

Parent Connections

Official Newsletter of the PTA of EWSIS
Vol. 2, Issue #3, December 2010

East-West School of International Studies

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PTA News

Dear East-West Families,

With school in full swing, it can be worthwhile to think about what we as parents and guardians can do to create a home life that supports our children in their studies. We have compiled some basic, tried-and-true tips to help parents ensure that their kids get the most out of school.

• **Eat Well / Sleep Well!** Make certain to start your child's day off with a well-rounded breakfast and finish off with a family dinnertime. Not only will they eat a more balanced meal, but also their conversation skills will increase when families take the time to eat together. Recent studies show that more time eating family dinners predict less risky behavior and lower obesity rates. In addition, school-age children need at least 8-9 hours of sleep each night in order for their brain and emotions to work best. What time do the lights go off at your house?

• **Encourage Routine.** Most kids need time to breathe, once they return home from school. Developing a family routine where they can relax and start their homework will give them the structure they need to be successful. Try to provide a place and time to do their work. A desk or a tote with school supplies will help them be ready to tackle any homework more efficiently

• **Monitor the screen time.** It's not just TV's! The Kaiser Family Foundation recently reported that kids spend 6.5 hours a day using electronic media: computers, videogames, cell-phones etc. How many TVs do you have in your house or even in the bedrooms? The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no TV for children under the age of 2 years old, and only 1-2 hours of "screen time" for older kids. That can go by quickly when kids are texting, using social network sites, or playing electronic games sometimes while doing homework! Encourage alternate activities instead, like reading, playing sports, crafts, having a play-date, riding bikes, hiking, letter writing, or playing games. Most of all watch yourself and turn it off!

• **Balance Activities.** Extracurricular activities help kids develop skills and interests and also provide them with a sense of accomplishment. However, too many outside commitments can fragment their attention. Try to maintain 1-2 activities a week. Remember, our job is to expose them to life experiences, while maintaining a balance.

• **Finally... Model, model, model.** Make it a point to get to know your child's teachers. Spend time at school and time at home learning. Go on field trips at school or on a family outing. Take advantage of museum "free days"; check out the library culture pass; take a hike; plant a garden. The more kids experience learning as fun, the more they will appreciate growing at home and at school.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for December 15, the evening of the East-West School Talent Show. We hope everyone can come out for this festive and fun event, which showcases the many talents of our amazing students!

With best wishes,
PTA Executive Board



A Word from Our Principal...

Dear Parents and Guardians,



The importance of studying

At the high school and middle school levels, studying is the purposeful review of material taught in class by the instructor. No child comes to studying naturally; it is a learned skill. Those who learn to study will find better opportunities for success at school. Those who do not learn to study will be forever mystified by the constant good grades of their peers who know how to study.

Studying begins with homework. Here at EWSIS, students are assigned homework 3-5 times a week in most of the courses. Assignments should take approximately thirty minutes to complete. A good homework assignment has a reading component followed by some identification questions and one or two thinking questions. Homework should be a review of the day's lessons in middle school and high school, and in high school can be a preview of what will be taught in coming lessons.

Studying, however, goes beyond homework. When a child studies, she or he creates and follows a system of review. There is a daily, weekly, and a monthly component.



Each day, the child reads over the class notes. She makes notes to ask the teacher the following day of material she is unsure of. She puts new vocabulary words onto flash cards for review during idle time. She makes a mark on the paper to indicate to herself that she has reviewed her notes.

Each week, she reads through all the notes she has written down in her notebook. She reviews new vocabulary words, formulas, and other concepts. She creates questions that she would ask if she were the teacher. She makes a mark on all the papers to indicate that she has reviewed all her notes of the week. If she is more studious, she will pretend to be a teacher and will create short quizzes for herself.

Once a month, she will skim the main ideas in her textbook and in her notes. She should know the vocabulary of the past month and should review older vocabulary words, formulas, and concepts from previous months. She should create written tests for herself on identification questions and essay questions.

In high school, the more studious will form study groups which meet regularly over soda or coffee to review work. They will divide up responsibilities with each of them summarizing the main points of chapters from the textbook or required readings, and then teaching these points to the other group members. Group members can also create their own practice tests to give each other with the aim being that their teacher's tests will be easy after all their practice tests.



As parents, our responsibility is to ensure that studying is occurring each day with a review of class notes and regularly each weekend and each month. We never ask, "Have you studied?" Instead we ask for evidence of studying in the form of vocabulary flash cards, self-made tests, notes written at home on the class notes pages of uncertain concepts which our child needs to review with her teacher the following day. We can also look for a self assessment mark made by our child indicating mastery of the material. Most students need a quiet place to study, free from distractions of the TV, the computer, the cell phone, and free of interruptions. By creating and following a systematic approach to studying, students will have a better opportunity at success while at East-West and beyond.

Continue to encourage your child to improve upon his/her studying habits. As always, we are available should you or your child need further academic support.

Warm Regards,

Ben Sherman
Principal





Teachers' Corner

Calendar of Events

- 12/4 PTA General Membership Mtg.
@ 10 AM
- 12/15 School Talent Show
- 12/21 SLT Meeting
@ 6:30 PM
- 12/24 – 01/02/2011 Winter Recess
School Closed
- 01/08 PTA General Membership Mtg.
@ 10 AM
- 01/17 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
School Closed
- 01/25 SLT Meeting
@ 6:30 PM



Trip Highlights:

On Tuesday November 9, 2010, our students went to the Metropolitan Opera to see the Director's Rehearsal of Don Carlo by Verdi. Our students experienced one of the first rehearsals of the opera's cast. Actors were in street clothes and the sets were still under construction. Our students watched as the actors/singers were placed on the stage and were given direction by the Director and Stage Manager. The music conductor and a pianist were in attendance to help the actors with direction and timing. Our students found that putting a play together can be a long and often tedious job. Practice really does make perfect.

At the conclusion of the Director's Rehearsal, 802 was invited to meet two members of the Met's staff. They met the Assistant Stage Manager and Mr. Rick Sordelet, fight coordinator. Mr. Sordelet is world renowned and is the most prolific fight director in America today. Our students were enthralled with his skills of illusion and fight techniques. Mr. Sordelet is not only an excellent fight choreographer, but he's incredibly articulate. Four of our students were asked to help Mr. Sordelet demonstrate his craft. Sam Lee, Tyler Moore, Ameena Ahmed, and Kierra Pittman acted as his assistants and put on quite a show for the rest of the class. *What an exciting experience for our students at East-West!*

Help Wanted

Parent volunteers to assist with School Talent Show on December 15, 2010. Assistance needed with Ticket Sales (at 6 PM) and Stage Decorating (at 3 PM). Please contact Ms. Marinos at emarin@ewsis.org or any PTA Board member at pta@ewsis.org if you are available.

Tickets: Adults - \$5
Children - \$3



We welcome any feedback for future issues of our parent newsletter. Please send any suggestions to the PTA at pta@ewsis.org.