

HILLCREST HIGH SCHOOL
A Recognized New York State Blue Ribbon School of Excellence
A Bill and Melinda Gates Small Learning Communities Demonstration Site
National School Change Award Winner
An Educational Partner with New Visions for Public Schools
160-05 Highland Avenue
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718-658-5407
Stephen M. Duch, Principal

www.hillcrestweb.com

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David Morris, P.T.A. President

Fall 2011

From the Principal's Desk



Dear Parents:

Hope you are all enjoying the beautiful autumn days. We here at Hillcrest continue to aspire to provide quality educational opportunities and quality services to our entire school community.

Our data continues to show that we are continuing to make great progress in ensuring that all students exceed standards. As one of the few New York City high schools to be a NCLB school in good standing, we are happy that all our students make progress.

During the week of October 24th – October 28th, students will be receiving their report cards (October 25th); and we will be conducting Parent Teacher Conferences (October 27th and October 28th).

Our **Saturdays @ Hillcrest** program, as well as our **Saturdays Parent Academy**, will begin on Saturday, November 19, 2011. Both programs have been slightly delayed this year due to budget reductions. Please make sure your children avail themselves to this great opportunity.

Again, if we can be of assistance, please feel free to email us.

Wishing you the best in autumn 2011.

Yours truly,

Stephen M. Duch

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Deborah Ziozis
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Breakfast/Lunch Program

Has your child submitted a lunch application?
 The **School Meals Application** is now a scannable form which is why it has been redesigned in a bright red color but the household information required has not changed. The application is to be completed using **black ink** – and should not be photocopied. Households are

encouraged to complete all required information to avoid delays in processing the forms. All Hillcrest High School students have been issued a **Point of Sales (POS)** PIN number. This is an automated system used in our cafeteria. The system identifies the meal status of each student. Meal status is assessed by evaluation of lunch applications. The POS number is needed for breakfast and lunch. Breakfast is served daily – [free of charge](#).

We know that good nutrition is essential to every young person's health and development. Although breakfast is widely regarded as the most important meal of the day, many of our students go without breakfast. Youngsters who eat regular, well-balanced meals are better able to concentrate and learn. Hillcrest High School distributes "**Bag and Go**" breakfast in the school lobby. As students enter the building, they have access to a free nutritious breakfast. Although breakfast is FREE, students must have a POS number in order to be eligible.

Metrocards

Students who are eligible for full and half-fare metrocards received them in the beginning of the semester. Metrocards are valuable tools, allowing students living at a distance to travel to school for little or no cost. These cards are extremely valuable. Please talk to your children about the importance of keeping their Metrocard in a safe place. Thank you.

John Michalos, A.P. Pupil Personnel Services

The first marking period of the fall term ends on October 21, 2011. All students will receive report cards on October 26, 2011. Please be sure to ask your child for his/her report card. You should spend some time going over your child's grades. There is a section on the report card for teacher comments. It is important to read what the teachers are saying about your child. If you are concerned about a class or a grade on the report card, you should contact your child's Guidance Counselor to discuss your concerns.

By this time, you should have visited www.nvpupilpath.com which is your direct link to how your child is progressing in school. This is a website that contains your child's current program, attendance, test scores, school transcript and other vital information. You may contact our Parent Coordinator, Ms. Prateema Dhane at 718-658-5407, ext 1161 or via email pdhane@schools.nyc.gov

for further information on Pupil Path. We encourage ALL parents to become familiar with this wonderful resource!

It is essential for students to attend school on a regular basis. Students with poor attendance generally do poorly in class. Parents are encouraged to monitor their children's attendance by speaking to their children, checking notebooks and contacting the school at the first sign of a problem.

SLC's are conducting Town Meetings with all students to discuss school issues, such as graduation requirements and promotion requirements, State Regents Exam requirements, school safety concerns and other important matters.

The guidance department is here to help you and your child. It is the beginning of a new school year, filled with opportunities. We hope this will be a successful year for your child. As always, you may contact us at 718-658-5407 ext.1120 or via email jmichal@schools.nyc.gov to discuss any guidance issues.

Daniel Scanlon A.P. Social Studies

The Social Studies Department is excited by the start of this new school year. With the assistance of our nine Small Learning Communities we believe we're in a stronger position than ever to offer your child a quality education, and we continue to strive to ensure that all students meet rigorous graduation requirements.

Those unfamiliar with the Social Studies requirements should be aware that all students are required to pass a full four years of Social Studies classes. In addition to this coursework, students must also pass two separate Social Studies Regents examinations, the Global History and Geography Regents in June of sophomore year and the U.S. History and Government Regents, which all juniors take in June. Students should be aware that these exams are cumulative and will be based on all work done in ninth and tenth grades on the Global exam, and all work done in eleventh grade on the U.S. History exam. Juniors and seniors who have not yet passed the Global History Regents, and seniors who have not yet passed the Global or U.S. History Regents, will be scheduled to take these exams in January. Saturdays at Hillcrest will offer review classes beginning in November, and all Small Learning Communities offer tutoring during the school day. If your child is scheduled for one of these January exams,

please encourage him/her to take advantage of these opportunities.

As the semester progresses parents should be aware that report card grades are based on a standardized set of marking rubrics used in all Social Studies classes; your child should have received a copy in his/her class at the start of the semester. Factors considered in the determination of report card grades include class exams, homework, participation and attendance, and required projects. If for some reason your child does not have a copy, there are copies available in the Social Studies office, room 116B.

Students interested in law or community service should take advantage of the many programs we offer, regardless of the SLC you are in. Last year, for example, students volunteered to teach a Social Studies lesson at a local elementary school, participated in the New York State Mock Trial Competition, toured the Queens Criminal Court Building, and traveled with the Queens Bar Association to Albany.

Please do not hesitate to contact us at 718-658-6507 ext. 1162 should you have any questions.

Martin Walsh A.P. Science / Health Careers

This year we welcome several new faces to the science and health careers departments. Ms. Rachel Bialik was with Hillcrest last year as part of a teacher training program. This year she joins us as a teacher of Living Environment. Mr. Lavern Powell transferred to Hillcrest this year and is also teaching Living Environment. We welcome back Mr. James Sylvester who has returned from military leave and is enthusiastically working with our Health Careers program. We welcome a new team of teacher trainees – Ms. Denise Duncan and Mr. Omar Sharif.

Last year the Science Department enthusiastically embraced the use of **Skedula** as a vehicle of communication between the teachers and will continue to make use of all of the features so that student performance information is available 24/7.

Science curriculum has been revised to better serve the needs of our students. For those students who were not successful in passing a Regents exam in science, we are offering two different *Investigations* courses. One of them focuses on the concepts of the Living Environment

curriculum; the other focuses on Earth Science topics. Upon completion of these courses, students will have a second opportunity to pass a Regents exam – a requirement for graduation. On the other end of the spectrum, we added *Advanced Placement Chemistry* to our menu of Advanced Placement courses.

Science laboratory procedures have been refined to better meet the needs of our students. The Regents courses still carry a 1200 minute laboratory requirement to sit for the Regents exam at the completion of each course. This year, students meet five periods per week for science class. Lab is now an integral component of science instruction. Students will meet the attendance requirement which has historically barred many students from sitting for the Regents exam.

Science teacher, Ms. Maureen Reilly-Gasior assumed the directorship of our Health Careers Small Learning Community. A trained nurse and science teacher, she brings a new level of expertise to the program. Teachers are hard at work in their respective specialty areas. In addition to their work in the classroom, each teacher supervises his or her students in clinical and practical settings as well. To better serve our students, Health Careers institute continues to develop new career pathways. Physical Trainer is a new specialty joining our already established Nursing Assistant, the Medical Assisting, EMT and Medical Lab Tech programs as areas of specialization. Health Careers institute continues its partnership with Queensborough Community College through their Career Pathways Initiatives. Students will earn college credits in some of their areas of specialization.

I would like to make you aware that credit recovery for science coursework is available through P.M. school. Students who are not on track for graduation because they are missing credits can make up those credits. Other options will include the *Saturdays at Hillcrest* program and concurrent options independent study.

As always, we welcome your participation and look forward to working with you in the education of your children. Please be sure your child does his/her homework, attends lab and completes the lab reports. I encourage you to access your child's performance information on ***Skedula*** as well. Your active participation is so important to your children's passing their courses.

If I can be of any assistance to you, please feel free to contact me either

by phone or email (718-658-5407 ext. 1167 or mwalsh@schools.nyc.gov). I assure you that I will respond to you promptly.

**David Morrison, A.P.
English, Art & Music**

The English Department continues to take the lead in implementing the Common Core State Standards. These standards define the knowledge and skills students should have so that they will graduate high school fully prepared for college and careers. Below is a sample of the work in reading and writing your child is doing to become ready for college and career:

- Understanding more from and making fuller use of written materials, including using a wider range of evidence to support an analysis
- Making more connections about how complex ideas interact and develop within a book, essay, or article
- Evaluating arguments and specific claims; assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is sufficient; and as appropriate, detecting inconsistencies and ambiguities
- Making an argument that is logical, well-reasoned, and supported by evidence
- Writing a literary analysis, report, or summary that develops a central idea and a coherent focus and is well supported with relevant examples, facts, and details
- Conducting several research projects that address different aspects of the same topic, using more complex books, articles, and other sources

The ***Winter Festival of the Arts*** will take place on December 21, 2011 in the Richard McNamee Theatre at 6:00 P.M. This event will celebrate the sights and sounds of the holiday season and highlight the hard work our students and teachers do in all the Arts classes at Hillcrest. The evening will feature students' artwork and the sounds of the band, chorus, and strings. Mark your calendar!

If you require more information or would like to talk about your child's English, Art, or Music class, please email me at **dmorris4@schools.nyc.gov**

**Tarek Ali, A.P.
Health & Physical Ed / Tech**

The school provides a comprehensive physical education program that offers 10 different activities to meet your child's interests and to help him / her be physically active.

You can help your child prevent obesity by ensuring that he / she participates in his / her physical education class daily. Make sure that they have their physical education uniform ready and that they arrive to school and the locker room on time to take advantage of participation during the class.

The classes that we offer are basketball, volleyball, soccer, cricket, softball, gymnastics, handball, weight training, zumba, spin class, rollerblading, yoga, aerobic dance, and adaptive physical education.

In addition, we have 28 sports teams for boys and girls that your child can choose from to participate. The requirements for participation are medical clearance on the scholastic form and a signed parental consent form. Students must pass at least 4 classes every term in addition to the PE class while maintaining 90% attendance.

Please encourage your child to participate and take advantage of our program. You can always visit our PSAL web site to check on our sports program and results at www.PSAL.ORG

**Jose Rios
A.P. Mathematics**

My first months as the new Assistant Principal has been dedicated to improving structures in the classroom that I trust will lead to improved outcomes for students. Teachers have been trained and been given the opportunity to use more technology in the classroom. Consequently, more teachers are using Smart boards and graphing calculators in their daily instruction. Textbooks have been made available online for students taking Integrated Algebra, Geometry and Trigonometry. Castle Learning has been pushed into the classroom so that students can get Regents level practice in school and at home by accessing the Internet. Teachers have been provided with training on the New York State Common Core Standards and new curriculum in order to better inform and align their instruction. Also, this year we started different tracks for students so that they would be given extra time to study and prepare for the Regents exams. Many students, therefore, will

take the Regents exams later than usual, but with more and better preparation. Finally, teachers are receiving consistent and frequent feedback about how they are performing in the classroom.

I trust that the promulgation of these technological, training and assessment initiatives will improve the quality of math instruction at Hillcrest High School. I welcome your feedback on any of these initiatives, as well as any further ideas you may have in order to achieve better math outcomes for students in our school.

Eliot Finkelstein, A.P. Security & Student Life

Hillcrest H.S. students have both the rights and responsibilities that will provide a safe and secure surrounding in which to learn and in which all people are treated with respect and courtesy. We are committed to working with staff, students, parents and community organizations for this purpose. School rules and regulations have been developed to ensure that the rights of everyone are protected. Students have received information specifically outlining their "Rights and Responsibilities." Please review it and discuss it with your child. It is inappropriate for students to have large sums of money or wear expensive jewelry to school. We do not have all day storage lockers for outer wear; therefore we recommend that students do not wear very expensive coats to school. The school day consists of four regular entry periods. Students must arrive at the following times as they will not be allowed to interfere with ongoing instruction if late.

Period	Arrival Time	Entry Closes
1	7:20 A.M.	8:20 A.M.
2	8:30 A.M.	9:00 A.M.
3	9:15 A.M.	9:45 A.M.

Detention will be given for students arriving after last entry. We require our students to follow all rules and regulations. Beepers/Cellular phones and unauthorized electronic equipment and potentially dangerous items are not permitted in school and will be confiscated. A dress code is in effect. A copy of the dress code is available from the Dean's office. Students are required to follow all rules and regulations:

*No hats may be worn in classrooms/offices/auditorium presentations.

*No "doo" rags/stocking caps/neck beads may be worn anywhere in the building.

*No electronic equipment including beepers, walkmen, diskmen, and cell

phones may be brought into the building and will be confiscated. We are a zero tolerance school. We will suspend and/or arrest any person violating the law, Chancellor's regulations, and/or city-wide code of conduct. We strive to keep Hillcrest High School a safe and secure environment so that teaching and learning can thrive. We need your support and cooperation.

Justin A. Follyga, A.P. Foreign Language/ESL

We in the Foreign Language/ESL Department welcome all of our parents and students. We hope you are all ready as we continue our journey to improve the services we provide students and parents in the LOTE/ESL department. Each and every student at Hillcrest will continue to receive instructions in foreign languages and ESL in his/her assigned small learning community. The state Education Regents board had decided to discontinue offering the Regents exams in January in all foreign languages due to financial constraints. However, the BOE has decided to continue administering the regents like exams in more than ten languages and therefore allowing students to meet the advanced regents requirements by passing a LOTE regents. As a result, we will be administering the LOTE regents in June 2012 in Spanish, French and Bengali here at Hillcrest and students will be sent to other hubs to take the LOTE regents in other languages.

We are offering Spanish levels 1, 2, 3, & 4; French levels 1, 2, 3 & 4 and ESL levels 1, 3, 5, 7, & 9. We will also continue to offer Latin for the freshman Pre-Med and Humanities students and many of them have shown great excitement so far and we're hopeful that they'll continue to enjoy studying this language that would be helpful for their future studies.

ESL students that are new to the U.S. are housed in a year total English immersion program in our Newcomers SLC. The small learning community of Public Service and Law will continue to service our bilingual Spanish students. ESL students who took part in the NYSESLAT - the test that identifies students' eligibility for continued entitlement for ESL/Bilingual services - and fulfilled the performance standards of the benchmarks set by the State are being programmed for regular classes in the Fall Semester. We are planning to offer supplemental instructional programs for our ELL population after the first marking period. We

encourage you to motivate your ELL child to attend.

As always, the Foreign Language and ESL teachers will continue to dedicate themselves to our students by providing them with a quality education that would prepare each and every one of them to compete in today's global economy.

Amar Nepal A.P. Data Analyst

Did you know you can easily monitor your child's homework assignments and quiz grades? All subject teachers will be utilizing the **Online Gradebook** featured in Pupil Path. We strongly urge you to monitor your child's homework, classwork, and exam average in all classes.

Pupil Path is a web based system that will give you access to a variety of information on your child. Pupil Path can be accessed from any computer or smart phone 24 hours a day. You can instantly send messages to your child's teacher which is the easiest and most effective form of communication. If you have not signed up yet but would like to, please contact our Parent Coordinator - Prateema Dhane at (718) 658-5407, ext. 5121, or pdhane@schools.nyc.gov You can also log on to www.HillcrestWeb.com and click on the Pupil Path link for more information.

Special **training sessions** will be offered at our **Parent Teacher Association** meeting on Tuesday, October 18, 2011 and at our **Parent Teacher Conference** Days, Thursday, October 27, 2011 & Friday, October 28, 2011. We will have laptops available to register you if you have not signed up. The process will be faster if you sign up for your own email account at home. For a free email account, go to www.gmail.com and click on "Create an Account."

We urge your child to take advantage of great programs created to help your child excel in high school. These programs include "**Saturdays @ Hillcrest**," in which students can earn a 1/2 credit as well as get tutoring in academic subjects. We also have **PM School** and "**Concurrent Options**" where students who qualify have the ability to make up additional credits. Other programs include **College Now** courses from Queensborough Community College and York College. These courses allow students to gain college credits, as well as Hillcrest elective credits toward graduation. Students who are interested in any of

these programs can see their guidance counselor or SLC director / co-director for additional information.

Students should take advantage of our in-school tutoring. For the latest tutoring schedule, please visit www.HillcrestWeb.com and click on "Tutoring Schedule" on the Quick Links section. Don't forget to follow Hillcrest High School on Twitter. Click on the Twitter link for details. This will allow students and parents to get up to the minute news and announcements from Hillcrest High School. Get reminders for upcoming Regents Exams, report card distribution days, parent – teacher conferences, half days, just as a few examples.

If you would like to reach me, my telephone number is (718) 658-5407 ext. 1042. My office is room 104. The best way to reach me is via email ANepal@schools.nyc.gov Please do not hesitate to contact me for any reason.

Stacie Sugarman, A.P.

Intervention Specialist/Theatre/Business

The school year has gotten off to a smooth start and by now students are all working hard to improve their grades from the first marking period. While studying and completing all assignments is a sure way to improve academic success, sometimes we all need a little extra help. I would like to remind all students to take advantage of all the support programs offered at Hillcrest. The **Saturdays at Hillcrest** program has begun, tutoring is available through SLCs, special regents preparation marathons will be held prior to the January regents, and of course teachers and administration are always here to help. If your child finds himself / herself behind in credits, please have him / her stop by in room 116-E so that we can work together to develop a plan for success.

Our support team in the Instructional Support Service department (ISS) continues to work with students to ensure that they receive all the resources and support needed to ensure a successful school year. This year we have approximately 38 classes that are co-taught with two teachers. This co-teaching model allows students to have twice the amount of support they would normally receive in a traditional classroom. Students in these classes have the advantage of learning the necessary curriculum from not one, but two educators. In many cases, one teacher is an expert in the subject area while the other is an expert on teaching methodology. We believe

that by creating a class with these two professionals, we are ensuring the success of all types of learners.

This is the fourth year of the Senior Academy, a customized program designed to assist senior students with accumulating the credits they need toward a June 2012 graduation. Students in this program will continue to utilize online credit recovery programs as well as accumulate credits on a quarterly rather than a semester basis. By creating opportunities to earn credits and by using technology, these students will all have the opportunity to graduate on time.

Our thespians in the Theatre SLC are also very busy preparing for the Thespian show that will take place at Hillcrest in December. Be sure to reserve your tickets for this usually full house show!

If you have any questions or I can be of assistance to you, please feel free to email me at ssugarm2@schools.nyc.gov

**School for the Humanities,
Arts & Writing (SHAW)
Charles Potter, Director**

The School for the Humanities, Arts and Writing (SHAW) has had a tremendous start to the 2011-2012 school year. Under the direction of Mr. Charles Potter who has taken over from Mr. Russell West, Humanities has endeavored to reach out to parents, staff and students in new ways to make our program more reflective of our community, more responsive to our needs and even more effective in our mission. Our deepening emphasis on college preparation will help us better serve our students throughout high school and beyond.

Since the start of the new year, parents completed surveys during orientation night, teachers have been asked to rate their strengths and weaknesses with regard to technology and everyone from parents to staff to students have been asked to reflect on how their educational experiences have shaped their lives. All of this information has been assessed and is already being used to open up new opportunities for participation, training and development for all members of our Humanities family.

We are committed to maintaining and reinvigorating ourselves as the strongest community of learners at Hillcrest. We are reaching out to the broader community to find opportunities for student exploration and creativity in groups and as

individual learners. Whether as part of our monthly Saturday trips to places such as Rufus King Manor and the Metropolitan Museum of Art or as part of the *College Now* courses offered by York College and Queensborough Community College or as part of programs like the Saturday Art Career Workshop Program, students are finding their places in the world with Humanities.

Our commitment to the Humanities community means helping students prepare for life after high school. Students will have the opportunities to hear about testing, majors, college admissions, applications and scholarships through a series of visits, town halls and fairs over the coming weeks. Our first college visit will be with the seniors as we make our way to Mercy College on October 12 as the underclassmen take PSAT and predictive exams. This trip will be followed by a senior town hall for more college information on October 21st and another trip, open to all, to the Jacob Javits Convention Center for the city wide college fair. Other college trips will offer additional information as students make an informed decision that will undoubtedly impact the rest of their lives. We look forward to supporting them and their parents as they explore their many options. We look forward to a continued conversation about how we can support your child as part of the School for the Humanities, Arts and Writing community.

**Teachers of Tomorrow Institute
John Binet, Director**

I am happy to share that Teachers of Tomorrow will be having an exciting next few months. The leadership committee will be hosting our second annual Homecoming Social to welcome our Ninth grade students. The Leaders will also be designing the Teachers of Tomorrow Spirit Week for Fall 2011 so please encourage your child to participate. We will have many fun activities to promote our school's culture. Also we will continue our "Movie Afternoon" tradition to raise money for our school. For \$5 students can come to watch a recently released DVD and get a cup of soda and popcorn.

Please also remember to encourage your children to take advantage of our Tutoring EVERY Thursday and Friday period 8 in Room 330, all of the subjects and all of the teachers all in one room.

I look forward to seeing all of you again on Parent-Teacher evening and afternoon on October 27th and October 28th.

Senior Academy
David Ricaurte, Director

Senior Academy at Hillcrest High School has started off well in its seventh year as a small learning community. Senior Academy's goal is for our students to graduate on time. One of the ways we will accomplish this is by having everyone in our school community set SMART goals, prepare them for Regents exams and participate in the I-Learn experience for our students to accumulate credits at their own pace.

Senior Academy will implement inquiry and common planning time throughout the school year. The inquiry process allows our staff to collaborate on our students. We will pick top 3 and bottom 3 students in every class. This will help us engage every student in our classes and make connections with students to motivate and inspire them.

During common planning time, staff members are proactive with procedures that will benefit our students. We discuss curriculum, plan lessons together, share ideas, and seek for strategies to improve student skills. Parents are also invited to common planning time to help build a stronger community at Hillcrest High School.

Senior Academy challenges our group of seniors to reach their maximum potential. We offer an array of methods for students to meet various and different academic needs. Senior Academy offers traditional academic classes, concurrent options (independent study) and is part of the I-Zone program. Our students can gain credit through an on-line credit recovery program and will allow them to graduate on time.

We also support students to become involved in extra-curricular activities such as being part of clubs and school teams. The Senior Academy at Hillcrest High School is truly one of the most exciting programs in the New York City school system. This academy serves as a wonderful home for our students.

Finally, Senior Academy at Hillcrest High School would like to invite you to our Parent Teacher conferences on Thursday, October 27, 2011 from 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm or on Friday, October 28, 2011 from 12:45 pm – 2:45 pm. See you then.



Theatre Institute
Amy Morrison, Director

The Theatre Institute is excited about this fall semester. We have had a smooth start with our 9th graders and our upper classmen continue to shine. The teachers in our Small Learning Community are committed to providing the best possible education to all the students in the Theatre Institute and our tutoring program has begun on Thursdays and Fridays during the lunch period and most students are taking full advantage of the extra help provided by our staff.

The International Thespian Society will continue their charity work this year with Broadway Cares and UNICEF. This October the Thespians have a goal to raise over \$500 for UNICEF! The Thespians are also participating in the Making Strides Walk for Breast Cancer Research. Our goal this year is to participate in as many charitable events as possible. In May, they will raise money for the AIDS Walk and over 50 students will participate. The Thespians will have their Black Box Theater debut the second week of December in the Neil Simon comedy, **Plaza Suite**. Tickets are only \$5 and you can call the office to reserve your seat.

This fall our students are given the opportunity to see many off-Broadway and Broadway shows, including **The Lion King** and **Memphis**. Through our work with **IMPACT BROADWAY** a group of seniors will get to work very closely with Broadway professionals to learn about career and college options in the field of theatrical arts. Also, this spring we will continue our work with LEAP and one of our students will have the opportunity to have their original one-act play produced on a Broadway stage and perform in the August Wilson Monologue Competition.

In the spring look for your child in the Senior Theatre productions in March or in the Junior Theatre Showcase in May. In an effort to give all actors time on stage, the sophomores will have a chance to shine in their own showcase in June! We didn't forget about you 9th graders—come to our monthly Poetry Readings to show off your talents! Students from all SLCs can audition for our spring musical in January.

The Theatre Institute will continue its partnerships with LEAP, Manhattan Theatre Club, Primary Stages, The English Speaking Union, and Youth Onstage to bring its students numerous opportunities to advance their creativity.

We hope you and your child have a wonderful school year! Feel free to contact the Director Ms. Morrison anytime at amorrison2@gmail.com

BizTek Institute
Christine Peterson, Director

Another school year has begun. We are excited about the new school year 2011-2012 and look forward to **new** beginnings. It gives me great pleasure to introduce myself as the **new** Director of BizTek. I bring with me a wealth of business and pedagogical experience. I have been where some of you are and I am proud to say my son is a graduate of Hillcrest High School. So Hillcrest and I have a history.

I have already spoken to some of you and look forward to speaking with the rest of you. We have important work to do to ensure that your child succeeds at Hillcrest. This success will result in your child graduating from Hillcrest High School in four years, attending college, and being career ready. I look forward to your active support and encouragement in assisting us with your child's education. Just as we have high expectations for your child/children, we also have high expectations for you.

The BizTek staff and I look forward to meeting with each of you on either Open School evening or afternoon. Those dates are Thursday evening, October 27, 2011 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. or Friday afternoon, October 28, 2011 from 12:45 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. Please bring your concerns or suggestions to share with us.

Welcome back to the parents of students already in our wonderful Small Learning Community (SLC), and a hearty first time welcome to our new parents. We are planning a full and successful year!

**The Academy of
Public Service & Law**
Salima Khan and Pedro Cubero
Co-Directors



The Academy of Public Service & Law is having an extremely successful

fall 2011. Our teachers and Guidance Counselor have managed to create an effective learning community where more than four hundred students feel connected and validated. They have significantly raised educational standards in every single subject area. Through the use of available data and inquiry, these dedicated professionals have changed their pattern of instruction to target the academic needs of all students and have managed to change many students' attitude to school.

Our teachers have been working extensively with every student in every class to help them develop goals for this school year. Your child now has a goal to accomplish and a plan on how to succeed in each class. This process will help him/her graduate high school in four years and develop a readiness for college.

Literacy is being infused in all content areas to help our students understand important academic language and to develop essential language skills. Our teachers have mounted Word Walls in all classrooms and are infusing the Essentials of Writing in all subject areas. Extensive tutoring is offered to all students during period four on Thursdays and Fridays every week.

Our law program has been transformed this term into a three year sequence.

We are offering classes in Criminal Law, Civil Law, International Law, Teen Law, Constitutional Law and Forensics & the Law. We are happy to announce that several of our students were accepted as interns to the High School Law Institute at Columbia and New York Universities and we have been able to foster a partnership with the law firm of Simpson Thatcher & Bartlett. We celebrated Constitution Day on September 17th. Students are currently being rigorously coached for Moot Court and Mock Trial tournaments, which will prepare them for the city wide championships.

We are pleased to announce that our academy is again participating in a ground breaking program called College at Home and CUNY. Twenty-five of our seniors take college courses in English and Math at Hillcrest and CUNY. These intensive courses will enable students to pass the rigorous CUNY Entrance Exam, which will guarantee them admission to all CUNY four year colleges. Our students also take college classes in Psychology, Criminal Justice, Calculus, Health Science, Anthropology and Cultural Diversity at school and at York College. Students also take Advanced Placement and Honors classes in all subject areas.

Many of our students were given the unique opportunity to participate in a City Breast Cancer Walk on October 16th under the auspices of the National Council for Unity. Council students in Public Service & Law are also involved in numerous public service ventures such as Food and Used Clothing Drives. They plan to bring cheer to the babies in the LYFE Center during the Holiday season and foster a culture of "Thankfulness" throughout the school. They also sponsor hikes, trips, dances and visits to the opera.

We are presently involved in doing rigorous outreach to parents. Hundreds of letters and phone calls have already been made since September to target students with truancy, tardiness, academic and behavioral issues. Please log on to <https://pupilpath.nvskedula.com> by using your password (your child has this information) to access his/her progress and attendance.

We reward our students who do well in class, by electing Students of the Month in all the subject areas. An Honor Roll and a Perfect Attendance List are generated at the end of each marking period and displayed throughout the Academy in many prominent places.

Health Careers Institute Maureen Gasior, Director

In Health Careers, our transition into the 2011-2012 school year has gone well. Our senior students are preparing to start the clinical rotations in their specialty areas. Those specialty areas are Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Medical Office Assistant, Medical Laboratory Technician, Nursing Assistant (NA). They will have the opportunity to use the skills they have gotten in the classroom in the workplace. These clinical experiences make our students uniquely prepared for their future health careers. In addition to job skills, our students have the opportunity to obtain college credits.

Our Health Careers Student Government is planning a Fall Gathering. That includes students that volunteer in a local soup kitchen. They are also in the process of planning a Winter Festival on December 15th for all Health Career students. These dedicated students plan their activities with the support of Mr. Venezia, Ms. Giannosis, Mr. Digenakis and Ms. Gasior.

We had the opportunity to meet with prospective students and their parents at the Citywide High School Fair, last

month. Many of those parents are expected to attend our Open House on Wednesday October 19th from 11am to 1pm.

We would like to welcome Mr. Malave as he joins us this year. Overall, we are very enthusiastic about things that are happening in our SLC. Any questions you may have, please feel free to contact Ms. Gasior at extension 3620 or MReilly13@schools.nyc.gov

Newcomers Institute Bibi Nazila Ramjan, Director

The teachers and guidance counselor of Newcomers Institute look forward to another year of hard work and dedicated service to our wonderful students and parents from all over the world. We plan to provide continued support to our students by involving them in a wide array of activities that promote good relationships and work attitudes that will assist them in enjoying their high school experience in their new home – America.

During the fall semester, Newcomers holds its annual Family Fun Night in November. This is an event where students and their families - parents/guardians, grandparents, and siblings of students - are invited to play games, enjoy dishes from all over the world, and dance to ethnic music. We will take the opportunity to distribute certificates to all the students who were on Honor Roll (90 and above) and acknowledge meritorious students for attendance, participation and good citizenship.

At the end of the fall semester (January), we will hold an awards ceremony to recognize our students who achieve 85 and above in all subject areas. We will also acknowledge students who have met their goals for the marking period. We will invite former Newcomers students who are in other institutes to speak about their experiences in their new institutes so that our current students will be able to make wise choices when they are leaving our SLC to enter one of the seven four-year institutes.

The Newcomers Institute is a unique small learning community where barriers are broken down and we are not afraid to try new things to promote good relationships among our students, parents and teachers. I encourage all students to stay in touch with us (room 250) to find out when the after school tutoring and regents preparation classes will begin.

**Pre Med Institute
Cristina Piccirillo, Director**

As a new school year begins the Pre-Med Institute would like to welcome all newcomers and those already with us as we embark on new adventures that will surely leave students with great experiences and everlasting memories. As the year progresses, the teachers will be working with students and parents to ensure success in all their academic endeavours.

Being in the Pre-Med Institute, expectations are higher than usual but nothing the students cannot handle with the right amount of dedication and determination. From the beginning, students are instilled with hard working ethics executed by teachers that will surely help overcome obstacles posed by challenging classes. Such classes include AP Calculus, AP Statistics, AP Global and American History, AP English Composition and Literature, AP Biology and Environmental Sciences, College Now courses, and many Honors level classes. For students seeking assistance, tutoring is now available Thursdays and Fridays Period 4. There are also tutoring classes offered on Saturdays at Hillcrest from 8:30 – 12:30. For further information, please look at Hillcrest's website www.hillcrestweb.com

Pre-Med not only focuses on academics but also involves the students with their environments to help make a difference. Each year Pre-Med students visit the Margaret Tietz Nursing Home during the holidays that allows them to interact and learn life lessons from our much respected elders. Pre-Med will also hold its much anticipated trip in January to Times Square and ice-skating at Bryant Park.

As a reminder to all parents, Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held Thursday, October 27th from 5:30 P.M. – 8:30 P.M. and Friday, October 28th from 12:30 P.M. – 2:30 P.M. Please take this opportunity to speak with your child's teachers.

Expectations are high and in the Pre-Med Institute success is inevitable! Faculty and students are all optimistic for yet another productive year.



**College Office News
Lisa Kearney**

All seniors are urged to complete their college applications by November 30, 2011. Appointments are being made in the College Office and students may do walk-in applications during certain periods. Students should refer to the schedule posted outside room 106.

The next SAT exams are November 5th and December 3rd. The next ACT is December 11th. All seniors should have taken at least one SAT or ACT by December 11th. Colleges use either SAT or ACT scores for admissions. Students should use collegeboard.org for all admissions requirements to CUNY, SUNY, and private colleges. Often colleges require letters of recommendation and/or essays as well as online applications. If transcripts need to be sent to any colleges, students must notify the College Office in writing. The office is open periods 1-9.

College Night is November 3rd at 6:30 PM in the student cafeterias. Representatives from several colleges are available for admissions information and questions.

Financial Aid Night is December 8th at 6:30 PM in the Theater. Families can begin applying for financial aid at www.fafsa.ed.gov as early as January 1st, 2012.

Seniors are required to report any acceptances to colleges, scholarships, financial aid awards, and FINAL college destinations by June 1, 2012.

**Message from
Parent Teacher Association
David Morris, President**

We, the PTA for Hillcrest High School, encourage you to attend our next PTA meeting on October 18th at 6:15 p.m. in the Theatre.

Additionally, it would be nice if you would attend the Saturday Parent classes beginning on October 15, 2011 from 9 am until 12 noon.

There is so much to learn and do! You will enjoy the different classes they have. We look forward to seeing you on these days.

**Message from Parent Coordinator
Prateema Dhane**

It is with great honor and pleasure that I welcome everyone back to school. This year we have many exciting programs for you and your child. Our Saturday Parent Academy will be starting October 15, 2011 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. We will be offering Introduction to Technology and ESL Skills/Horticulture. We will also be serving a light breakfast for our parents.

This year the NYC Department of Education will be offering free tutoring for students that receive free or reduced priced lunch. On October 18, 2011 at 5:00 pm we will be having a Supplemental Education Services (SES) Fair where you can meet various providers. Please come and meet the people that will be offering FREE tutoring. Applications can be picked up in room 116 until November 1, 2011.

Don't forget to attend our PTA meetings on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm in the Theater. PTA meetings are a forum for you to share ideas and ask questions that can help improve our children's school life.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 718-658-5407, ext. 1161 or e-mail me at pdhane@schools.nyc.gov



IMPORTANT DATES

PTA MEETINGS

October 18, 2011
November 15, 2011
December 20, 2011
January 17, 2012
February 14, 2012
March 20, 2012
April 17, 2012
May 15, 2012
June 19, 2012

