

Middle School Parents' Association March 2009 Newsletter

Hello, MS Parents:

Although this is a short school month, there is plenty going on. Please look over the following newsletter carefully as there is plenty of much needed information. We hope everyone has a restful Spring Break and comes back to school ready for spring! We would like to add a special thanks to the Faculty Appreciation crew who helped make the February luncheon so wonderful and delicious. The staff truly appreciates your efforts!

On another note, you must all be aware by now, of the tragic incident involving Elizabeth Mun, the eleventh grader from Concord Academy. This sad event provides an opportunity for the BB&N Community to make sure our students know we are there for them. As parents, we show our concern for student safety by being a part of the Safe Home Initiative. Like our peer schools, including Winsor, Belmont Hill, and Roxbury Latin, BB&N has established a Safe House program at both the Upper and Middle Schools.

Directors Jack Knapp and Mary Dolbear have strongly endorsed this initiative as a way to promote the safety of our students at an age when risky behavior can become a serious issue. This program is an agreement by parents hosting a gathering on their private property to be present to chaperone, to prohibit the use of alcohol and/or drugs, and to secure any firearms. This agreement is viewed as an important means of promoting health, safety, and open communications among BB&N parents and students. [Click Here](#) for information about the Safe House Program. You will also be receiving this form in the mail in the coming week. Please return it as soon as you can.

Sincerely,

Amy Sucoff, Laura Nevill, Catherine Mandile, and Lucia Marshall

WHAT'S GOING ON THIS MONTH?

Friday/Saturday, March 6 & 7

[Upper School Winter Musical: *Babes in Arms*](#)

Friday, March 6 and Monday, March 9

8th Grade Exams - Please see info at end of newsletter!

Monday, March 9

Spring Sports Begin - Dismissal Procedures were emailed on Friday, February 27.

Friday, March 13 – Sunday, April 12
Read-A-Thon

This is the Middle School's second annual Read-A-Thon. This will occur during the first two weeks after Spring Break. Students will receive credit for reading books and double credit for reading books written by Lois Lowry. She will be speaking at the Middle School on April 17 and signing books. The handful of students that read the most during the Read-A-Thon will be awarded with lunching with Lois Lowry. If you have any questions, please contact Beth Brooks at beth_brooks@bbns.org.

Thursday, April 2

Middle School Parent Social - 7:00 pm - 46 Belmont Street, Watertown

Please join other Middle School parents for a chance to mingle and connect with other Middle School parents at the BB&N new offices. The social in the fall was a big hit and we hope you join us! The invitation is in the mail! You can RSVP to Amy Sucoff at amyandy@comcast.net.

Thursday, April 16

Faculty Appreciation Lunch-11:30 am

Calling all chefs, bakers, and/or set-up/clean-up volunteers! Please help bring or create something delicious for our faculty and staff. We truly appreciate their efforts and they thoroughly enjoy and appreciate the meals we provide. If you are interested in helping, please contact Shannon Hayden at shannon_hayden@verizon.net or Jocelyn Sand at jhsand@aol.com.

Tuesday, April 7

Freedom From Chemical Dependency Parent Night-7:00pm-MS

Information to follow.

HELPING YOUR 8TH GRADER WITH EXAMS

Your 8th grade student will be taking MS exams on Friday, March 6th and Monday, March 9th. History and math will be given on Friday, and science and foreign language will be given on Monday. There is no exam in English; students recently completed an end-of-project paper on *To Kill a Mockingbird* that takes the place of a written exam.

For our students, exams offer good practice in preparing and mastering material, taking cumulative tests, and working productively over a longer stretch of time. They also present a great opportunity for 8th graders to assess their study skills, learn more about their areas of strength, and identify areas of challenge before they move on to the Upper School. Middle School exams are given primarily to provide experience and represent a small portion of students' second semester grade.

In several exam preparations sessions, your students have received handouts to help guide them in the studying process. These include calendars for planning, general study tips, and study tips by subject area. Over the next week, each department will conduct review sessions in class, and depending on your child's specific teachers, there may be additional review time scheduled. On Wednesday,

March 4th, all departments will hold a Review Session between 1:00 and 2:00 pm. Students can attend different department sessions during this Review, but should be encouraged to attend those they consider most important for their exam preparation.

Some 8th graders may experience anxiety around exams. Students will receive class-specific and general information to help minimize their worry, but here are a few ideas you can reinforce at home:

- Students should remember to eat and sleep well before coming to school. Breaks and lunch are regularly scheduled, and students should bring small snacks to eat in between tests to keep up their energy.
- Students should pay close attention to teacher instructions regarding calculator use and any additional materials allowed in the exam.
- Help your student stick to a study schedule that allows for 1-2 hour review sessions for each subject followed by shorter spot reviews for clarification. Planning ahead for these longer study sessions should begin as soon as possible. Make sure your students take sufficient breaks, and even exercise, to re-energize their brains for more study time.
- Overall, the most important things you can do are provide encouragement, make sure your students are aware of the expectations for each exam, ensure they have sufficient sleep, and help them stay calm.

Following is the schedule for Friday the 6th and Monday the 9th. All exams will be administered in the Big Room. Please pay close attention to check-in and dismissal times.

Friday 3/6

Check-in by 8:15

8:30-10:00 (History exam)

10:00-12:00 (Break, study, lunch)

12:00-1:30 (Math exam)

1:50 Dismissal (No Sports)

Monday, 3/9

Check-in by 8:15

8:30-10:00 (Science exam)

10:00-12:00 (Break, study, lunch)

12:00-1:30 (Foreign Language) exam)

3:40 Dismissal (1st Day of Spring Sports)

Please contact Deirdre Savarese, Academic Support Specialist, with any questions at 617-800-2369 or deirdre_savarese@bbns.org.