



# The Chicago Academy Middle School News

September 11, 2009

## Important Dates

**September 8**  
First Day of School  
All-School Assembly

**September 10**  
Team Building Day

**September 11**  
Town Hall Meeting

**September 17**  
TCA Open House

**September 18**  
All Gym Orders Due

**September 25**  
No School  
Staff Develop. Day

**October 12**  
No School  
Columbus Day

**October 23**  
No School  
Staff Develop. Day

Dear Parents,

This newsletter is your most up-to-date source for TCA Middle School news. In it, you will find information on important upcoming dates, accurate contact information for all middle school teachers, special announcements, and a few words about what's currently happening in every teacher's class. Please look for this newsletter in your child's backpack BIWEEKLY on the last day of the week. We look forward to working with your child and to a successful 2009-2010 school year!

~The TCA Middle School Team

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### Mrs. Kim - 7th & 8th Grade Mathematics

In order to ensure that our students are more successful in high school, the TCA 8<sup>th</sup> graders will use the *Algebra I* textbooks and the 7<sup>th</sup> graders will use *Transition Mathematics*. Both of these textbooks were published by the University of Chicago School Math Project. I am also emphasizing certain studying habits that can greatly benefit the students such as homework completion as well as a daily review of the lessons. I believe that if students were to take notes more seriously it would allow for them to complete homework as well as study more efficiently and with less frustration. Students are also allowed to use their notes for some tests. With better notes, they can be better equipped for these tests. A new option that I will implement this year will be for students to correct their mistakes in order to receive one half point per problem corrected. Make sure students take advantage of these opportunities because it can help to improve grades as well as study habits for their future in high school. Welcome to the new school year of 2009-2010!

### Ms. Sidell - 7th & 8th Grade Language Arts

In a typical week in language arts we will spend two days dedicated to reading and vocabulary only, and two days dedicated to writing and grammar/mechanics only. The remaining day will be a catch up day, quiz/test day, and/or a day for enrichment activities. I will be using reading and writing workshop as my main type of instruction. Usually, students will be taught a short lesson, and then will be asked to apply the lesson to their independent reading or independent writing. We will start the year in reading working on the skills and strategies good readers use. Writing will focus on narrative, specifically writing memoirs. We will also be studying word parts and using context clues in vocabulary. Grammar will begin with a review of parts of speech and an intensive study of subjects and predicates. Homework assignments will vary depending on how well students use their in class time, but students will be expected to read independently nightly. **Research shows that students who exceed on standardized tests read more than two hours a day!** Make sure your son/daughter is reading at home. I look forward to a great school year!

### **Mr. Newman - 7th & 8th Grade Science**

Welcome back! Mr. Newman has had an exciting summer working with a team of paleontologists in Montana. There is lots of work for Science Helpers to clean, preserve, and catalog these finds. Fossils will be exhibited in the 2nd floor display case soon.

This year in science, students will explore a variety of topics: 7th grade students will learn about biology, microscopes, genetics, geology, and paleontology first semester. 8th grade students will learn about environmental science, physics, and chemistry first semester.

All students will complete a Science Fair Project. Projects must be completed by Monday, November 16, when classroom presentations begin. The school fair will be held in early December and will feature the best projects from the classroom presentations. Be on the lookout for more information about Science Fair in the next two weeks.

In other news, Danielle English, a science specialist, will be working as a resident with Mr. Newman this year. Ms. English is excited about the opportunity to explore lots of science topics with Middle School students and commands a strong knowledge of biology and chemistry. Let's welcome Ms. English to our team!

This is shaping up to be another exciting year in science. Please contact Mr. Newman if you have any questions. Thanks!

### **Mr. Value - 7th & 8th Grade Social Studies**

We will study politics, economics, culture, and geography through the lens of American history. 7<sup>th</sup> graders cover First Americans through the Civil War. 8<sup>th</sup> graders cover Reconstruction through Globalization. Our class time will be divided between researching different eras in American history and various inquiry projects. We will use a range of texts and materials for our research, but our main text is the series *A History of US* by Joy Hakim. Inquiry projects will focus on the ten themes of social studies proposed by the National Council for the Social Studies. We will use Bloom's Taxonomy as our framework for accessing and organizing information. Other skills and strategies to be acquired and practiced will be annotating readings, the Cornell note-taking system, the use of Document Based Questions, comparison matrixes, etc. Essays are assigned quarterly. Homework will be assigned nightly. Maintaining a completed homework journal is critical to success in the class. Homework is reviewed daily with opportunities for corrections and revisions. Grades are based on a range of assessments including homework, classroom projects, essays, and exams.



**The next issue will come out  
Thursday, September 24th !  
Look for it!**

## **Contacts:**

\*Alphabetical listing

**Mrs. Baggot**  
kmbaggot@cps.edu

**Mr. Burman**  
*Counselor*  
arburman@cps.edu

**Ms. Cordero**  
aecordero@cps.edu

**Ms. Fleetwood**  
pcfleetwood@cps.edu

**Mr. Iturralde**  
*Principal*  
viturralde@cps.k12.il.us

**Mrs. Kim**  
jjkim@cps.edu

**Mr. Newman**  
odnewman@cps.edu

**Mrs. Miller**  
pkmiller@cps.edu

**Mrs. Siegel**  
jarosenthal@cps.edu

**Ms. Sidell**  
alsidell@cps.edu

**Mrs. Smith**  
npsmith@cps.edu

**Mr. Value**  
brvalue@cps.edu

**Mrs. Walters**  
hawalters@cps.edu

**Dr. Wei**  
*Assistant Principal*  
hhwei@cps.k12.il.us

**Ms. Williams**  
cswilliams@cps.edu

To reach us by phone  
please call the main  
office:

**(773) 534-3885**

## **Mrs. Smith - 6th Grade Mathematics & Science**

**Mathematics** - Sixth graders will continue to use the Everyday Math Program for their math instruction this year. Topics will include data analysis, lots of geometry and algebra, and some interesting ways to multiply and divide big numbers and decimals. Students will have homework nightly as practice in locking in the skills taught in class.

**Science** - Sixth graders will also be participating in the TCA Science Fair this year. All students are expected to develop and present their own projects. To model the process expected for Science Fair, we will be working on a whole class science project at the beginning of the year to help students learn how to form questions and collect measurable data by running experiments. Help your student start thinking about things s/he finds interesting or wants to know more about. A visit to the public library is a great idea to help focus interests.

## **Ms. Cordero - 6th Grade Language Arts & Social Studies**

**Language Arts** - In language arts we will start off the year by writing about our hopes for middle school. The students will be using the writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, proofreading, and publishing) to complete this assignment. Throughout this time students will be reading independently everyday. I will be teaching reading strategies and skills throughout the year using reading workshop. For writing the students will be continuing their practice of expository/informative pieces, while learning more about narrative and persuasive writing. We will also be studying nouns, verbs, adverbs, conjunctions, pronouns, and verb tenses. Homework will be given daily and students are also expected to be reading independently at home.

**Social Studies** - In social studies we will be concentrating on ancient civilizations, which include Egypt, Mesopotamia, Mesoamerica (Aztecs, Incas, and Mayans), Greece, and the Renaissance. In our study of these civilizations we will discuss and explore the many contributions that were made to our society. The students will participate in group projects about the government, economy, and culture of these societies.

## **Mrs. Siegel - Sixth Grade Academic Support Provider**

Welcome back everyone! I am excited to start another year with all of you! This year, I will be teaching students in fourth through seventh grade. Ask me about my trip to Thailand, Malaysia, and Cambodia!! I also would love to hear of your travels this summer.... write me a letter or stop by room 220!

## **Mr. Burman's Counselor's Corner**

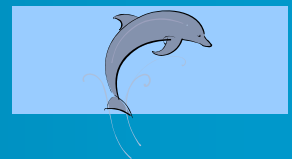
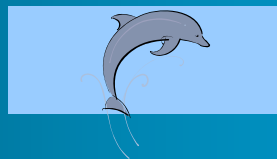
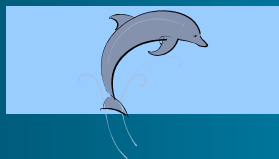
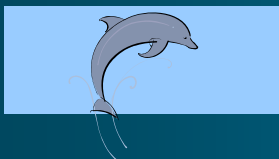
I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome everyone back to school. I hope you are as excited about this school year as I am, and I look forward to working with everyone this school year. My counselor's corner will be a devoted to helping middle school students succeed in school and in their personal lives by offering a network of assistance and support systems. This network extends to parents and staff. Some of the areas I will be writing about will include information about the high school application process, testing information, study skills, as well as other resources for students and their families.

Office location: north side of the building Room 131

Email address: [arburman@cps.edu](mailto:arburman@cps.edu)

Office direct line: (773) 534-3885 Ext. 61825.

Once again, I look forward to seeing and working with everyone this year.



## **Mrs. Baggot - 7th & 8th Grade Academic Support Provider**

I provide academic support for students in 7th and 8th grade at TCA. This means I may pull some students out to work in small groups, or I may go into one of the 7th or 8th grade classrooms to provide academic support. I work with all teachers to ensure that all students get the support they need to be successful in school.

I would like to provide resources for you, as parents, or for the students, so please read my section.

My first article is “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Parents.” I have taken this article from a group of parents from another school who has taken *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens* by Sean Covey and highlighted the following information. For each of the habits, ask yourself “What will this look like in my family?”

### **Habit One: Be Proactive**

- Establish a good relationship with your son/daughter.
- Find opportunities to talk—create open lines of communication.
- Let your kids know that you are there for them.

### **Habit Two: Begin With the End in Mind**

- Ask yourself how you would like your kids to describe your relationship with them.
- Ask yourself how you would want your son or daughter to describe you as a parent and, more importantly, as a person.
- Keep this picture fresh in your mind and use it to guide how you act with them.

### **Habit Three: Put First Things First**

- Remember how important we are to your lives.
- Family has to always come before work.
- If a situation arises when we make you worried and mad, show the worry first.

### **Habit Four: Think Win- Win**

- In solving a problem, how can we do this and both come out on top?
- It is okay to compromise...at times.
- Understand that we have some answers too.

### **Habit Five: Seek First to Understand**

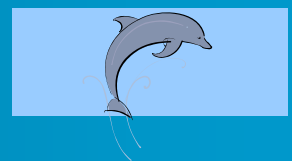
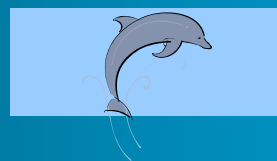
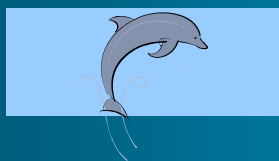
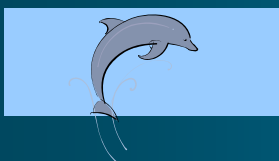
- Don't just judge always by how you view the situation; remember that we may view the situation differently.
- Remember, you were a kid too.
- Before you judge, please listen—truly listen. We may not always be right, but we deserve to be heard.

### **Habit Six: Synergize**

- For “our” relationship, realize that “we” are a part of this.
- It is a sign of strength (not weakness) to ask for help, advice, or guidance (from friends, family, school).

### **Habit Seven: Sharpen the Saw**

- Take the time to work on our relationship.
- Do things just so that it might improve our relationship of parent/kid, or just to have fun together.



### **Ms. Fleetwood - Library**

This grading period, I will be collaborating with the science teachers to prepare students for the CPS Science Fair. I am sad to report that there will be no library card campaign this school year. If your child doesn't have a Chicago Public Library card or it has expired, you may visit any branch for assistance. Having a library card will be necessary for those needing additional resources for their science fair project.



### **Mrs. Miller - Physical Education**

I want to welcome everyone back and remind you of the days you will need to be prepared for class for the first quarter.

Room 206 - Wednesday  
Room 208 - Thursday  
Room 201-Monday and Friday  
Room 203-Tuesday  
Room 205-Wednesday  
Room 207-Thursday

All students are required to wear the Chicago Academy gym clothes and have proper gym shoes. I have sent home the forms with the classroom teachers. All orders are due by **Friday, Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>**. I will not give students time to change for class. They must come prepared to participate. Due to safety, there is absolutely no gum chewing allowed in class. I am looking forward to having a fun-filled year in class! Please come prepared on your gym day so you can have some fun too!

### **Mrs. Walters - Art**

Visual arts are a way to communicate ideas with visual images. It includes drawing, painting, printmaking and sculpture. In art class students will use a variety of materials and techniques to express their own individual ideas. Students will also learn about famous artists and their artwork. I look forward to another great year of creativity and fun with T.C.A.

### **Ms. Williams - Music**

Welcome back, students! I look forward to playing instruments, singing, moving, and learning all about music theory this year. I look forward to having some classes perform in the winter and spring assemblies. More information to come in the next newsletter. I hope that you had an enjoyable summer!

