



Professional Learning Community

"You have to get up to plant the seed and see if it grows, but you can't just wait around. You have to water it and take care of it."- Bootsy Collins

Save the Dates:

- Interim Assessments in Math and LAL: **Tuesday, 3/2; Wednesday, 3/3; Thursday, 3/4**
- Half-Day 12:30 Dismissals: **Wednesday 3/3; Thursday 3/4; Friday 3/5**
- Homework Expectations Workshop for Parents: **Thursday, 3/11 at 6:00pm**
- Parent Workshop on Home-School Partnerships: **Saturday, 3/13 at 10:00 am-12 noon**
- Report Card Distribution and Conferences: **3/19 from 3:15-6:00 pm**
- Black History Month OKRA Dance Presentation: **Thursday 2/24 9:45 for 5th and 6th graders; 10:45 for 7th and 8th graders**
- Parent Council Meeting: **Thursday 3/25 at 6pm.**

Reflective Practice

Self-evaluation and reflection are essential components in the process of learning and development. As a school, we are committed to practice these habits and create ways to seek and receive constructive feedback to support our continued growth. This month, we have provided you with a formal way to evaluate our program here at Pride Academy and your experience so far this year. Please take the opportunity to complete the survey attached to this newsletter and return it to the Main Office.

Your candid and constructive feedback will be shared with the Board of Trustees and with our administration and faculty to help as we reflect on our success and set goals for continued improvement and growth as a school community.

Over the course of this year, our faculty has continued to strengthen as a professional learning community. We are proud of the collaboration and openness to growth that our teachers demonstrate as they work together in grade-level teams and cross-grade level partnerships to share best practices in teaching, utilize assessment data and lesson plans based on the data, and implement classroom management systems and routines. We commend staff members who regularly step up to lead school wide or grade level initiatives and volunteer their time and resources to help to strengthen the community and implement programs to meet the needs of our students.

It takes courage, energy, and initiative to be involved, to share an idea, to suggest a solution to a problem and then to be willing to be part of the solution. In order for a plant to grow, we must take the first step to plant the seeds. In order for it to flourish, we must take care of the seedling and provide it with nourishment.

Our teachers are leaders who have planted strong seeds and we need the help and support of our parents to make these seeds grow even stronger and afford maximum benefit for your children.

We encourage your presence at Parent Council meetings, parent-teacher meetings, workshops, and school events. We are eager to hear your suggestions and ways to work together to address concerns and make improvements.

Some ways that you can do this during the month of March include the following:

- Attend the March Parent Council meeting.
- Complete the Parent Survey and use it as an opportunity to suggest positive school-wide improvements.
- Attend the Homework Expectations and Building Home-School Partnership Workshops scheduled for this month.
- Arrange to attend the 2nd Trimester Report Card Conference evening on March 19th.

Your time and sharing are investments in your children's education and in supporting the growth of our teacher-leaders and strengthening positive and beneficial home-school connections.

2nd Trimester Report Cards

Please make every effort to come to school on Report Conference afternoon on **Friday, March 19th** between **3:30 pm and 6:00 pm** to pick up your child's report card and meet with teachers. In order to encourage parent attendance, we will be holding a raffle. Each parent who attends report card night will receive one chance in the raffle. The lucky winner will receive a gift certificate for a 1-hour massage at Massage Envy. If you are unable to make it, please call your child's teacher to make an alternative day and time. Report cards will not be mailed or sent home with your child. In order to ensure that your meeting is productive, please consider these tips:

- Prepare your questions in advance.
- Let the teachers know what your concerns are and what you feel is important for them to know about how your child learns.
- Ask to look at your child's work.
- Be open-minded in working with the teacher to develop an action plan to help address any concerns that you may have.
- Share your expertise about your child to help the teachers understand how best to work with your child.
- Share any situations that may be going on at home that may be impacting your child's academic performance or behavior.
- Be prepared to hear good news as well as perhaps hearing news that may be disappointing or surprising. Your children's teachers may have insights and knowledge about your child's learning that you may not have heard before. Be open to discussing these calmly and professionally.
- After the conference, be sure to take time to sit down with your child to discuss his/her progress report. Celebrate the good and address the concerns by coming up with a plan to make improvements.

NJASK State Tests!

The month of March is a very important month in the lives of your children and in the life of our school. Important State mandated NJASK tests will be administered to students in grades 5-8 during the months of April and May. You can help support us as we work hard to prepare your children for these tests by doing the following:

Ensure that your child arrives to school on time by 8:00 am, attends school every day, and stays in school until the designated dismissal time.
Ensure that your child completes quality homework assignments every night.
Ensure that your child takes advantage of extra help and tutoring opportunities provided by his/her teachers.

Support the school in reinforcing that your child follows all school rules and does not disrespect the teachers, his/her peers, or in any way disrupt the learning and teaching process.

Suggestions, comments, questions: please contact us at
Phone: (973) 672-3200
<http://www.prideacs.org>

Homework Expectations

In order to support your children's academic success here at Pride Academy, prepare them for their NJASK tests in April/May, and reinforce study skill and habits that they will need for high school and beyond, we are preparing to implement a heightened focus on consistent completion of EXCELLENT homework. Our Homework Plan will incorporate rewards to celebrate students who choose to meet our high expectations for homework production, and also, serve to hold students accountable when they choose not to complete homework or when they choose to put mediocre effort into completing their homework.

TEAM HOMEWORK CHALLENGE: When ALL students in an entire team complete EXCELLENT QUALITY homework each night that it is assigned in ALL subjects for an entire week, all the students in that team will earn a dress down day for meeting this team-wide homework challenge. On the back of this page, please read the criteria for what an excellent homework assignment looks like and the level of EFFORT that is required.

Students who do not complete their homework or who put mediocre effort into doing their homework on a daily basis in Math and Language Arts will receive Homework Accountability on the day that the homework assignments are missed or incomplete. Attendance at Homework Accountability is mandatory, and failure to appear will result in disciplinary consequences, up to and including parent-teacher/administrator conferences, Saturday Accountability, and Suspension (depending on the frequency and number of missed Homework Accountabilities). Homework Accountability will be held from 4-5pm **on the day** that the homework is missed or incomplete, and will take priority over participation in all other after school activities. Students who catch the Orange and East Orange buses will also be expected to attend Homework Accountability sessions **on the day** of the missed or incomplete homework and parents will be requested to arrange for alternative means of transportation when accountability is over at 5pm.

How Can You Help Your Child Meet His/Her Homework Expectations?

- Check that your child completes their homework in EVERY subject EVERY night and that their homework assignments meet our expectations for EXCELLENT work (please see the back of this page for our standards).
- Sign your child's Homework Agenda AFTER you check that the homework assignments have been completed fully and are of an excellent quality.
- Attend our Homework Expectations Workshop on THURSDAY < MARCH 11th at 6:00pm.
- Support the school policy if your child receives Homework Accountability and work with your child to avoid receiving these accountabilities.

Our Pride Scholars are BRILLIANT and we support them in choosing every opportunity to let their brilliance shine!



Pride Academy Website News!

The Pride website www.prideacs.org now has two pages that students, parents, and staff in the Pride community can use to stay informed and learn about events at Pride. The [Event Calendar](#) is a calendar of upcoming events at Pride including dates and times of special student events, parent council and board meetings, important exams, holidays and school closings. The [Event Calendar](#) is helpful for seeing what's coming up this week or for planning ahead over the coming months. Click on the [Event Calendar](#) button on the right hand side of the Pride website to view the calendar. The '[Feel the Pride](#)' news blog has articles of general interest giving information about student accomplishments, opportunities for parent involvement, and the programs and initiatives that the Pride faculty is using to enhance education. New articles will be regularly added to the blog to keep you informed and share our news. Click on the [News](#) button on the right hand side of the Pride website to view the news blog.

Keeping informed helps to build strong home-school partnerships!