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Urban Science Academy’s Quarterly Family Newsletter

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August 2016, Issue 1

# WHAT’S FLY @ URBANSCIENCE

*HEADMASTER’S MESSAGE*

Dear USA Families:

It is hard to believe that the new school year is right around the corner. Our staff; most of whom have spent the summer devoting countless hours engaged in professional development, curriculum planning, designing new programs, customizing student schedules, and/or planning community building events; look forward to the arrival of your children on Thursday, September 8th.

As always, our staff’s commitment to you is that we will continue to strive to do whatever it takes to “do right by your child.”  On behalf of our dedicated faculty and staff, I look forward to partnering with you to support this endeavor.

Your partnership in this work is welcomed and essential to ensuring that all of our students ultimately leave us prepared for success in college and career.

I am thrilled to introduce several new staff to the USA family. They include Olinka Briceno (Coordinator of Engagement & Student Affairs), Luella Carter (Social Worker), Alicia Copeland (Special Education Instructional Support), Gloria Jones (Secretary); as well as several new teachers including Ernest Coakley (Science), Adrian Headley (Humanities), Jane Leone (Humanities), Erin Wilson (World Language), Lorraine Cioffi (Humanities), Farida Doherty (Humanities), Jean Petit-Frere (Mathematics), Calvin Beckett (Theater), and Evens Chamblin (Mathematics).

Please see page three of this newsletter to learn more about some of the newest additions to the USA faculty and staff.

Other new exciting developments include USA receiving a $75,000 grant that will allow the school to offer a Computer Science Pathway program for our students that will prepare those who are interested for a future career in the computer and information technology industry. The Computer Science Pathway curriculum consists of a three-year sequence of courses (Technology Literacy, Exploring Computer Science, and AP Computer Science Principles) where students will learn the fundamental concepts and terminology of software application development and develop skills in designing and writing simple computer programs. The introductory course (Exploring Computer Science) assumes no programming background and provides an overview of the software development process in addition to introducing important programming constructs and methodologies. A significant portion of the grant will fund a new state of the art computer lab, a 3D printer, a SMART Board, and 15 robotic kits. See page 4 for more info about USA’s new Computer Science Pathway program.

Finally, page 9 of this newsletter includes reminders of upcoming events, what students should bring to school in order to be prepared beginning on day one, a list of new course/program offerings, important policies, and a reminder about our Summer Reading Assignment.

I hope to meet you in person during our first monthly Headmaster/ Assistant Headmaster Coffee Hour on Thursday, September 15th (7:30 – 8:30AM) in the library.  If not then, I hope to see you at our Back to School Night on Thursday, September 29th (6:00 – 8:00PM).  In the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.  I can be reached at 617-635-8930 (o), 617-652-0591(c) and/or at [JCook@urbansci.net](mailto:JCook@urbansci.net).

Sincerely,

Jeffrey S. Cook,

Headmaster



Jeffrey S. Cook

Headmaster

Jeffrey S. Cook

Headmaster

Jeffrey S. Cook

Headmaster

# Headmaster’s Message Continues

**Fall Sports Info**

For all those interested in participating on a Raiders athletic team this fall, please contact the coach of the team you want to be a part of. Their contact info is below. While all sports besides football start in September, practice for football begins the last week of August.

Derek Wright, Head Football Coach  [dwright3@boston.k12.ma.us](mailto:dwright3@boston.k12.ma.us)

Kirk Womack, Assistant Football Coach  [kwomack@urbansci.net](mailto:kwomack@urbansci.net)

Jacky Ismeus, Boys Soccer Coach jismeus@urbansci.net

Edner Cayemite, Girls Soccer Coach  [ecayemite@boston.k12.ma.us](mailto:ecayemite@boston.k12.ma.us)

Modesto Gomes, Girls Volleyball Coach  [mgomes@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:mgomes@bostonpublicschools.org)

**MEET OUR NEWEST STAFF & FACULTY**



**STAFF:**

Olinka Briceno (Coordinator of Engagement & Student Affairs), Luella Carter (Social Worker), Alicia Copeland (Special Education Instructional Support), Gloria Jones (Secretary)

**FACULTY:**

Ernest Coakley (Science), Adrian Headley (Humanities), Jane Leone (Humanities), Erin Wilson (World Language), Lorraine Cioffi (Humanities), Farida Doherty (Humanities), Jean Petit-Frere (Mathematics), Calvin Beckett (Theater), and Evens Chamblin (Mathematics).



**NEW COURSES OFFERED AT URBAN SCIENCE ACADEMY**

ONE GOAL –

BIO-MEDICAL -

RESTORATIVE JUSTIE -

**Student Activity Fee**

**The School Site Council approved the $ 10 activity fee. This fee will offset the cost of students’ activities, field trips and community wide celebrations. It will also include the locker fee. Every student is expected to pay this fee by the end of October.**

**The fee for seniors is $60 or $140 for graduation related expenses. Seniors do not need to pay the additional student activity fee. More information will be available at the first senior meeting. Any questions or hardship could be directed to Ms. Briceno at** [**Obriceno@urbansci.net**](mailto:Obriceno@urbansci.net) **or Mr. Cook** [**Jcook@urbansci.net**](mailto:Jcook@urbansci.net) **or Tel: 617-942-1817.**

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Students will need a three-ring binder with lined paper. Depending on student preference, they can have a small three-ring binder for each course or one large three-ring binder (with dividers) that can accommodate handouts from all of their classes. In addition to binder(s), students will want to obtain an ample amount of folders, pencil, pens, and highlighters.

Although, it is recommended that students have a graphing calculator and computer to keep at home it is not a requirement, as teachers will provide them when necessary for use during class. Lastly, agenda books will be provided by the school.

**Humanities Summer Reading Assignment**

**Students were assigned Summer Reading Assignments that are due on Thursday,**

**September 8th. Students were given handouts**

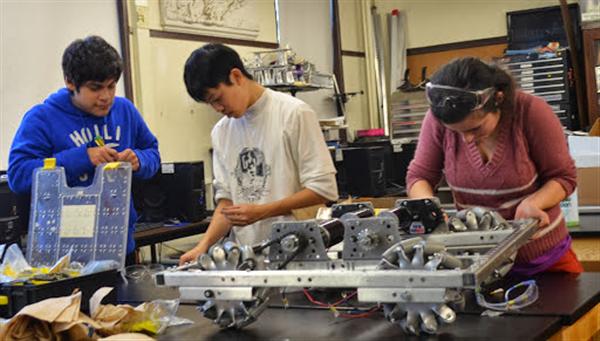
**Describing these assignments in June.**

**The handouts with directions for these**

**assignments can also be found at urbansci.com.**



**URBAN SCIENCE ACADEMY’S COMPUTER SCIENCE PATHWAY PROGRAM**

**This upcoming year USA student’s will have the wonderful opportunity to develop and master skills for a future career in the computer and information technology industry. Student will have access to a state of the art computer lab, 3D printing and Robotics Kits. **

**The Computer Science Pathway Program will support career and technical education that prepares USA students both for postsecondary education and the careers of their choice. For more information or to schedule a tour of USA’s new Computer Science Pathway Program feel free to call Ms. Briceno Tel: 617-942-1817.**



**Urban Science Academy Attendance Policy**

**Effective School Year 2016-2017**

**Introduction:**

**Wanted: All Students in Every Class On Time Everyday!** Effective for this school year, USA’s attendance policy has been revised to in part send the message that outstanding attendance is not only required but also expected, as we know that academic success and consistent attendance (90% or greater) go hand-in-hand.

**Attendance Policy:**

Only absences caused by illness/injury that prevent the student from attending school, a death in the immediate family or other significant personal or family crisis, medical or psychological appointments that cannot be scheduled at other times, court appearances, religious holy days, or college campus visits (verified by a college admissions official) may be excused. Providing that a note **within seven school days** is submitted from a parent/guardian, which includes date of absent, reason for absence, a phone number where a parent/guardian could be reached and the parent/guardian’s signature an absence will be excused. **If an illness or injury prevents a student from attending school for five or more consecutive days, a note from a health care provider documenting the health problem or hospitalization must be attached to the parents’ note for the absence to be excused.** Official documentation of absences should be provided to Ms. Jones in the Main Office or homeroom teacher. **Again,** **the note must be received within seven school days after absence.**

Students with more than three unexcused absences per term will receive a grade of NC if they are otherwise passing a class. A grade of NC will only be changed back to the letter grade earned if a student has less than 12 unexcused absences at the end of the year or passes the course’s final exam.

**\*Note that three unexcused tardies is equal to one unexcused absence.**

**Urban Science Academy Attendance Policy**

**Effective School Year 2016-22017**

**Attendance “Buy-Back” Policy:**

Students with unexcused absences can “buy” them back by doing the following:

**1) Being on time for five CONSECUTIVE days and having no behavioral issues.**

All teachers will sign-off on an “Attendance Buy-Back” form and meet with the student on the Friday of the end of the buy-back week to show the growth that has been shown by a student to show how well they do when they are in school/class consistently.

**Students who accomplish this feat will be able to “buy back” one unexcused absence.**

**2) Participating in the After-School Program**

Teachers who work with you after school will sign off on an “Attendance Buy-Back” form. Students can “buy back” one unexcused absence for every three After-School Program days they attend.

**Tardiness to Class**

If you are tardy to class, meaning **you are not in your seat by the end of the bell*****after being marked present for the day***, you must follow the steps below to make up the learning time you missed.  Below you will find the steps followed and consequences for tardies.  Notes that the number of tardies will reset every term.

**First Tardy**

1. Sign in on the tardy sheet
2. Write the time you arrived to class
3. Record the total class time you missed

**Second Tardy**

1. Sign in on the tardy sheet
2. Write the time you arrived to class
3. Record the total class time you missed
4. Write a few sentences in the appropriate place explaining why you were late.

**Third Tardy**

1. Sign in on the tardy sheet
2. Write the time you arrived to class
3. Record the total class time you missed
4. Write a few sentences explaining why you were late.
5. You will serve a 30 minute detention\* with your teacher.
6. Teacher will notify parent or caregiver of repeated tardies.

**USA’s Grading & Assessment Policy:**

**Performance Based Learning 2.0**

**Overview:**

The Urban Science Academy’s faculty and staff are dedicated to preparing all students for success in college and the workforce through rigorous instruction and high academic and behavioral expectations, with a focus on fairness and equity.  A hallmark of Urban Science Academy is the staff and faculty’s commitment to collaborating, constantly improving practices in order to better support our students as they strive to meet our high expectations. It was in this spirit that beginning in the 2012-13 academic year the school implemented Performance-Based Grading (PBG).  The change sought to better evaluate students’ academic performances in a manner that was more accurate, fair, consistent, meaningful, and supportive of learning.  With any new initiative, it is important to reflect on its strengths and weaknesses.  Such reflection has occurred with the aid of focus groups and surveys that involved staff, students, and families.  It is with this reflection and feedback in mind that Performance Based Learning 2.0 (PBL 2.0) was developed. PBL 2.0 represents a significant revision to PBG and will be implemented effective in SY 2014-2015.

**Hallmarks of PBL 2.0**

- Students will be holistically assessed with an emphasis placed on growth pertaining to scholarly habits, academic skills, and content area understanding.

- As a part of considering overall performance--in addition to being provided with feedback and grades on summative assessments (quizzes, tests, labs, debates, exhibitions, projects, essays)--students **will be provided with explicit feedback and grades on scholarly habits** (homework, organization, preparedness, participation, active learning, note-taking, etc.). Since students were not formally graded on their scholarly habits, many students wrongly perceived that the school did not value scholarly habits.  Although this could not be further from the truth, PBL 2.0 has been designed to drive home the message to students that scholarly habit development is as important as their growth in academics.

- Opportunities for Re-Learning (Retakes): Retakes, which were a hallmark of PBG, will remain an integral component of PBL 2.0; albeit with significant changes described below.  After all, we know that we learn most from our mistakes.  A commonsense “Retake” policy encourages students to embrace teacher feedback and learn from their mistakes so they ultimately grow as learners.



**Upcoming Events**

**- 9th Grade Student Orientation ~** Monday, August 29 – Wednesday, August 31 (8:00 – 11:30pm)

**- New Family Welcome Session ~** Monday, August 29 (8:00 – 11:30AM)

**1st Day of School for All Students ~** Thursday, September 8 (7:20 – 1:40PM)

**- Headmaster & Assistant** **Headmaster Meet & Greet ~** Thursday, September 15, (7:30-8:30AM Library)

**- USA After School Programs Begins ~** Monday, September 19 (2:00 – 3:30 PM every Monday, Wednesday, & Thursday)

**- Back to School Night/Parent Council Elections ~** Thursday, September 29, (6:00 – 8:00 PM, Library)

**- Roslindale Parade, October 2,** (11:30-2:30pm, Roslindale Square)

**- College Night (For ALL Students & Families) ~** Thursday, October 13 (6:00 – 8:00 PM, Bolling Building, 2300 Washington St, Roxbury, MA 02119)

**Guidelines for Retakes**

***Students will be given a two-week period from the time an assignment is returned to complete retakes.***  Students will *only have the opportunity to retake assessments if they demonstrate effort on an initial summative assessment* and fall short in an area(s)/learning target.

Prior to taking a retake, students will be ***required*** to do the following:

* Meet with their teacher to review feedback and engage in re-learning.
* Complete additional practice in the area/learning target in which they struggled.
* Schedule a date and time to retake the assessment.

Teachers will implement PBL 2.0 with much greater consistency. 9th Grade, 10th Grade, and in the Upper Academy (11th and 12th Grades) teachers have outlined exactly how PBL will be implemented across each grade level, including a breakdown of how grades will be weighed. Specific details about how grades will be weighed, will be noted in the USA Student & Family Handbook available on our website – as well as on the syllabus for each class.



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1. **Use lockers only during transitions between classes.**

* One person per locker.
* Lock and/or lock sharing is not allowed.
* Only school locks are allowed.

1. **All students should remove all headwear upon entering the building.**

* Including but not limited to: scarves, hats, earphones, and electronics.

1. **Use of electronic devices is only allowed during lunchtime in the cafeteria and at the time designated by your teacher.**

* ALL electronics should be stored upon entry to the school.
* Use of electronics during passing in stairwells or hallways is prohibited.
* Phones visible during prohibited times are subject to confiscation for up to three days or until a parent retrieves it.

8. **Dress appropriately for learning.**

* All body parts must be covered.
* All pants must be worn on the waist.

**9. Stay on campus at all times**

* Your presence in school is expected and valued all day, everyday.
* You cannot leave the school campus after arriving unless escorted by a staff member.

1. **Respect and support all members of the USA community.**

* Use appropriate language towards all members of the community.
* Interact with peers positively in all situations.

1. **Treat all instructional time as sacred.**

* Follow instructions from the staff the first time they are given.
* Share your ideas and collaborate with your peers.

1. **Come to school each day, on time and prepared to learn.**

* Your presence is necessary to support your development and the learning of your community.
* Full participation in all daily assigned programs and activities.

1. **Always remain in the classroom for the first 10 minutes and last 10 minutes of class.**

**USA Non Negotiables**