

VOLTAJE

Science Park High School

260 Norfolk Street, Newark, NJ 07103

Volume 4, Edition 3

April 2013

A Thank You to Mrs. Bajaj

by Brionna Robinson

Mrs. Bajaj is the Science Department Chair here at Science Park High School; however, she also teaches Organic Chemistry. Mrs. Bajaj has been teaching Organic Chemistry for many years because it is something she loves to do.

She has high standards for her students, and it means a lot to her students to hear her state that she is proud of them. Mrs. Bajaj always says, "Don't memorize the material; learn it." That's the way to pass her class. She teaches her students to apply their knowledge so that they can actually see the benefit of the things they are learning, thus making the class even more enjoyable.

I am not a big fan of chemistry, but I took the class because it is a prerequisite for the field I want to pursue. I actually found the class to be more interesting than I originally thought it would be. Mrs. Bajaj is a great teacher, and while she may be tough on us as students, she truly cares about each and every one of us as individuals. She views us as a family, so she is not just there for you as a teacher, but also as a friend.

Organic Chemistry is a class usually pursued by those who want to go in to the engineering or medical field, but if it is

something you are interested in doing, take the risk; I guarantee you will enjoy it. Do not just take my word for it, though; check out what other students had to say:

"Organic Chem is a class that has it all: a very dedicated teacher, challenging loads of work, and people brave (or crazy) enough to take it with you."

"You learn a lot in this class, but don't expect an easy A. Mrs. Bajaj is a great teacher. I would recommend this class to anyone majoring in the sciences. It is very beneficial, not only for future college classes, but also for science classes taken in high school."

"If interested in the sciences, taking Organic Chemistry would be a good thing to do. Mrs. Bajaj is a caring woman who wants nothing but the best for her students, not to mention that she's a great teacher."

"Mrs. Bajaj is an amazing teacher; even though the course is challenging, I've learned a lot."

Those are just some of the comments students taking the class had. On behalf of myself and the rest of the Organic Chemistry Class, thank you Mrs. Bajaj for being such a great teacher; you are greatly appreciated.



Waiting for Superman, or Lex Luthor?

by Flavia Bortoleto

The world of education over the past few years has been overtaken by a new form of schooling. Charter schools have become all the rage, and the excitement has not been limited to educators, but has also spread to billionaires, policy makers, and even the mainstream media.

One of the reasons for the recent enthusiasm is a documentary called *Waiting for Superman*, funded and produced by digital billionaires and supported by corporations such as Walmart, which by now has become notorious for morally repugnant business practices and worker exploitation. However, what is most important about *Waiting for Superman* is the message it delivers and its impact in urban areas.

The documentary starts out by claiming that recent evidence shows that the only thing that matters in a child's success in school is the teacher he or she has. While we have all been blessed with having a handful of exemplary teachers throughout the years

in school, it is naïve to operate under the assumption that external factors such as poverty do not affect a child's ability to learn. Problems at home such as having parents that are not present, living in a house with terrible conditions, and not being guaranteed food everyday are major factors; it is no coincidence that children in households that earn more tend to have higher performing children.

Furthermore, we begin to see that we are not watching a documentary that presents facts and that shows examples of successful educational reform, but rather a documentary presented in a narrative style that follows the lives of four children who enter the lottery in hopes of being accepted into a charter school. It may not be hard on facts, but the documentary pulls heavily on one's heartstrings, and at the end, most are left wondering if in fact the public school system has robbed these innocent children

of their potential. The documentary does not mention the injustices of having a lottery system to enter a school, which could be equated to Willy Wonka's golden ticket. The film also accepts that public schools cannot be changed or reformed, and instead of proposing increased funding for those schools or reforms in the public system, it assumes that funding a new type of school is the only answer.

The documentary uses teachers as a scapegoat and blames them, their unions, and their job assurance. It does not touch upon the only two things that have been proven to positively affect a child's performance in school: smaller classroom sizes and greater teacher experience.

Overall, I would recommend a documentary that counters this one with accurate information; if interested in such a documentary, one should watch *The Inconvenient Truth Behind Waiting for Superman*.

AP Tips from a Student

by Rykeea Lowe

Many students here at Science Park are taking one or more AP classes, and with those classes come the AP Exams in May.

For students who will be taking any exam, the thought of those exams is terrifying: “How do I get a 4 or 5? How do I remember all the information or formulas? What if I forget how to solve this type of problem? How do I feel confident in my answers and not second guess myself?”

These are questions that go through every AP student’s mind when it comes time to prepare and actually take the exam; however, the most important thing to remember is to stay calm and not worry yourself to death.

Some Tips to Prepare for the Exam

•Be confident in yourself.

Know and understand that you can do anything you put your mind to and have faith in yourself as well as your teachers.

Believe that they have prepared you to their fullest ability to take the exam and pass with flying colors.

•Practice, Practice, PRACTICE.

There is no better way to prepare for these exams than to practice. Ask your teachers for extra AP practice questions or even practice sessions in class.

Go on www.collegeboard.com and try their practice questions. Try to find AP exam books, i.e. 5 Steps to a Five series; use those exams to study and learn your strengths and weaknesses, and then improve on them.

•RELAX!

The night before the exam or even a few days before, rest. Don’t freak out and go into full study session mode.

Sometimes, students who do this actually do worse on the exam.

Get some rest, put your feet up, and mentally prepare for the next day.

•Do YOUR BEST!

Don’t freak out if there is material that you don’t know or you aren’t sure of. You can never be completely sure what will be on the exam.

If there is a question that you aren’t sure of or can’t remember material concerning the topic, attempt to make an educated guess and remain CALM! Don’t leave any answers blank.

The AP exams freak everyone out to some extent, so don’t feel like you are the only one stressing about it. Need help with certain material?

Talk to your teachers, practice, or even form a study group with classmates so you can get additional tips, strategies, and help.

Some classmates might have come up with easy strategies to remember things. When it comes time to take your exam(s), stay calm and remember: Do your best!

AP Tips from AP Teachers

Mrs. Pickett:

The tips [I’m giving] are for how to develop a successful [art] portfolio. Don’t be afraid to take risks or make mistakes. Manage your time well. Really invest yourself in the work; that way you enjoy it. When you enjoy something, you do a better job. I think those are tips not only for success in AP Studio Art, but also tips for success in your academic career and life.

Mr. Alston:

Take lots of practice exams; understand vocabulary; and make sure you review grammar, sentence structure, commas, dashes, and all basic grammar. Make sure you that review all the grammar rules thoroughly so that you have more tools at your disposal.

Mr. Goff:

Read closely! Try a problem even if you don’t understand it. Do the easier problems first.

Dr. MacDonald:

Students do not need to know every detail of Biology; they need to know the larger ideas and how they’re connected to each other and how they are threads throughout biology. They should consult the AP college board course description and actually look at the list of different topics being covered; we’ll go over them as part of review, but I think it would be good for them to actually go on there, open up the PDF file, and go through them and in their mind, think about the statements or questions, and see how they can answer these larger questions about Biology because that will help them do better on the test. Studying is very important. Keep your cool the day of the exam. Go in and do your best; that’s what I tell my students. Don’t worry that day. Just do the best you can.

Mr. McMahon:

My tips: Don’t sign up for an AP class if you aren’t ready to do the work. A lot of that work has to take place outside of the classroom. If you’re a student who just counts on learning inside the classroom, obviously that’s going to be happening, but you have to have outside plus inside to really go out.

Mr. Gironda:

The best thing you can do for an AP exam is to practice old AP exams over and over again. The key to doing well on the exam is like a driver’s exam. You already know what’s going to happen... You can practice and force yourself to be good at it by practicing. Then you can take the test with confidence. You have to be able to walk in there knowing what the exam is going to be before you even take it. That way when they throw something at you, because they’re always going to throw something at you that you’re not expecting, you can say, “OK, I can handle this because I’m confident with everything else.” Don’t wait for the teacher to review. Go to the store and buy an AP book; start reviewing on your own.

Mrs. Jarkowsky:

Tips would be eat breakfast. Rest. Don’t over think, just trust your gut.

Mr. Mohren:

Study. Bring a pencil. Eat breakfast. Go to bed early. Stay focused. Don’t get side tracked. Manage your time well.

Mrs. Perkins:

Students certainly have to study the course content and practice taking multiple choice tests. Strategies for multiple choice questions include elimination to narrow down your choices and making sure to not spend too much time on any one question. You can return to the questions that will take more time, if time is available at the end of the test. In addition, sometimes our students over think the questions. An answer may be simpler than the student thinks. Students will see choices that are designed to be distractors; therefore, they need to be trained not to be distracted by those choices. In terms of the free response questions, students need to be aware that they know more than they think, but they must express that knowledge on paper to show the reader that they have knowledge of the topic. If a fourth grader can say it, then they need to rethink their answer. In term of the math problems, the student needs to watch the units and look for what units are expected in the answer. You can often figure out the calculation needed by examining the units you need to end up with.

AP Programs at Science Park

AP English Program

Courses: AP Language and Composition, AP Literature and Composition

Teachers: Mr. Alston, Mr. Townsend

Course Description: If you enjoy reading and analyzing texts, these are the perfect classes for you. AP Language teaches you how to use language and how to effectively communicate through persuasion. AP Literature teaches students how to read, analyze, and write about major literary works.

AP Foreign Language Program

Courses: AP Spanish Language, AP French Language

Teachers: Mr. Garcia, Mrs. Jarkowsky

Course Description: After taking three years of either language, you can take the AP class. It's always good to know another language, and colleges and employers will love that you know more than just English.

AP History Program

Courses: AP European History, AP World History, AP Microeconomics, AP US History

Teachers: Mr. Mohren, Mr. Rippey, Mr. Gomez, Mr. McMahon

Course Description: While AP US History is not a class this year, it will be offered next year. AP Microeconomics focuses on markets and supply and demand, but it is not a business course. The courses focus on specific areas of history.

AP Math/Computer Science Program

Courses: AP Computer Science A, AP Calculus AB, AP Calculus BC, AP Statistics

Teacher: Mr. Gironda, Mr. Patiak

Course Description: If you like solving problems and learning the language of the computer, these courses would be ideal for you. They each teach logic in one way or another.

AP Science Program

Courses: AP Biology, AP Chemistry, AP Physics B, AP Physics C, AP Environmental Science

Teachers: Dr. MacDonald, Mr. Yip, Mr. Goff, Dr. Okil, Mrs. Perkins

Course Description: These classes revolve around specific areas of science. They go in depth on the topics you've covered in your regular science classes.

AP Art/Music Program

Courses: AP Studio Art, AP Music Theory

Teachers: Mrs. Pickett, Dr. Allgood

Course Description: If you need a creative outlet to express yourself, AP Studio Art is the class to take. If you want to learn more about music, AP Music Theory will teach you.

AP Testing Schedule

Week 1	Monday, May 6	Tuesday, May 7	Wednesday, May 8	Thursday, May 9	Friday, May 10
Morning 8 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chemistry Environmental Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer Science Spanish Language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calculus AB Calculus BC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Literature and Composition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Language and Composition
Afternoon 12 noon					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statistics Studio Art*
Week 2	Monday, May 13	Tuesday, May 14	Wednesday, May 15	Thursday, May 15	
Morning 8 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biology Music Theory 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World History 	
Afternoon 12 noon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physics B 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> French Language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> European History 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Microeconomics 	

*May 10, 2013 is the last day for your AP Coordinator to submit your digital portfolio sections, but you will need to complete this work and submit it to your teacher well in advance of May 10.

AP Teachers



(From left to right)

Row 1: Dr. MacDonald, Mr. Patiak, Dr. Allgood, Mr. Townsend

Row 2: Mr. Alston, Mr. Gironda, Mr. McMahon

Row 3: Mr. Yip, Dr. Okil, Mr. Goff, Mr. Rippey

Not Pictured: Mr. Garcia, Mrs. Perkins, Mrs. Jarkowsky, Mrs. Pickett, Mr. Mohren

VOLTAGE

Student Newspaper of Science Park High School
260 Norfolk Street, Newark, NJ 07103

Editor-in-Chief: Daniela Fonseca

Co-Editor-in-Chief: Ashanti Hargrove

Assistant Editor: Christian Mendonça

Photographer: Edith White

Contributing Staff:

Brionna Robinson Flavia Bortoleto
Sofia Ribeiro Darius Francois
Rykeea Lowe Ashanti Hargrove
Niekelle Bloomfield-Hunter

Advisor: Mr. Townsend

Study Hall

by Sofia Ribeiro

Throughout the nation, counselors and students meet up annually to discuss their schedules for the upcoming high school year. Most advisors recommend study hall for stressed out athletes or students who are taking too many AP classes, but what is study hall?

Study hall is a class that consists of a thirty to forty five minute period where students take the time to catch up on school work, study for upcoming tests, or even start on homework. Most people have the misconception that students will only use this free time to socialize with friends and that the time for that could be found after school; however, with the involvement in after school activities and the amount of homework piled on students, study hall serves a useful purpose. With study hall, students will have more time to organize and evaluate the work they need to complete during the day, which will lead to higher grades and a more tranquil lifestyle.

The shuffling of sneakers, the noisy chatter amongst teammates, the skidding of equipment being dragged throughout the floors--all are the well known sounds of a new sport season. Whether it is fall season and soccer players are trying to get accustomed to new teachers and a new team, or whether it is winter season and track runners are battling the stress of midterm arrivals, all athletic students are anxious about finding equilibrium between school and sports. Daily high school practices can last up to three hours, and by the time students commute home, they are too tired to confront the

piles of homework waiting for them within the folders of their book bags. The same goes for academic students. After hours of trying to stay attentive in AP classes and being involved in the chemistry club or math Olympics, completing more school work seems tedious. Most students will stay up until the wee hours of the morning trying to get everything done, but if there were study hall, all these obstacles could be overcome.

For students who take four AP classes or athletes who just need more time in a day, study hall would be the cure to all academic suffering. These types of students want to make the most of their education, so much so that twenty four hours isn't enough! Study hall would give back a few minutes for these students to catch their breath and reevaluate their priorities based on what needs to be completed first! More time to study and more time to organize cuts back on stress and results in more knowledge gained.

Science Park High School prides itself in its scientific research and mathematical data to back up findings; therefore, let us carry out an experiment in our school, an experiment which will test the effects of supervised study hall on our students.

Based on the previous background knowledge, we can form a likely hypothesis that with study hall, students will regain their focus and energy, charging on to becoming even better students!

Let's set up study hall for the next academic year.

Five Ways To Be Happy

by Darius Francois

Walking through the halls of Science Park, you can find many students who always look sad. If you are one of these students, here is a list of things you can do to be happy, created by one of our very own classmates.

1. Have a moral standard in which you constantly help people and are honest. This will allow for opportunities where you will be rewarded in mysterious ways. Try it for a week and see what happens.

2. Get rid of your fear of death. With this fear comes so much unneeded anxiety. If you rid yourself of the fear of death, you will see life in a whole new light, partly because death is the root of most fears and anxiety.

3. Try not to get offended. Don't take yourself too seriously, and laugh off everything. You may find that hurt can be warded off with a smile. This does not mean you should lower your standard of respect for yourself, but with the right balance you can enjoy a better quality of life.

4. Never hold back from expressing yourself. If you feel like singing, then sing. If you feel like crying, then cry. Your body needs this in order to get rid of the contorted energy which messes with your happiness.

5. Don't let unfortunate events get you down. View failure as a tempering with the soul that may end up helping you out later.

How to Survive a Zombie Apocalypse

by Niekelle Bloomfield-Hunter

The year is 2325. The Earth's population continually dwindles due to a recent and large scale outbreak of flesh-eating zombies. The area where you live was lucky enough to not be the first place targeted, but the zombies are headed your way. Time is running out. What do you do?

•The first thing you should ALWAYS have prepared in case of any type of disaster is a DISASTER KIT. Your kit should include the basic necessities that you may not be able to get to in the wake of the ongoing apocalypse:

- Water
- Food (Canned goods and non-perishables)
- Medication
(Both prescription and non prescription)
- Tools and Supplies (Swiss army knife, bleach, duct tape, radio, etc.)
- Sanitation and Hygiene Supplies (Soap, towels, disinfectants)
- Important Documents (Copies of driver's license, passport, and birth certificate)
- First Aid Supplies (Basic first aid kit)

One non-traditional natural disaster item that should be kept close at all times in the event of a zombie attack is a BASEBALL BAT. You don't need any skill to use it, and it will prove to be extremely useful in forcing your way through a crowd of unbalanced mindless zombies.

•Have an EMERGENCY PLAN already prepared. The plan should entail the following:

- Two meeting places. This is in case it becomes no longer safe to stay in your home. Have somewhere to meet up later with friends and family who may have gotten separated somehow. One of the places should be close to home and the other farther away.
- Have a list of emergency contacts. The list should include officials such as the police and fire departments, scanner frequencies (for the radio), and long-distance relatives.
- PLAN YOUR EVACUATION ROUTE! Plan out the route you will use to evacuate and evade the zombies. Do not leave it to chance or just "wing it."

•Use TEAMWORK! Your mother has been infected, and now she's in the living room biting off your father's ear. This is not the time to have pointless arguments with your brother about who left the downstairs door open. It does not matter who is with you when the zombies attack; it is imperative that you find common ground and establish a level of trust and respect for one another.