



TECH PARENTS NEWS

Volume 3, Issue 6

February 2010

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Stay Informed!

Marc Williams - Assistant Principal of Student and Parent Engagement



As I address you as parents, I am reminded that I was always taught that the bigger person is the one who apologizes. So I apologize....I apologize for the 5am call. I know that this is an old story by now, but I thought that it was only right to put my apology in print. Now I must add this, my intention is not to apologize for doing something wrong, but rather for doing the right thing at unfortunately the worst time of the day....5:00am. I take you back to Sunday night, January 3, 2010. It was 10:30pm. I was on the computer while my wife was watching "Brothers & Sisters" (which seemingly is a very good show, but I digress). All of a sudden, a flood of emails overwhelmed me (my blackberry was buzzing at an insane pace). "Is it true?" "Is Brooklyn Tech closed indefinitely?" "I received a message on Facebook, written by the Senior Class President." "The message was written by you, Mr. Williams." After I contacted the Senior Class President and asked him about the message he posted, his response was, "OMG... you didn't send that message." Nearly two hours later, I had posted a message on the school website, initiated a retraction on Facebook and BTHSNews.org, emailed all students and parents, emailed responses to a

mix of staff, students, and parents, and scheduled THE CALL. Sorry folks. But after I communicated that the original "school closing" message was false, I not only received more emails from people who had not read that the message was false, but I received emails from people who were then confused; which is the real Mr. Williams' message: that the school is closed or that the original message is false? Attendance, as you know, is extremely important. Children need to be in school. And every school's budget is affected by attendance. I firmly believe that had I not responded, many of our students, under false pretense, would have selected not to attend school on January 4, 2010. I could not let our attendance suffer. I could not let the source of this hoax accomplish such a thing. I had two choices: call you at midnight or at 5:00 am. I didn't want to do either, but I hope that you understand that I feel that I have a responsibility to you and to our children. So I feel justified that I called you because I deemed the situation to be a matter of urgency, but I do apologize for waking you earlier than you had wanted to wake up, or for disturbing the babies whom you had wished would have slept later, or for giving you information that you may have already received. As I stated earlier, I was taught to be the bigger person by apologizing when necessary.
continue on next page...

I was also taught that communication is key. For so long at Brooklyn Tech we have been plagued by poor communication. I will not claim that we have perfected our communication, but I think we're getting better. Some may even say that we over-communicate, if such a thing. One parent asked to be removed from the phone list because he already gets all the PTA emails and my daily announcements. He said that he is more than informed. I hope we all feel that communication is getting better. With that said, let me add this. When in doubt about any news regarding the school, check the only ultimate reliable source, www.bths.edu. Facebook is a world-wide phenomenon, but it is not Brooklyn Tech's official means of communication. Second, with our new phone system, despite what the hoax letter stated, I can make a call from any location; I do not have to be on school premises to communicate with you. So there it is: my apology and explanation. By the way, I cannot believe the media gave this so much attention. If you ask me, here's what the media should focus on:

Several student organizations redirected their fundraising efforts from funding their activities to supporting the Haiti Relief Effort, the Young Entrepreneurs Association is continuing their partnership with the Alumni Foundation to host the Third Annual Career Day, which is scheduled for February 27th, the Boys Swim Team is tied for first place in their division, our Boys Step Team, Organized C.H.A.O.S became the Daily News 4th An-

nual Youth Step High School Tournament Champions and are now on their way to Nationals in PA in May, one of our students premiered her film as part of the Jewish Museum Video Workshop, the Brooklyn Tech High School Boys Indoor Track team placed 3rd overall at the PSAL Martin Luther King Games, the Boys Varsity Basketball Team clinched a play-off position with a victory over Erasmus, the Wrestling Team maintained their position as one of the two best teams in the city as they faced off against Curtis High School, the Brooklyn Tech Moot Court successfully defended its championship, beating Stuyvesant in the finals two years in a row, and the English Department presented the Annual Shakespeare Recitation Contest which will culminate with a performance by one of our students at the Borough championships.

Yes, I believe that the media should highlight the amazing things that our student do, but maybe I'm just a little bias. But if I could have my way, that would be the front page news and the lead-in story, with a special nod of course to the parents of our wonderful children.

Well, those are my words of "engagement". Until next time, good luck to all of you on the second term and continue to stay informed!



If you're interested in receiving **Mr. Williams's Daily Announcements via e-mail**, please sign-up by contacting him at mwilliams@bths.edu - It is loaded with vital information of your child's ongoing concerns at Tech!

Upcoming Events of Interest



- Wednesday, 2/3, 6-9 PM - Auditorium - College Process Information Night
- Thursday, 2/4, 6-7 PM- Auditorium—Get Ready For College Now
- Thursday, 2/4, 7-9 PM -Auditorium - February PTA Meeting
- Saturday, 2/27, 9AM - Convene at Auditorium - Third Annual Career Day
- Monday, 3/1 - Third Annual PTA Chinese Dinner, 6 PM - Bamboo Garden Restaurant

6409 8th Avenue, Brooklyn NY. Tickets will be available at the February PTA meetings and at the G.O. Store.

- Colleges that Change Lives Info Night (Wednesday, 3/17) – there is an option to the Ivies, SUNY/CUNY systems and “hot colleges that “everyone” applies to. Give your student some real choices.

If you have any other ideas for future PTA events, please contact any of the PTA board members via the parents link at the school's web-site at: www.bths.edu. We look forward to hearing from you!



Parents Asked, Tech Answered

Roweena Singh - Columnist

Parent: The Daedalus system is a great resource for parent, for those parents who did not activate their Daedalus account or need login assistance, is there a help number or a person that he/she could call to assist them?

Mr. Williams: For those parents who need assistance with Daedalus, they could contact Marc Williams, Assistant Principal; Alan Palmer, Assistant Principal; or Mei Chan, Parent Coordinator.

Parent: What sort of support or guidance BTHS have in place to guide students in meeting their graduation requirements?

Ms. Epstein: Guidance counselors are available at all times during the school day. Students do not need to make appointments to meet with their counselor. There are six report cards each year which indicate the performance of the student. The students should use their grade as a benchmark to seek help if their grades are low. If a student fails a class the first term of the year, the students can get that credit if they pass the second course, providing they did not get below a 50 as a grade on the last report card. Tutoring is available if the student needs help and credit recovery can make up a failure along with summer school.

Parent: Interaction with parent and teachers is always encouraged, what advice can you give a parent who cannot get their child's teacher to respond to any of their inquiries about their child's progress?

Ms. Epstein: Parents can reach their child's teachers through the respective departments. Parents can call the teacher's supervisor to have the teacher return the call. Parents can also communicate via e-mail of the teacher through the department head or the counselor or the BTHS website.

Parent: In which school year would a student be required to take the PSAT at BTHS?

Mr. Malchiodi: Students are scheduled to take the PSAT during school time in both sophomore and junior year, and should do so. The junior year exam results, however, are the results that will qualify the highest achievers for potential National Achievement, National

Merit, and other scholarships.

Parent: Does BTHS publish on their website college acceptance statistics?

Mr. Malchiodi: All students and parents can access admission statistics of BTHS graduates through the students' individual Naviance accounts. Some data is posted on the school website on an annual basis, but the spread of results for many class years is available only in Naviance.

Parent: How do you motivate or encourage students to reach higher academic standards?

Mr. Belmont: One method of encouraging students to reach higher academic standards is emphasizing the importance of critical thinking skills. When we say knowledge is power, this to me means that critical thinking skills can translate into benefits outside the classroom, such as increased earnings potential, greater status in society and the ability to take control of your own lives. When students understand that success is the reward for academic excellence, they become self-motivated and life-long learners.

Parent: If a student is a slow learner and falls behind or is a fast learner and is bored, how do you accommodate these different learning styles?

Mr. Belmont: Helping students learn generally falls into two categories: helping them understand the content material and the skills needed to master that content, and creating a supportive learning environment. For students who are struggling with mastering the content, breaking down the material during the lesson into smaller bites helps students keep up. It also gives them an opportunity to identify specifically what in the material they may be struggling with. Extra feedback and guidance when giving back graded material, and one-on-one conversations can help in keeping the student engaged and on task. Tutoring is also a great opportunity to address specific student needs. *continue on next page....*

Mid-Year Reflections and Review

by Giancarlo Malchiodi

Coordinator of College Services/Advisement



The beginning of the Spring term is a good time for parents/guardians of ALL class years to review their child's progress and focus more acutely on the time ahead.

For FRESHMEN: Did your child work to capacity in his/her first semester of BTHS and satisfactorily succeed? What changes in priorities or environment or attitude can be made to improve on that success? Has your child activated his or her Naviance account and listed his or her most used e-mail address in their Naviance profile?

For SOPHOMORES: After three semesters at Brooklyn Tech, is your child working to his or her full potential? Have his or her many responsibilities been prioritized to make school the first one? Has your child joined any meaningful extracurricular activities to help develop leadership skills and personal responsibility? Has your child activated his or her Naviance account and listed his or her most used e-mail address in their Naviance profile?

For JUNIORS: With the Junior year being the final opportunity to build on past successes prior to college applications, has your child done everything listed for Sophomores? Has your child sought out meaningful community service or outside learning opportunities to further develop skills and responsibilities? Has your child considered what major(s) might be of interest in college? Have you and your child reviewed his or her academic progress to investigate colleges for which he or she is a competitive candidate? Has your child activated his or her Naviance account and listed his or her most used e-mail address in their Naviance profile?

For SENIORS: Sorry, parents and students, but your work is not done yet!! Academic success in the remainder of Senior year must be roughly equal to or better than past performance. Colleges can reverse admissions, terminate grants and scholarships, or place students on academic probation before even entering college if the Spring term grades fall below their expectations. Students should continue to achieve the best they can through June and avoid the dreaded "Senioritis" plague!

Q&A

Lastly, students need to feel that their struggles are simply part of a learning curve and the teacher is there to help them along on the educational journey. Teachers should consistently demonstrate that they not only support students who know the work, but also students who are struggling to know the work.

For students who are fast learners, letting them know that more is expected from them is one way to keep them engaged. Also, how many times have young people been given a toy, only to end up playing with the box? Curriculum is also like that. It is filled with the nooks and crannies of learning that is usually not covered by a survey course. But those nooks and crannies can engage students, like the life of a gladiator or how a Mongol diet is based solely on the horse.

The PTA is committed to assist all parents by simplifying their Brooklyn Tech experience and providing need-to-know information. If you have questions or comments, please submit them to pta.asktech@gmail.com and the PTA will make sure that they are answered and make available to all parents through this column.

Thanks to the faculty contributors for taking the time to answer the parents' questions:

Mr. David Belmont, English Teacher

Mrs. Harriet Epstein, Guidance Counselor

Mr. Giancarlo Malchiodi, College Advisor/Teacher of English

Mr. Marc Williams, Assistant Principal of Student and Parent Engagement

Treasurer's Report

Barry Ritter

**PTA
Fundmometer
Goal:**
\$125,000



**Current
Contributions:**
\$44,470



The PTA would like to thank the following families for contributing to this year's annual drive since our last report:

M. Azimbaeva, M. Benjumea, B. Bunyan, Y. Chen, A. Engeler, M. Freedman, S. Gad, A. Garner, B. Hanks, F. Hayslett-Littell, J. Joachim, D. Lee, Y. Lei, A. Ling, M. McIntyre, S. Melnichenko, M. Murray, M. Nadboy, K. Seidwurm, L. Shadburn, D. Stein, T. Tan, M. Tehrani, C. Walker, A. Williams, K. Williams-Chung, C. Yang, and J. Yu

Career Day at Tech

Enid Febus - PTA Co-President



Career Day at BTHS, what a GREAT opportunity for our students to better determine their future career choices. For the parents, an opportunity to understand our children's choices and understand a profession we may know nothing about. This day is also enlightening because who better than BTHS Alumni to address our children, share their educational paths, experiences and attained professional goals.

My son, currently a Junior, is quite clear and determined now on what his professional goal is: Civil Engineering. That was not always the case. I recall when he was in middle school, he was given an opportunity to participate in an architecture course. He knew he wanted to design structures. Actually, he wanted to build bridges, tunnels and highways. In fact, when we traveled by car or walked around Manhattan he would say, "Imagine if there was another Bridge here or a tunnel there...". As a child he would spend countless hours drawing what appeared to be intricate highways. He entered BTHS thinking Architecture was his choice. During his Freshman year we attended. Yes, we attended the Career Day event. I was one of several parents who attended. My son says most students don't ask their

parents to attend or tell them of the event. He selected to sit in an architecture presentation and another by three civil engineers. The information provided by the presenters was interesting and allowed for questions. That day, during the civil engineering presentation I saw how my son's interest in that specific profession came to a full perspective. What I mean is, that while we can read many articles or books about any profession. A career day event gives us a better understanding of not only the educational requirements needed but, also the many dimensions that career involves. That is what the Career Day event at BTHS did for us.

While many parents have hopes and dreams of a specific profession they would like their children to realize. We as parents must remember that we cannot live vicariously through our children if our professional goals were not materialized. It is, however, our responsibility to understand their passions, interest and choices of their chosen profession and help them to reach their goals. BTHS Career Day is Saturday, February 27, 2010, I urge you to attend with your child, If, however, you are unable, then encourage them to attend. It is definitely worth your time.

ADVERTISEMENT

Consider placing an ad in the Newsletter!

Per Issue Rates:

1/8 page - business card size	\$25
1/4 page	\$50
1/2 page	\$100
Full page	\$200

Contact: Mike Tang 917-687-4803 / e-mail: stratm3@yahoo.com

CLASSIFIED ADS

Tech parents, faculty and administration members may submit classified ads at free of charge to stratm3@yahoo.com

Join the PTA for an Evening of Fun!

*Chinese New Year Dinner
Monday, March 1st - 6:00 PM
Buffet Dinner, Soda & Dessert*

*\$25 per person
Tickets will available at the Feb-
ruary PTA meetings and the G.O.
Store*



Please contact Barry Ritter, PTATreasurer

*Bamboo Garden Restaurant
6409 8th Avenue
Brooklyn, NY*

Take N Train to 8th Ave / 62 St. Walk two blocks to 64 St.

BROOKLYN TECH PARENTS ASSOCIATION

Co-Presidents: - Enid Febus / Judith Hertzberg
Principal - Randy Asher
A.P. of Student and Parent Engagement - Marc Williams
Parent Coordinator - S. Mei Chan
Newsletter Editor - Mike Tang

Senior VP - Stephen Gales / Junior VP - Li Pan
Sophomore VP - Jean-Louis Motolo / Freshman VP - Carol Ying
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Recording Secretary - Elizabeth DeAngelis
Assistant Recording Secretary - Carrie Ho
Corresponding Secretary - Jason Horowitz
Sergeant-at-Arms - Michelle Ifill-Williams

School Leadership Team
SLT Judith Hertzberg / SLT Theresa Law
SLT Mike Tang / SLT Liz Moreno
SLT David Gold

Committee Chairs
College Process - Carrie Ho / Jean-Louis Motolo
Teacher Grants - Elizabeth DeAngelis
Fundraising - Randy Gresl
Communications - Mike Tang
Teacher Appreciation Dinner - Stephen Gales
Chinese New Year Dinner - Elizabeth DeAngelis / Li Pan

February Calendar

February 2, 2010

- Prefect
- Report Card Distributed
- Spring Term Begins

February 3, 2010

- **10:20 AM - 2:00 PM:** Senior Class Ring Orders
- **6:00 PM - 9:00 PM:** College Process Information night

February 4, 2010

- **6:00 PM - 7:00 PM:** Get Ready For College Now - Meeting
- **7:00 PM - 9:00 PM:** PTA Meeting

February 5, 2010

- Senior Pride Fridays (Pajama Day)
- **4:00 PM - 8:00 PM:** S.A.D.D's 1st Annual (Red) Carpet Affair

February 8, 2010

- Common Time

February 10, 2010

- **6:00 PM - 8:30 PM:** Open House

February 11, 2010

- **3:00 PM - 5:00 PM:** PEP RALLY

February 12, 2010

- Senior Pride Fridays (Hollywood Day)

February 15-19, 2010

- Midwinter Recess - School Closed

February 22, 2010

- Faculty Meeting

February 24, 2010

- Prefect
- **7:30 AM - 9:30 AM:** American Mathematics Competition

February 26, 2010

- Senior Pride Fridays (Nerd Day)
- Talent Show

February 27, 2010

- 3rd Annual Career Day

March 1, 2010

- Chinese New Year Dinner

March 4, 2010

- Black History Show
- **7:00 PM - 9:00 PM:** PTA Meeting

