the Expectations of Special Education Reform

Scholars' Academy has already begun the process of meeting the expectation of increasing our enrollment of students with special needs. This year, we have formed our first Integrated Co-Teaching Class, ICT, in grade six, as well as worked to provide academic programming for several students in grade nine for the first time.

We recruited and hired several special education teachers to assist us as we continue to enroll students with special needs in order to meet the enrollment targets set by the Office of Student Enrollment.

This *Shared Pathways for Success* Initiative, also known as Special Education Reform has prompted all screened schools throughout the city to enroll percentages of students, that are comparable with the district percentage of students with disabilities (for middle school) or borough percentages of students with disabilities (for HS), with special needs that meet the criteria of having an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that delineates their services as prompting the support of a self-contained class, an integrated co-teaching class, or receiving services in an integrated co-teaching class for more than 21% of the school day.

Admissions Criteria Adjustments:

To adhere to the special education reform movement and comply with the new state law, the Scholars' Academy formed an Admissions Team and a Special Education Implementation Team (SIT) which was charged with the responsibility to re-examine our admissions policies, rubrics, outreach efforts, and staffing needs. In addition, screened school admissions criteria, due to a recently enacted state law, prohibit schools from using standardized test measures as the majority of screening or admission criteria.

Although Scholars' Academy has never used more than 50% of a student's standardized test scores as an admissions criteria, several changes were recommended by the Admissions Team. See changes on next page.

Middle School Students Entering September, 2015 Evaluation Criteria:

Students will be ranked and screened according to application zone in order to receive an interview offer. There is no standardized cut-off score to apply. All students who apply are not guaranteed an interview.

Scholars' Academy Middle School Application Breakdown:

State Test Scores Grade 4 - 10 pts ELA, 10 pts Math, 10 pts Science Grade 3 - 5 pts ELA, 5 pts Math	40 points
Character/Learning Profile Validity will be cross referenced with report card data	20 points
Teacher Recommendation Validity will be cross referenced with report card data	10 points
Attendance History	5 points
Interview Total 100 points	25 points

High School Admissions Criteria and Screening Process For September 2015

NOTE: DUE TO SPACE CONSTRAINTS, SCHOLAR' ACADEMY DOES NOT CURRENTLY ANTICIPATE RANKING ANY EXTERNAL STUDENTS TO THE 9TH GRADE FOR SEPTEMBER 2015 ENTRY UNLESS CURRENT/CONTINUING ENROLLMENT OF EIGHTH GRADE TRENDS CHANGE.

SCHOLARS' ACADEMY IS EXPECTED BY THE OFFICE OF STUDENT ENROLLMENT TO RANK STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS INTO GRADE NINE OR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WILL BE PLACED ON THE SCHOOL'S REGISTERS BY THE OFFICE OF STUDENT ENROLLMENT TO MEET THE BOROUGH WIDE GENERATED PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADES.

Scholars' Academy High School

Admissions Rubric Submitted Draft 9/30/14

Category		Points
Report Card Grades 50%	Report Card: Math	15
	Report Card: ELA	15
	Report Card: Social Studies	10
	Report Card: Science	10
Most Recent Relevant State Test Scores 40%	State Test: Math	20
	State Test: ELA	20
Attendance & Punctuality 10%	Absences	5
	Lateness	5
	TOTAL	100

Admissions Priority goes to Scholars' Academy continuing 8th graders.

- **Initial Screen / Filter:** Applicants will be filtered by report card grades and any applicants with grades below 75 in any of the four subjects will be eliminated (Missing scores will not be penalized, see below)
- **Missing Data:** Scores on alternative standardized assessments scaled out of 100 points are included in the state test conversion and will be counted as such. For all other instances of missing data, the score will be calculated out of the total points available for scoring and an equivalent % will be used (e.g. a student missing a science report card grade will have his/her total calculated out of 85 points and will be converted to a percent, which accommodates any missing data).
 - In the absence of any specific report card grade, or standardized achievement test score, the total amount of percentage points that a student may earn for ranking purposes, will be calculated out of the appropriate proportional reduced potential percentage points.

Additional School Information from Key Staff for October 2014

Parent Information & Involvement:

- Please keep November 20th marked on your calendars for Parent Teacher Conferences
 - Students do not attend school on this day
 - Teachers will schedule PTC for parents and caregivers based on your schedule
 - We will have morning, midday, afternoon and evening conferences

- Our September 2014 Curriculum Overview was attended by 442 parents and caregivers
 - Middle School - 360
 - Grade 6 - 166
 - Grade 7 - 111
 - Grade 8 - 83
 - High School - 82
 - Grade 9 - 41
 - Grade 10 - 24
 - Grade 11 - 8
 - Grade 12 - 9

Guidance:

- All 10th and 11th grade students will be taking the PSAT on Wednesday, 10/15. All students were given a preparation book to bring home and review.

- The next College Office Parent Workshop on Standardized Testing will be held on Wednesday, November 12th from 6:00pm-7:00pm. This workshop is for all 9th-11th grade students and parents to gain a better understanding of the following exams: SAT / SAT Subject Tests / PSAT / AP / ACT.

Deans Office

- There has been a significant improvement in students adhering to the dress code policy. Thank you all for your continued support of our dress code policy!

- Tonight was our first Town Hall Meeting, where we concentrated on cyberbullying. Please continue to monitor your child's internet activity on a continued basis.

Science Department

- 7th Grade students will be going on a STEM trip with Rockaway Alliance between on October 29 and October 30th
 - We are organizing STEM trips through Queens College and Brookhaven National Lab to promote hands on activities for all students in MS and HS
 - We applied to be part of a National Science Competition (The Science Bowl) on January 11, 2014
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- In Humanities class, students are currently working on revising and finalizing their Response to Literature essays involving their summer reading novels. Many students have been utilizing google docs for their essay writing and peers and teachers add comments and suggestions into the shared google document as forms of feedback and assessment. Teachers have been uploading many writing resources, as well as their units/lessons/screencasts on their websites which you can find at www.scholarsnyc.com. Every Scholars' Academy student is challenged to work toward reading at least 25 novels this school-year. This is a combination of class novels, book club books and independent reading books. Please help us push this initiative along at home as well. Lastly, there will be many humanities focused trips during this school year. During the month of October grade 6 will visit The American Museum of Natural History on October 23rd, 29th and 30th. The 7th grade has the opportunity to attend a set of plays hosted by the Chamber Theatre Productions Company at Brooklyn College on December 12th. and our eighth graders will travel to Ellis Island on 13th as well.

Next Parent Association Meeting and Principal's Report will be on 11/12/14.