



Highlights of Community School District 5 Harlem Schools

Special points of Interest:

- TCCS—Winterfest
- Native American Guests at CS 154
- PS 30 Student Voices on Accountable Talk
- PS 161 Presents “The Little Mermaid”
- Marvin Maurer Spotlight Dawn Decosta (PS 318)
- Cooking Competition at New Tech (MS 410)
- Talent Show at RLA
- Great Attendance Equals College Readiness

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Superintendent’s Message

“America’s future will be determined by the home and the school. The child becomes largely what he is taught; hence we must watch what we teach, and how we live.” Jane Addams (Sociologist, Author, and Social Worker)

As a community school district, it is important to help our children understand the importance and value of going to school regularly. Attendance is an important factor for a child to perform well in school and also later on in life. As a parent, you can help us improve the educational outcomes for your child by sending him/her to school every day. When children are excited about going to school, their enthusiasm will definitely help to motivate them to perform at their optimum.

Our community schools have personnel to assist you, should you have difficulty in getting your child to school each day. For example, most schools offer incentives to improve attendance, or programs to assist with students who suffer from chronic illnesses. Schools also have attendance teams, which include the principal, social worker, guidance counselor, attendance representative, school nurse, and parent coordinator to assist you with any related issues. They can help address attendance challenges affecting students and also support you in better understanding the importance of attendance.

For example, the team could arrange for daily wake up calls, signed attendance contracts, or arrange for a buddy system to assist families. The NYC Department of Education has partnered with **Attendance Works**, a non-profit organization, which offer additional tools to help families. Please visit their website at www.attendanceworks.org to learn more.

Please continue to help District 5 *make every day count* for our children. Together, our children can and will succeed as we prepare them to meet the rigorous demands of the 21st century, by instilling personal habits of success in them – starting with good attendance. We are here to assist you in laying the foundation for each child’s success, which will enhance their performance both in college and in their future careers.

“One Village, One Community, One Voice.”

Gale



Community Superintendent Gale Reeves

**Great Attendance Equals
College & Career Readiness**

Number of Days Absent	Attendance Rate	Instructional Time Loss in Months	Instructional Time Loss in Hours
9	95%	1/2 Month	49.5 hours
18	90%	1 Month	99 hours
27	85%	1 1/2 Month	148.5 hours
37	80%	2 Months	203.5 hours
46	75%	2 1/2 Months	253 hours
55	70%	3 Months	302 hours
64	65%	3 1/2 Months	352 hours
73	60%	4 Months	401.5 hours



Warning: below the 90% range places your child at risk of repeating the grade.



District 5 Upcoming Events



- ◆ *Districtwide SLT Training—March 16th*
- ◆ *Super Saturday! STEM Expo—May 16th*
- ◆ *District wide Spelling Bee—June 3rd*
- ◆ *Family Day—June 13th*

Please spread the word and encourage families to attend.

Thank You

CEC for your generous donation of the wireless speaker system to District 5. It's deeply appreciated.

Gale Reeves, Superintendent

Native American Guests at CS 154

By Kiara Usher Jackson and Angel Gomez, Grade 4

On November 17, 2014, two guests from the Red Hawk Native American Arts Council came to the media center of our school. They talked with our fourth grade class about the Haudenosanee people aka the Iroquois. They taught us about their traditional clothing. They dress in certain ways, like the males wear head pieces, metal arm bands, moccasins and also wampum. They didn't use wampum for money until the European settlers arrived. The women wear fur shoes, hats and coats.

One visitor told us a story about the Native American flute, and played a beautiful tune for us. The story was about a boy who liked this girl, but she didn't like him, so his grandfather gave the boy a flute and, he played a song for her. The visitors also told us about the Native American drumbeat. In the longhouses, they hold celebrations, and the beat they dance to is like the heartbeat of the Earth. The different dances the visitors performed were, smoke dance, robin dance, and hoop dance. They even taught us the stomp dance. We learned a lot.



Student Voices on Accountable Talk!

By Caroline Carrasquillo, Lesley Santiago, & Javin Vega (Grade 5 students)
Interviews by Sasha Claxton-St. Louis & Quri Robles (Grade 3 students)

If you want information about Accountable Talk this article will inform you about it and maybe even persuade you to use it in your school. Accountable Talk is when you share your ideas with others and use prompts (called stems) to help get more ideas. As Ms. Johnson, Assistant Principal, said, “Accountable Talk means paraphrasing what someone has said and adding on...It brings your level of language to a higher standard.”



PS 30M is using Accountable Talk in all classrooms and in all subjects and we highly recommend it! We recommend it because in every subject it helps to find more complex answers with inferences faster because when somebody has the right answer you can build on what they said to get a whole answer that is correct.



5th Grade Students doing Accountable Talk Research.

Inference has to come from your head so when you hear an answer from a student and you build on it then you can build to your own thoughtful answer.

In order for you to understand how Accountable Talk works in our school we did research by touring the classroom of Ms. Brown, a second grade teacher, and we will now report our findings. In Ms. Brown’s classroom there are Accountable Talk stems all over the room. They are in different areas: the Math, Science, Social Studies area, and the ELA stems take up the whole space above the chalkboard. And, there are Accountable Talk stems on each student’s desk so they can use them while talking in groups.

So, this is how Accountable Talk works: when a student hears what his classmate says he will get the gist. Then the student can look at the Accountable Talk stems on the wall and use one of the stems, which include “can you restate...”, “can you tell me where you found your evidence...” and “I would like to add on...” This helps the students burrow into the answer because their brain gains more knowledge through listening and talking. They also burrow because every time they use the stems they are drilling how to talk to each other and how to think. They are also burrowing into the knowledge because the Accountable Talk helps them focus on the topic.

Accountable Talk helps students to listen. As Ms. Ibroci, Reading Recovery Teacher, said, “...not only are you a speaker but you are a listener...you have to listen to your teacher or your friends and build on what they say.”

We interviewed Ms. Brown and three of her students about Accountable Talk in their classroom. Ms. Brown said, “Accountable Talk is important because it allows students to have deeper discussions, to agree or disagree and it allows other students to listen in because in order to agree or disagree you have to listen to what the student is saying.”

Continued from page 4—PS 30—Accountable talk

When we interviewed her students in the library, Lyric Malloy said: “[It] helps you to not all talk at once because you have to listen...When somebody wants to talk they have to listen first so they can add on or agree or disagree.” Lyric is almost thinking the same thing as Ms. Brown about how Accountable Talk helps students listen and then agree or disagree or add on.

A lot of people we interviewed said the same thing about Accountable Talk: it helps students listen in order to agree and disagree and it helps students focus on the topic. We hope this article helps you so when your students are talking to each other they can share their ideas instead of just raising their hands and calling out in class. We highly recommend Accountable Talk because it helps us to get to a higher level of speaking, listening, and knowledge.

We met with Ms. Stinson, our principal, after she read this article and she gave us her reflection on what we wrote. Ms. Stinson said she is proud that this article was written in student voice. She also liked how we gathered our information. Lastly Ms. Stinson liked the way we wrote that we ‘highly recommend Accountable Talk because it is about a best practice at PS 30M.

Marvin Maurer Spotlight – Dawn DeCosta (Thurgood Marshall Lower School)

Congratulations to Dawn Decosta, Principal of the Thurgood Marshall Academy Lower School and the winner of the 2014 Marvin Maurer Spotlight. Dawn DeCosta has been an educator for more than 20 years. After spending 2 years teaching pre-school, and 15 years in the New York City Schools system, she was appointed as Principal of Thurgood Marshall Academy Lower School in 2011.

Dawn has consistently opened her school’s doors to The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, and truly embodies what RULER should be—an approach that touches everyone, without exception. She has made herself available to support the RULER training program by sharing her RULER experiences with others, actively recruiting parents, and encouraging individuals to adopt the RULER method. Over the last few years, Dawn rolled out RULER throughout Thurgood Marshall Academy Lower School, including parent training, and she has inspired her entire community to engage in self-awareness practices daily!

Testimonial

“Dawn DeCosta is an outstanding school leader. She is a stellar human being with a warm smile for everyone she meets! Dawn is a visionary and innovator in her community, a compassionate and reflective educator, a transformative and inspiring leader.”



Teen Chopped @ New Tech

On Friday, January 30th, a bleak and blustery snowy day, eight eighth grade students came alive as they competed in a culminating cooking competition entitled "Teen Chopped @ New Tech". After completing two marking periods of nutrition, students were able to put their knowledge and skills of healthy eating to the ultimate test. Modeled after the successful television show on the Television Food Network, students worked in teams and competed against one another to prepare healthy meals in three rounds: breakfast, snacks and smoothies. At the end of each round, teams faced the judges and their comments on the dreaded chopping block. Students looked forward to this event for weeks. Despite being a competition, the event inspired creativity and camaraderie.



Teen Chopped was a huge success and taught students skills that go beyond the classroom. Please check out the photos. Perhaps you too will be inspired!



Teachers College Community School Proudly Presents... Winterfest



Teachers College Community School parents, students and staff celebrate the holiday season with arts and crafts and performances at Winterfest.

On Saturday, December 13th, Teachers College Community School hosted its first ever Winterfest! Winterfest was a winter extravaganza that included: a potluck dinner, arts and crafts, student displays of art and cultural performances. At Winterfest, students demonstrated their oratory skills by presenting the historical and cultural significance of Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, Christmas and Three Kings holidays in 5 minute vignettes. After the cultural performances, students in 1st grade brought the house down by singing “Best Day of My Life”. 2nd grade students enthusiastically sang, “Living in New York City”, and other holiday tunes. The audience clapped their hands and stomped their feet to encourage the students to shine. At the end of the performance, the 3rd grade Strings class took to the stage to perform, “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” and “Jingle Bells”. The hard work and dedication of the students was evident under the direction of Ms. Tammy Yi, who led the strings class to musical excellence!

The success of this event is credited to the parents, students and staff at Teachers College Community School. The Winterfest committee worked tirelessly to ensure a great time for all. Great Job Teachers College Community School! We look forward to next year’s Winterfest!

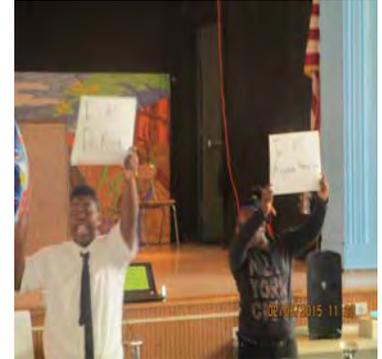


Students in 2nd grade work hard to create awesome gingerbread displays using crafts.

TALENT SHOW AT Renaissance Leadership Academy (IS 286)



On February 6, Renaissance Leadership Academy hosted its very 1st student lead talent show. Performances included singing, dancing, stepping, guitar playing and the performance of the play *Anasi the Spider* by our 6th grade Scholars.



A group of students approached RLA Principal, Melisha Jackman, for a talent show. When asked why, students made a good case. They wanted to have an event that would bring students together,

help students express themselves through their talents and have fun. After some consideration Ms. Jackman told them that if they wanted a talent show, they would have to run it.

The students took the challenge and called themselves the RLA Eagle All Stars. These young ladies, with the assistance from school administrators, organized the whole event from beginning to end. They created and distributed flyers, made presentations to all classes about the event, held auditions and dress rehearsals all while choreographing their own performances.



The event was hosted by 7th grade student Jasmine Brann and Principal Ms. Jackman. It opened with the performance of the 6th grade drama students performing the play *"Anasi the Spider"*, followed by 7th and 8th grade students performing a powerful skit in honor of Black History Month, *"Change is Gonna Come."* By the end of the skit, the energy was nothing less than electrifying.



Other performances included a duo who played the guitar and sang *Stay With Me* by Sam Smith, 6th grade student who did an acappella to *Skyfall* by Adele, 6th grade young lady who sang *"Let it Go"* from the Frozen Soundtrack, a young man who sang Michael

Jackson's *"I Want You Back"*, the RLA Eagle Steppers and the RLA Eagle All Stars also performed their choreography. During this event the winner of the RLA Contest was also announced. She was awarded the opportunity to be Principal for the Day and two (2) tickets to see a basketball game.



RLA wants to thank all the members of the student body, faculty, and parents who collaborated to make this event a great success. Special thanks to Mr. Mayers and the RLA Crew for the wonderful art scenery, Ms. Steele (Math Teacher) for leading the Steppers, Ms. Jones (Drama teacher) for coordinating the play, Mr. Wilson (Para), 8th grade student Jamil William for coordinating the music, 8th grade students, Jordan Mejia for creating the program, Mishel Agustin and Ileana Smith, for taking pictures of the event, and 6th grade parent, Larry Spann for video production. This might be RLA's 1st student led talent show but it will definitely not be our last.



PS 161 Theatre Arts—*The Little Mermaid*

It began with a vision brought to PS 161 four and a half years ago, when PS 161 Principal Pamela Price and City College theater professors Jennifer Katona and Sobha Kavanakudiyil realized that the neighboring institutions should be working together. Over the years, the partnership has grown into our fall musical, one of the major highlights of our year and the pride of our fine arts department.

Musical Theater takes discipline, focus and many hours of patient rehearsal. Through the work of CCNY grad students, PS 161 teachers and over fifty middle schoolers, we have raised the standard of arts in our building with this electrifying tradition. Theater is alive at 161, and for our school culture it has been uniquely transformative.

8th grader Mariah Morales is just one of many students in the cast who have grown up in the PS 161 theater. Having performed in every musical at PS 161, Mariah set out to recruit more students than ever this year. This year, she deliciously took on Ursula the evil sea witch. In all moments, she leads the cast as a positive role model and student leader.



Rehearsals are more than just a time to work on the show. At PS 161, the theater rehearsals, which run for two and a half hours afterschool every Tuesday through Thursday for the entire fall, are about rehearsing skills for life. Students in our fall musical learn to collaborate as they form an ensemble, to innovate as they solve problems, and persevere as they encounter obstacles. The greatest reward is the process itself.



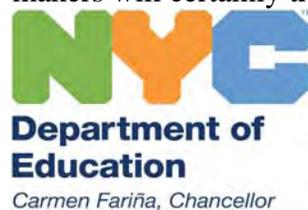
On the day of the show, the students are in costume and bursting with opening night jitters. Hundreds of community members, family and friends pack into the school cafeteria for the pre-show potluck, and eventually into the theater for a full house performance.

When the students are on stage and hear the applause of the audience, they can't help but smile. The parents cheer and groove in their seats as they witness their children handling the numerous challenges of putting on a musical.



The Little Mermaid marked our highest-attended arts event yet, and our whole community eagerly awaits next year's production. *Mermaid* will be hard to top, but the PS 161 and City College theater-makers will certainly try.

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