



★ *THE EAGLE'S NEST* ★  
**Administrative Parent Newsletter**



***A Note From the Principal***

HOME OF THE BALD EAGLES

AMERICAN HISTORY HIGH

Welcome to the 2013-2014 School Year! One tradition I've established since the creation of American History High School is naming each school year with a school wide theme that drives the work we do as a professional organization. The 2013-2014 school year has been deemed the, **"The Year we Polish the Stars."** All staff members see themselves as **star polishers** ensuring all of our students **gain the social and academic skills needed to attend and graduate from an institution of higher learning**, the mission of our school. It is our goal that we **awaken the genius** that all of our students possess illuminating the star the exist within them. I am confident this year will prove to be **historic** as we graduate our first senior class in accordance to the Newark Public School's newly mandated high school graduation requirements.

The goal of the administrative parent newsletter is to keep you informed about our school's accomplishments, challenges, and initiatives. In this edition you will find articles written by **7th grade students** from our Middle School Program highlighting successes from the 2012-2013 school year while being introduced to new administrators and support staff that play a key role in the accomplishments of our goals. Important dates leading up to December are also shared along with a breakdown of our attendance and the challenges associated with it from the 2012-2013 school year.

Academic life at American History High School continues to improve. For the second consecutive year our school received a Bronze Metal in **"U.S News Best High Schools in America Report"** and the State of New Jersey named us as a **Reward School** for our ability to improve and maintain high rates of student achievement. For the 4th consecutive year we graduated all of our Seniors while ensuring over 90% of them continue their education at either 2 (27%) or 4 (71%) year colleges. During the 2012-2013 school year we increased



A. Robert Gregory  
Principal

student achievement on the HSPA, a state assessment needed to graduate, by 13% and ranked third in the Newark Public School's behind Science Park and Technology High Schools. 82.5% of our Juniors passed both the Math and Literacy portion of the test with **98.7% of them scoring proficient or advance proficient on the Literacy portion**. This is good but not great.

Our goal this year is to go from **Good to Great**. While it impressive being ranked as

one of the nations premier high schools, we do not want to settle for a Bronze Ranking. After we obtain the Silver metal we will continue to chase the gold, the ultimate reward for a successful school.

We continue to face challenges on College Readiness Assessments (**i.e the S.A.T, A.C.T, and AP College Board Exams**) that enable schools to achieve Silver and Gold rankings, thus our focus.

We will be implementing quarterly interim assessments aligned to the A.C.T and Common Core Standards using the data to inform and modify our practices, tailoring them to the needs of our students.

**Attendance** matters and is an important factor in improving student achievement. To that end, our goal is that over **95% of our students are in attendance daily**. Parents you play a vital role.

**Personalization** will be our focus this year, **as we polish the stars**, and you and your child will eventually get to know that every administrator and teacher is committed to ensuring our students gain admissions or employment to the college or career of their choice. This is no easy task and one that will involve a **united effort**. I remain confident the legacy **we** (Faculty members, students, and families) leave behind for those who follow in our footsteps will be one not engraved in stone monuments, instead, woven into the lives of others. **"Our Story"** will continue to inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more as we make and live **"History."**

**WELCOME ONCE AGAIN TO THE 2013-2014 SCHOOL YEAR!!**

**AMERICAN HISTORY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT PLACES FIRST IN NEW JERSEY N.A.A.C.P ACT-SO COMPETITION**

Written by: Akua Asante (Grade 7)

Ivana Malera, placed Gold in the category of film in the N.A.A.C.P's ACT SO State competition this spring. The awards ceremony was held at Montclair High School where she was also presented with a four day full expense paid vacation to Orlando, Disney World this summer.

Ever thought about making a film? Well, it all started with High School when she marched through the doors in September. "Where Does That Leave Us" is a film about the journey of two teenagers who struggle with a life changing deci-

sion. A young lady in a relationship becomes pregnant and they both have to face the music. Together they realize several options must be explored and any decision that is made will impact both of their lives.

Mr. Lee, Video Production teacher was informed about a film contest and relayed the details about the ACT -SO competition to Ivana. Once Ivana investigated, it was then she discovered there was only one day left to enter the contest before the deadline.



Ivana Melara, Class of 2014  
N.A.A.C.P ACT SO  
New Jersey Gold Medalist Winner



**AHHS STUDENT PLACES FIRST IN STATE WIDE ACT-SO COMPETITION (con't pg. 1)**

**Film maker, Ivana, wrote the script herself and had a cast of approximately thirty people that included a line-up of actors and extras. It took 5 months to complete the film and in January it was ready to air to the public**



You can view the film by visiting the school's website. Click on Eagle's T.V. then scroll down and click on Where Does That Leave us?

Malero approached the opportunity expeditiously and seriously. Once admitted as a contestant she and others were scheduled for meetings where they were prepared for the competition by Mrs. Deborah Smith-Gregory and Mr. Darnell Davis, representatives from ACT SO. There were approximately six other contestants competing for film. Ivana remarked, "I was confident, yet excited, but not in shock when I won." Being prepared, talented, and keeping a positive attitude definitely renders winning results.

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It took five months to complete the film and in January it was ready to air to the public. "The most difficult and longest part of the process was actually filming due to conflicting student schedules," Ivana remarked. Needless to say, Malero overcame those obstacles with patience and advice from Mr. Lee.

Although Ivanna won the award it took teamwork to make that happen. Making a film is a process; Mr. Lockhart, English teacher edited the script along with high school student Kwamie Ngaoijua. After filming was complete, Mr. Lee edited a final version of the film for audiences to view. As a director and writer, Ivana also prepared the introduction as well as the credits during the development of her award winning student film.

After interviewing Mr. Lee, some secrets and tips were discovered on how to produce a good film. Mr. Lee remarked, "You must study film in order to make a good one and have patience." For this reason, in his class students learn how to interpret media, such as internet, television, and movies, how to create films, and also media literacy.

When asked why the film received the accolades it did Mr. Lee stated, "The idea was well thought out and she did a lot to avoid it being cliché; it was "outside the box" good casting and good directing." This shows that Mr. Lee is proud of his stu-

dent for doing a fantastic job. Mr. Lee thinks that Ivana has what it takes because she doesn't take no for an answer and associates herself around people with good personalities.

What can students anticipate this year? Students at American History High can expect more film making and receiving more awards to take home with hard work and dedication. When asked how would you improve the quality of the film if you had to do it again Ivana responded, "I would have more shots out of school to make it more realistic." Ivana Malero has plans for her future to major in Cinematic Arts, Film, or Communication, but is also extremely interested in directing, script writing, and creative writing.

Meanwhile, Malero is a Senior at American History High School whose goal is to produce a film this year looking at the impact race has had on her peers perceptions of one another. We look forward to viewing and discussing this extraordinary effort.

**REVISED GRADING POLICY AT A.H.H.S**

**ISR SCHEDULE**

- 10/11/13
- 10/25/13
- 11/8/13
- 11/22/13
- 12/6/13
- 12/20/13
- 1/10/14
- 1/24/14
- 2/7/14
- 2/21/14
- 3/7/14
- 3/21/14

During the 2009-2010 school year Principal Gregory attended the College Board's Annual National Conference entitled, "A Dream Deferred." While attending this 4 day conference, Principal Gregory had the opportunity to meet with admissions counselors from colleges and universities throughout the country. One common universal theme drove home, **60% of a student's admissions into most state colleges is based on their G.P.A and the courses they've enrolled in throughout high school.**

Principal Gregory and his staff worked effortlessly to increase the amount of rigorous courses the school offers while enhancing the G.P.As of the student population.

This year the staff has adopted what Jim Collins, in his book from *Good to Great*, describes as a "Big Hairy Auspicious Goal." That goal is that 50% of the stu-

dents who attend American History High School will maintain a Grade Point Average (G.P.A) of a 3.0 or better.

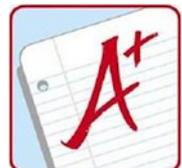
In an effort to reach this goal and ensure students obtain mastery of curricular objectives the staff reviewed their current grading practices and ways they can improve. Their investigation revealed that far too many students were not given an opportunity to enhance their grades in a given marking period/cycle. At times students were not aware of their current average in classes and the work that needed to be done to improve their grades. As a result, the staff, along with the administrative team agreed upon several practices as follows:

- Students will be provided a bi-weekly Grade Report that reflects their current overall average along with their assessment, homework, and classwork

grades.

- Once a student receives their Grade Report they have two weeks to make up any assignments they may be missing (homework/classwork) thus impacting their grades.
- If a student receives less than an 80% on an assessment or quiz they can retake it, as long as they attend at least one afterschool tutorial sessions aimed to support them.
- All students must retake assessments and make up work within two weeks from the time they receive their grade report.

The schedule for Bi-Weekly grade reports known as ISRs appears on page 4 of this newsletter. Parents your support is needed in this endeavor .



# 2013 National Honor Society Fall Induction Ceremony

By: Mrs. Sesay-St. Paul (Vice Principal of Curriculum)

The National Honor Society (NHS) is the nation's premier organization established to recognize outstanding high school students. More than just an honor roll, NHS serves to honor those students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas of Scholarship, Leadership, Service, and Character. Today, it is estimated that more than one million students participate in activities of the NHS. NHS chapters are found in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, many U.S. Territories, and Canada.

Chapter membership not only recognizes students for their accomplishments, but challenges them to develop further through active involvement in school activities and community service.

Here at American History High, this elite group of students have proven academic excellence by earning a cumulative G.P.A of 3.3 by the end of their Junior year. This may sound simple but this is no

easy feat. These students were able to maintain A's and B's while taking multiple Honors and AP courses each year and exhibiting our 3 C's- **Courage, Consciousness and Commitment.**

This year we will be inducting 14 Seniors in the Fall. Juniors will have the opportunity to be inducted at the conclusion of the school year. Members of the Senior Class new to the Honors Society include- Kelly Castillo, Madina Ouedraogo, Jeffrey Espinoza, Azia Daniels, Tishawna Jones, Cynthia Pierre-Louis, Ivana Melara, Keilyn Hernandez, Stephanie Da Silva, Julio Muchaypina, Aja Helton, Regina Anderson, Ifeanyi Nwabor, and Isa King.

Congratulations to all of these students who prove that as Eagles they are the BEST because they FLY HIGH above the REST!

Members of the Honors Society will spearhead various community service initiatives that involve adopting Senior Citizens and assisting them in varied homes throughout the city and a partnership we've established with New Jersey Regional Day School where our students will assist students with various handicaps in achieving life skills such as grocery shopping, catching the bus, etc.

So what can you do to become inducted into the National Honor Society you ask? Come to school regularly, complete all of your classwork and homework to the best of your ability, perform well on tests and projects and make sure that you put EFFORT into your academic performance! Also, be sure to participate in community service projects and co-curricular activities. Strive for nothing less than a B. Shoot for the moon, if you miss at least you'll land on a star.

This year's National Honors Society induction ceremony will occur on October 22, 2013.



Members of the Class of 2013 at last June's National Honor Society Induction Ceremony ( Left to Right) Marshea Walton, Rafiki Johnson, Taylor Jones, and Martina Harris

# A.H.H.S RATED 5 STAR FAMILY FRIENDLY SCHOOL

By: Akua Asante (Grade 7) and Jada Velez (Grade 7)

The news is in! American History High School has been rated a 5 Star Family Friendly School. After interviewing our former parent liaison Ms. D'Amico, we wrote down some vital information on how we earned this achievement. To begin, the criterion for a 5 Star Family Friendly School are the following: parent involvement, volunteers, good first impressions, and people who are loving, respectful, and understanding. Parent involvement is when parents get involved with their children's education. When visitors first walk into our front lobby, they should feel greatly welcomed by whoever greets them. Students and staff in our school should respect each other and show understanding towards each other.

The individuals involved in rating the schools were Mr. Carl Shaw and Mr. Carlos Garcia. Mr. Shaw travels to schools and checks for invitations by seeing if people are friendly and well-mannered while Mr. Carlos Garcia is a parent coordinator. To continue, there are a lot of areas for improvements for our school to help us remain a 5 Star Family Friendly School. Ms. D'Amico stated, "There is always room for improvement." This means that we can remain a 5 star school if we realize our errors and improve upon them. What do we need? We could use more volunteers to help us have a better parent and student organization

How are we compared to other schools in the district? "We're pretty high" with students, staff, and academics altogether we make the ideal school pick.

Additionally, this is the first time we have had a "family friendly walkthrough" meaning this is the first time we had the opportunity to become rated and we arrived at the top.

Lastly, Ms. D'Amico exclaimed, "I was very excited because first when I did the walk through, I was anxious." She believes that this school can remain a 5 star school. With that said, we believe that American History High School has what it takes to be a 5 Star Family Friendly School every year.



Principal Gregory with Parent Volunteers during the 2012-2013 School Year



**Family Friendly School**

**LUNCH APPLICATIONS MUST BE COMPLETED ON LINE**



<http://www.schoolunchapp.com/>

## IMPORTANT DATES

BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT	10/2
HSPA/HSPA PRACTICE TEST (GRADES 12-11)	10/1- 10/3
ACT PRACTICE TEST (GRADES 9-10)	10/1
CRESST INTERIM ASSESS- MENT (GRADES 9-10)	10/3
PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES	12/5
FAMILY GAME NIGHT	12/18



**WE'RE ON THE WEB**  
@  
[www.nps.k12.nj.us/his/site/default.asp](http://www.nps.k12.nj.us/his/site/default.asp)

## ATTENDANCE MATTERS : AN EFFORT TO GO FROM GOOD TO GREAT

Superintendent Cami Anderson began the school year with a challenge to all Newark Public School's stakeholders including administrators, teachers, families, and community members. That challenge, **attend school on a regular basis**. It seems simple but has been problematic throughout the Newark Public Schools.

Attendance matters and has drastically impacted student achievement at American History High School. Unfortunately, our attendance rate ranks amongst the lowest of all district magnet schools as we have a daily average of 91% of our total student population attending school on a regular basis. This is something we can not settle for if we are going to go from **"good" to "great."**

Research shows that students who attend school on a regular basis are more successful than those who do not. Attendance Rates are very often linked to Drop Out Rates and are earlier predictors of a student's success in College, the mission of our school. To the right of this article we have broken down attendance in three ranges (Low attendance, Chronic Absenteeism, and Severely Chronic Absenteeism).

As you can see only 40% of our students have missed less than 10 days of school with an inexcusable 32% of

them missing more than 20 days. Parents, excused absences (*illness, judicial proceeding, religious holiday, or family emergencies*) are inevitable and at times unavoidable but the students who have brought down our attendance rate have unexcused absences which makes them truant. **Truancy is punishable by law and families can be fined accordingly.**

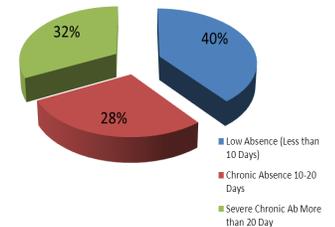
It is our goal to assist parents in meeting the needs of your child. If your child misses 5 days of school you can expect an administrative parent conference arranged by our Vice Principal of School Climate and Culture (Ms. Elizabeth Haden) and the Student Support Team. Parents of students with 10 absences will have to participate in a mandatory conference where we will outline goals for attendance prior to submitting documentation to the courts.

It is our goal to ensure that our students are engaged in interesting rigorous college readiness curriculum. We need them in school to get them ready for the challenges of the 21st Century. Your support is greatly needed. **Let your child know that you think school is important. Set a regular bedtime for them and enforce it. Provide an alternate transportation plan for getting your child to school on time.** Classes begin promptly at 8:15 in the morning.

Every second counts and we want you and your child to take full advantage of the educational opportunities prevalent at American History High School.

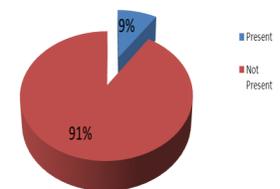
**"Excellence is the Standard. Anything else is, uncivilized."** Together we can change this paradigm.

BREAKDOWN OF ATTENDANCE



Student Absences 2012-2013 SY

AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE 2012-2013 SY



Average Daily Attendance 2012-2013 SY

## NEW ADMINISTRATOR AND SUPPORT STAFF MEMBERS ARE KEY INGREDIENTS TO OUR EFFORTS TO POLISH THE STARS

This year I am delighted to introduce you to three key staff members who make our organization more complete. We begin with the individual spearheading their efforts our new **Vice Principal of Climate and Culture Ms. Elizabeth Haden**.

Ms. Haden by no means is new to education. She has served as a Vice Principal in multiple high schools in Newark and was a former mathematics teacher who was named Rookie of the Year and Sallie Mae's Teacher of the Year. She's a graduate of the College of Notre Dame of Maryland and received dual masters from N.J.I.T in Applied Math and St. Peters College in Administration.

She is not new to the American History High School Family. She's played an integral role for three years in ensuring all of our students have schedules on the first day of school and was an individual I was

attempting to add to our organization for the past two years due to her level of expertise. Ms. Haden's primary roles at American History are as follows: She is the Dean of Middle School Education and leads our Student Support Team discovering ways to support students experiencing academic and behavioral issues along with those who are excelling and those who are in the middle. As Vice Principal of Climate and Culture she will also be addressing issues pertaining to student attendance and lateness. She is joined by no other than **Mr. John Mayo**.

Mr. Mayo is a former colleague of mine who also has years of experience in education. He has joined our staff as the newly appointed Dean of Students and plays an integral role in polishing our stars. Mr. Mayo's primary responsibilities are to support students experiencing challenges and institute a viable

behavior modification program. He is committed to ensuring all students who he has an opportunity to work with successfully transition from high school to college.

Rounding out the list of newly appointed **Star Polishers** is no other than **Ms. Anita Atkinson**, our parent liaison. Ms. Atkinson has years of experience as a liaison and has already mapped out extraordinary opportunities for parents to get involved in their child's education. You are encouraged to check our school's website for monthly parent involvement activities. Ms. Atkinson will readily make herself available to assist parents in lunch applications, gaining access to PowerSchools to monitor your child's grade from home and arranging parent teacher conferences when needed.

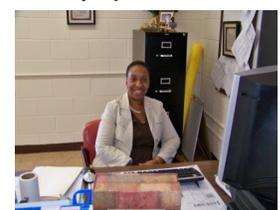
All of our new star polishers are members of our Student Support Team led by Ms. Haden and will prove to be key ingredients in leading us to **greatness**.



Ms. Haden (VICE PRINCIPAL)



Mr. Mayo (DEAN OF STUDENTS)



Ms. Atkinson (PARENT LIAISON)

