



Upper School Newsletter

News from the Asst. Headmaster

The month of February is always my least favorite month. It's been too cold for too long. I'm tired of seeing the dirty and icy remnants of snowy days gone by. I am ready to start spending time outside again, smelling fresh air, not the stale, re-circulated stuff that's been around since late last October. February always throws a few of those warm, sunny days in to tease you, followed by a major icing the next morning. I am so done with Winter.

On a brighter note, we will be heading into the Spring season soon with many events, including a few concerts, an Upper School dance, Michael Fowlin, and MCAS. (in no particular order of entertainment) Many of the dates are listed below.

Another aspect of Spring is budget season. This year is shaping up to be an extremely difficult budget process as

there are financial constraints that require potential job elimination. These proposed cuts will drastically affect each and every student, ranging from larger class size to the elimination of all after-school activities. While one voice can do little, the voice of many can move mountains. For Belmont to remain the system it is accustomed to being, we need community support and financial assistance. Whatever you can do to help would be greatly appreciated, whether that is attending a meeting or writing a letter. Every voice matters and every vote counts.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call or e-mail me.

Sincerely,



Bill Grubb

Asst. Headmaster, Upper School

Chenery Middle
School

February 2009

Special points of interest:

- Important Dates
- MCAS
- Technology: "The Good, Bad, and Ugly"
- Final Thoughts

Important Dates

- Feb. 26th: Coffee with the Headmaster, 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room. PTO meeting immediately following at 7:30. Budget presentation with Dr. Missal
- March 12th: 7th/8th grade chorus/orchestra concert: 7:00 p.m., CMS auditorium.
- March 13: 7th and 8th Grade Dance: 7-9:30, cafeteria.
- March 16th: Dr. Michael Fowlin assembly, Grades 7 and 8.
- March 19th: 7th/8th Band concert: 7:00 p.m., CMS auditorium.
- March 25th: Coffee with the Headmaster, 9:00 a.m., Community Room.
- Week of March 30th : MCAS testing, grades 7 and 8. (March 31st: Long Comp. for grade 7)



Mark these dates on your calendar.

MCAS Information

MCAS will be administered the week of March 30th. The 7th graders will be taking the Long Composition test on March 31st. Both 7th and 8th graders will also be taking Reading Comprehension tests that week. A complete schedule will be issued later in March with exact dates and times.

It is very important for you to encourage your child (ren) to do the following when preparing for these tests:

- Get a good night sleep. Encourage your child(ren) to go to bed early.
- Eat a decent breakfast.
- Don't stress out too much. These exams are to be taken seriously but students are well prepared by our teachers all year long to do well on these. Putting unnecessary pressure on oneself will only lead

to increased and unnecessary stress and anxiety.

- Come to school on time. Too often students come to school tardy, thus already setting them back. If your child arrives after the directions have been given, your child will have to take the test during one of the re-test days.
- Students should also bring two #2 pencils and a highlighter.



Technology: "The Good, Bad, and Ugly"

I can still remember the excitement of when I first hooked my computer up to the Internet years ago. I could go anywhere in the world. I could visit the Public Library...in Berlin!! Access to the world was at my fingertips. ("The good") Then came things like chat rooms, Facebook, and MySpace. Who knew these would be such hot-spots for worry and concern; A venue for online predators to make arrangements to meet kids at places unbeknownst to their parents. ("The bad"...I'd even stretch that to "Really Bad"!) Finally, the latest chapter involves the fancy cell phones that so many students carry around. The issue of late is called "Sexting". ("The Ugly") It's when students take pictures of one another in scantily clad outfits, or none at all, and text them to their friends. This is an ever-increasing and serious concern. Also, it is a crime. If you don't believe it, ask those middle school age children on the Cape who are facing criminal charges of distributing pornography. Just to remind parents and students, while in school, our policy is that all cell phones are off and unseen. Parents can help us out greatly by not calling or texting your child on his/her cell phone during the school day. (It happens often)

Final Thoughts

My final thoughts are merely a continuation of the Technology segment above. While technology has opened the doors to a vast universe of information available at our fingertips, it has also created a huge number of problems that did not exist when I was a kid. I never had the pleasure of being harassed online through IM or AIM or whatever other letters go with that. Let alone being texted stuff on my phone. When my phone rang, I had to go the wall and answer it. All of this technology and the vocabulary that goes with it is so confusing. I'm still trying to figure out the difference between a chat room and a blog. And from the chat room, apparently then you can go to a private room? Who in their right mind actually thought

that would be a good idea to design? I think we should go back to the basics. People ask me for my cell phone number and are surprised when I tell them I don't know it. (I really don't) I don't know the number because the phone is there for me to call people when I need to, not to be found when I am not at home or at my job. What happened to "alone time". Students giving cell phone numbers out to everyone on the planet is probably not the best idea either. Lastly, kids should know that, if they are home sick, they should be resting. Texting and calling kids at school on their cell phones would indicate that perhaps the "sick child" is actually well enough to be here. Or, he/she certainly has the desire to be. Just my thoughts.