

Parent Connections

Official Newsletter of the PTA of EWSIS
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PTA News

East-West School of International Studies

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Jeannie Park, *Guidance Counselor*
Carlos Diaz, *Guidance Counselor*
Janine Esposito, *Community Associate*
Julia Cheng, *Community Associate*

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Donna Forde, *Treasurer*
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Denise Eng, *Communications Chairperson*
Rita Lopez, *Fundraising Chairperson*



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Thank you to the following teachers: Mr. Bantz, Ms. Chang, Ms. Lebowitz, Ms. Mandel, & Mr. Sherman for contributions made to this newsletter.



Check out a new page on our school website that lists opportunities for scholarships, summer programs, and internships:

<http://ewsis.org/current>

Dear East-West Families,

Spring is here and the school year is moving by quickly. Students have begun to prepare for various end term assessment tests. Included in this newsletter are some frequently asked questions & answers regarding the NYS English Language Arts (ELA) & Mathematics Exam that our Middle School students will be taking in May 2011. We hope this information will be useful for you.

Furthermore, as a reminder, the school's Learning Environment Surveys have been distributed. Please take the time to fill these parent surveys out. They play a valuable component of our school's report card. Your concerns and feedback are much needed. Please let your voices be heard. Completed surveys must be returned to the DOE by **April 15th**. If you have not received your survey or have any questions regarding the Learning Environment Survey, please contact our Community Associate, Janine Esposito at jesposito@ewsis.org.

In addition, we are continuing the nominations process for PTA Executive Board members for 2011-2012. We also have two parent openings for our School Leadership Team this coming year. If you are interesting in running for one of the PTA Executive Board positions or for one of the available School Leadership Team positions, please contact any of the members of the Nominating Committee or see any current Board members to submit your names. If you have the time and would like to get more involved with the school, consider joining the PTA Executive Board for 2011-2012. We would gladly welcome your involvement and support.

Sincerely,
PTA Executive Board



Teachers' Corner

School News...



The entire East-West community was moved to act upon hearing news of the natural disaster and seeing scenes of destruction in Japan. What started as a small idea in one Senior Institute class to hold a bake sale became a school-wide project supported by students, parents, administration, teachers, and school support staff. Our Japan Relief Bake Sale was held during Parent-Teacher Conferences on March 17-18. Response was tremendous on all fronts; many students and staff donated baked goods to sell, scores of parents and students purchased those goods, and many in the East-West community made additional cash donations. We were able to raise a grand total of (drumroll, please...) \$1,734!

This is a testament to the lessons we are teaching our children about having compassion for others and the importance of doing small actions that benefit people who need help. The money will be sent to the Japan Society's Earthquake Relief Fund, which is partnering with relief organizations large and small in Japan and has promised to distribute 100% of the money to those organizations solely for relief efforts.

Summer Trip Update:

Because of a State Department travel advisory, the Department of Education is not permitting any travel to Japan at this time. Our trip to Japan is cancelled until further notice. Tremendous thanks go out to Mr. Bantz and to Ms. Arroyo for all their work on the trip, and to Mrs. Noriko Aoki and her group of housewives in Nagoya, Japan who had offered to host our students.

2011 China Summer Camp Program Dates: July 16-31, 2011

Cost:

Students are required to cover the costs of round-trip air tickets, International travel insurance and visa fees. Hanban will cover in China costs, including room and board, transportation, activities and sightseeing for students and chaperones.

Please be aware that the deadline for the registration is Tuesday, April 5th 2011.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Ms. Chang at mchang@ewsis.org

Calendar of Events

- 04/02 PTA General Membership Mtg.
@ 10 AM
- 04/12 SLT Meeting
@ 6:30 PM
- 04/18 – 04/26 Spring Recess
School Closed
- 05/03 - 05/06 NYS ELA Exams
Grades 6-8
- 05/07 PTA General Membership Mtg.
@ 10 AM
- 05/11 & 05/12 NYS Math Exams
Grades 6-8
- 05/24 SLT Meeting
@ 6:30 PM
- 05/25 & 05/26 EWSIS Spring Musical
@ 7:00 PM
- 06/23 12th Grade Graduation Ceremony
- 06/27 8th Grade Stepping Up Ceremony

Frequently Asked Questions about Preparing for the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) Exam

Q: When will Middle School students take the ELA exam?

A: Testing dates are scheduled by New York State for the week of May 3-6 and make ups are scheduled for May 4-11. The East-West testing schedule will be posted on our school website at www.ewsis.org.

Q: How long is the exam?

A: The exam is a two day exam, administered on consecutive days. Actual testing time (excluding set-up, preparation and time to read the listening section) is 70 minutes on day 1 and 90 minutes on day 2.

Q: Has the exam changed from previous years?

A: The length and the format of the exam will change this year, but the skills tested remain the same: reading, writing, listening, and critical thinking.

Q: Do East-West teachers offer test preparation?

A: East-West teachers across content areas integrate the skills and strategies tested on the exam into their daily lessons. At-risk students meet in small groups during Academy to reinforce these skills. Additionally, we are offering a session on Saturdays to those students who signed up for the program.

Q: How can I find my child's score from last year?

A: The easiest place to access that information is on the ARIS web site. Both your child's actual score and his or her performance levels are posted. If you have difficulty finding the score, feel free to contact your child's English teacher.

Q: How can I help to prepare my child?

A: Due to the length of this year's exam, stamina will be exceptionally important. Students should be reading every night (including weekends) for at least 30 minutes. Additionally, all past exams are posted on the New York State website and resources are available on the Acuity website.

Q: How should my child prepare for the exam?

A: Your child should practice note-taking, active listening, and sustained independent reading on a daily basis. Command of these skills will enable your child to transfer these skills to the exam.

Q: How is the ELA test scored?

A: Students' tests are graded and a raw score is calculated. New York State converts the raw scores to scaled scores. Performance levels are generated from the scaled scores.

Q: When will I receive my child's scores?

A: Typically, during the late summer or early spring.

Q: Where can I find more information about the ELA exam?

A: Information is available on the State Assessment website:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/osa/english/ela-ei.html>

Q: If I still have questions, who can I contact?

A: You may contact your child's English teacher and/or Robin Mandel, the English Department Chairperson.

Frequently Asked Questions about Preparing for the New York State Mathematics Exam

How can I help my child prepare for the exam?

Start reviewing the math concepts taught this year with your child. For the best results, review nightly and on weekends.

What resources do I have to use as a review?

- 1) Use your child's quizzes and exams from this school year.
- 2) Review class notes and homework assignments.
- 3) Look up topics in the Quick Review Math Handbook. This book explains the concepts taught in class and has practice examples and an answer key.
- 4) Complete NYS Mathematics Exams from previous years. Exams and Part I answer keys are available online. At the bottom of the page on the website, there are translated versions in Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Russian.

6th Grade Practice Exams

<http://nysedregents.org/Grade6/Mathematics/home.html>

7th Grade Practice Exams

<http://www.nysedregents.org/Grade7/Mathematics/home.html>

8th Grade Practice Exams

<http://www.nysedregents.org/Grade8/Mathematics/home.html>

How can I help my child review the work?

Rewrite on a separate piece of paper the questions on your child's class quizzes and exams. The quiz/exam can be used as an answer key. If the correct answer is not on the quiz/exam, you may want to have your child ask his/her teacher to check it. In addition, use the resources listed above.

Make sure that your child is writing down the calculations he/she used to arrive at the answers to the problems. It is helpful for your child to practice showing how he/she arrived at the answer. This method allows your child to look back at his/her work to assess its accuracy. If a calculation error is made, he/she can correct the mistake. Writing down the steps also helps to arrive at a correct solution.

There are some math concepts that my child is learning that I don't remember. How can I help my child?

Just sitting together can be encouraging for your child. Print out a copy of a NYS Mathematics Exam from a prior year. Have your child complete the examples he/she understands. You'll have an answer key to check. If your child needs additional help on certain problems, ask him/her to ask his/her teacher for help. Your child can come home and share with you what he/she learned. This will reinforce your child's understanding and make him/her feel successful.

Is my child preparing for the exam in class?

Yes, your child is exposed to the types of questions and language on the exam. On **April 6th & 7th, EWSIS will conduct a practice exam**. Students will experience the conditions of the actual exam.

What are the dates of the NYS Mathematics Exam?

Wednesday, May 11th & Thursday, May 12th

What can I do to help my child's success on the day of the exam?

- 1) Make sure your child eats breakfast at home or arrives at school early enough to eat breakfast.
- 2) Bring your child to school early.
- 3) Reassure your child that he/she will do well on the exam.
- 4) Have your child get a sufficient amount of sleep the entire week leading up to the exam.
- 5) Send your child to school prepared with sharpened pencils.

If you have any other questions, contact your child's math teacher. He/she is there to give support to you and your child.