



Happenings

Health Sciences Charter School

UPDATE FROM DR. WENDY RICHARDS, HEAD OF SCHOOL

As we embark on a new semester, I have been pondering as to what sets Health Sciences apart from other local high schools. I have come to the conclusion that the word 'family' describes us best. It means partnering with parents, meeting student needs, collaborating with the community, and empowering our teachers to do whatever it takes for our students to be successful.

Families choose Health Sciences, in part, because of the strength that this commitment brings to its diverse community and the dynamic educational environment that it offers. We collectively share a common vision that includes high expectations, lifelong learning, and the importance of family and community involvement in the school.

In a short few weeks, students will be sitting for their January exams. I respectfully ask that you join me and our teachers in doing whatever it takes for your child to be in school, on time, rested, prepared, having completed their homework, and ready to participate and contribute in all of their classes. This unity between home and school will go a long way to ensure the academic success of every student at Health Sciences.

Know that I am always available to meet should you have any questions or concerns about the school or your child.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HEALTH SCIENCES

High Honors and Perfect Attendance: Over 40 students were recognized for academic achievement, leadership, growth, and in some cases perfect attendance at a December 7th luncheon at Roswell Park. Special thanks to board members, Dr. Rick Hershberger and Cynthia Schwartz, for hosting the luncheon. It was a wonderful experience for our students. I continue to hear how much they enjoyed the opportunity to meet a number of the Roswell doctors and staff.

Recent Grants: Thanks to the following foundations for their recent support of Health Sciences: Goodyear Foundation, Marks Family Foundation and WNY Foundation. We are grateful for their support and acknowledgement of the work we do on behalf of our students.

Pep Rally: There was a lot to celebrate on November 21st when the entire school came together to officially kickoff the winter sports season. The high energy and enthusiasm of the Pep Rally has carried over to increased attendance at athletic events by students, staff, and faculty. It is also a great way to meet and greet other parents as well.

Athletic Study Table: All student athletes are required to participate in a mandatory study session at least three times per week for 90 minutes to maintain their grades and strive towards mastery. This important initiative is non-negotiable for all team members and is being led by Rob Baxter, Assistant Principal.

College Visits: Representatives from several colleges have been on campus recently to meet students and talk about their school, admission standards, financial aid, etc. If you have a current junior or senior, please encourage them to take advantage of these opportunities as they work through the college admissions process. Also, it is important that they stay connected with their School Counselor.

Experiential Learning Program: Thanks to the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences at the University at Buffalo, Health Sciences is hosting an exciting after-school program beginning on January 31st. This program will help students develop technical competencies and practical experiences that link their classroom learning to the real world and future careers. Possible projects and competitions include: Science Olympiad, First Robotics, and Imagine Cup.

Bridge Program: To help bridge the college readiness gap, D'Youville College has selected Health Sciences to offer an early college high school program to select students. It aims to integrate health sciences curriculum in order for students to earn a minimum of 24 and up to 60 transferable credits, equivalent to an associate degree, while still in high school and at no cost to them or their families. This extraordinary opportunity will provide students access to various support services and a wide range of faculty and staff to help them achieve their goals. They will also gain hands-on experience through internships and summer programming.

Health Careers Pathway Program: In January 2019, Catholic Health will be launching a new program for select freshman students. This hands-on program will provide students with opportunities to explore and visit various healthcare facilities throughout the year. This exposure will enable the students to see a behind-the-scenes look at future healthcare careers.

Work-Based Learning: Caressa Guerrero, an eight year veteran teacher at Health Sciences, has been named Coordinator for the Work-Based Learning Program. Work-Based Learning offers opportunities and benefits that school-based academic programs typically do not and will be able to motivate, reinforce, and augment student learning in ways not available to traditional classroom instruction.

Mobile Library: Thanks to ELA Teacher Alicia Monaco, the Erie County Library on Wheels will be making monthly visits to Health Sciences. Students will be able to check-out books, movies, music, audiobooks, get a library card, and have questions answered regarding a research project or on a variety of individual needs. The winter dates are January 11th and February 8th.

New Board Members: Three new community leaders have joined the Board of Trustees: Mary E. Farallo, Vice President of Human Resources, Catholic Health; Clement Kwakye, Director of Operations, Community Health Center of Buffalo; and, Dr. Jamie D. Smith, Dean of Liberal Arts, Science & Curriculum, SUNY Erie, State University of New York. Each of these individuals has unique skills and experience that will benefit our students.

NEW YEAR / NEW BEGINNINGS

Attendance: It is well documented that the major contributing factor to the absence of academic achievement is poor attendance on a regular basis. Health Sciences can work with you and your family on coming up with ideas and solutions to assist you and help your child set daily attendance goals, if attending is an issue. At a minimum, **all students should get enough sleep each night; take advantage of the healthy breakfast offered at school; be on time; come to school in uniform and ready to learn; and, attend all advisory and enrichment opportunities.**

Credit Recovery Program: Health Sciences is piloting a new credit recovery program for students who have fallen behind and need to make up credits to advance to the next grade or reach graduation. The self-contained independent study has been designed to supplement the school's existing curriculum and give students a chance to earn credits in subjects they previously failed.

Student Recruitment: If you know of a student who would benefit from the Health Sciences experience, please encourage them to contact the school. Applications for the 2019-20 school year can be found on our website and/or they can call the school at 888-4080 to have one sent to them. Beginning in January, every Tuesday and Thursday, prospective students will have the opportunity to shadow with one of our students and learn firsthand about the school and its culture.

Service Learning: Health Sciences remains committed to students performing 100 hours of service learning throughout their high school experience. This is non-negotiable on the part of the school. It is important that students not fall behind on this required commitment. Students are encouraged to make service learning a priority beginning in their freshman year with the goal of completing 25 hours per year.

REMINDERS

Important Dates:

- **January 26** – Parent Meeting/Dinner (3:00 pm at school)
- **January 21** - No School (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)
- **January 22 to 25** – Regents Exams
- **February 18 to 22** - Mid Winter Recess
- **March 20** – Annual Diversity Dinner
- **April 20 to 28** – Spring Recess
- **June 29** – Graduation

Athletic Events: Also, be sure to check the school's website for upcoming athletic events. It is inspiring to see our teams in action and they always welcome spectators! Go Falcons!

Flu Season: Cold and flu season is upon us; please do not send your child to school if they are sick or running a fever. If that occurs, they can access their work online or contact their teachers by email to avoid falling behind.

School Cancellation: Should we experience inclement weather, closings will be communicated on television, radio, the school's website and the one-call system.

Fast Food: It is the policy of the school that NO fast food of any kind is allowed on campus.

Parent Portal: The portal provides parents with: Up-to-date information on student performance; attendance reports; report cards; progress reports; and, test and assignment grades. For those parents who do not know your username and password, or have never used the portal, please contact Lisa Newell at cio@healthsciencescharterschool.org or call her at **888-4080** to secure your personal information.