



Students in Roger Williams 8 celebrate their Week 1 Olympic victory with a rare "dress down" day.

Eighth Grade Olympics Take Center Stage

On Monday, January 7th, Excel Academy kicked off its first annual 8th Grade Olympics, a six-week culture-building extravaganza. The games commenced with the official Opening Ceremonies, during which 8th grade teachers paraded through the Community Circle area cheering on their respective homerooms. Mr. Habetler, Dean of Students, explains, "The two 8th grade homerooms are competing across a number of categories, including punctuality, homework completion, and of course, weekly Olympic events." So far, three events have been held: the "Name Game," the Teacher Ice Cream Eating Contest, and the Student Ice Cream Eating Contest. The homeroom that scores the most points throughout a given week earns the right to "dress down" on that Friday. The games will culminate with an 8th grade team-building field trip (Feb. 14th) and a school-wide Talent Show (Feb. 15th). According to Dean of Curriculum Ms. Bhasin, "The goal is to build a sense of team and specific social skills necessary for students to be successful in Freshman Academy."

Upcoming Schoolwide Events

Friday, Feb. 1st: No School (Staff Prof. Dev'p.)

Tuesday, Feb. 5th:

- 11:30am student dismissal
- Family Conferences, 12:00-2:00pm and 4:00-6:30pm

Wednesday, Feb 6th: 11:30am student dismissal

Thursday, Feb. 7th: Vision and Hearing Screening

Thursday, Feb. 14th: 8th grade Team Building Trip

Friday, Feb. 15th: "Excel Idol" Talent Show

Mon., Feb. 18 – Fri., Feb. 22: February Vacation

A Note from the Principal

Dear Excel Academy Families:

Happy New Year! One of our 2008 resolutions as a school is to more frequently expose you to the many wonderful learning opportunities encountered by our students both in and out of the classroom.

The best way to see Excel is to arrange a tour during the school day. Since September, Excel Academy has welcomed over 200 non-family visitors into our school to see our academic program in action. Each visitor has left the school significantly impressed by the dedication and enthusiasm of our teachers, the diligence and professionalism of our students, and the soundness of our overall program. It is my sincere hope that you, as a member of our school community, can also witness your child's learning first-hand.

Until you are able to join us, please continue to ask your child about his or her daily experiences at Excel. Ask about Community Circle, Enrichment, or the Building Block Challenge. Or ask about the algebra they're learning in math classes or the extraordinary works of literature they're reading in English classes. From 8:00am-3:40pm, your child is a scholar in every sense of the word.

One specific academic note: because Excel's science and social studies classes are one semester in length, your child is now transitioning into a new subject for the 2nd semester. If your child took science during Semester 1, he/she will now take social studies. And if your child took social studies during Semester 1, he/she will now take science.

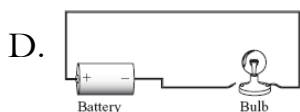
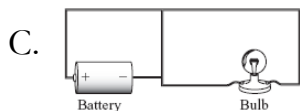
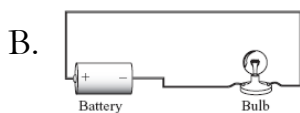
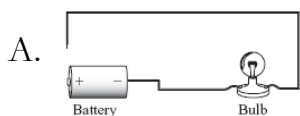
Sincerely,
Scott Given, Principal



Some images from the 8th Grade Olympics. On left, 8th grade teachers show off their homeroom allegiances. On right, Juan Lopez and Adaliz Corea celebrate Ice Cream eating victory.

Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader?

Test your knowledge on this question from the 5th grade Final Exam in science: Which diagram below shows a circuit that will cause the bulb to light?



The correct answer is Choice B.

Excel Academy Basketball Teams Competing Well

The Excel Academy boys' and girls' basketball teams have begun their 2008 seasons in exciting fashion. The boys' team has earned thrilling victories over Innovation Charter School and Marblehead Charter School, while the girls' team has shown tremendous improvement throughout its first four games. Both teams participate in a 12-team league made up of Eastern Massachusetts Charter Schools.

Participation on the teams requires a significant commitment. Teams usually have one or two weeknight games in addition to their weekly practices. According to team member Kristian Siri, "Playing on the team helps me focus on my school work. I know I have to do well in school to stay on the team."

Many thanks to coaches Ms. Fraker, Ms. Saltonstall, and Ms. Martin.

Mandatory Family Conferences!

Tuesday, February 5th

Session 1: 12:00-2:00pm

Session 2: 4:00-6:30pm

Families are required to attend during one of the two sessions. Student Report Cards will be distributed at conferences. We look forward to seeing you!

"Excel Idol" Talent Show

Friday, February 15th

6:00-8:00pm

Zumix Music Studio

202 Maverick Street, East Boston

Hosted by the Class of 2008

Important Dress Code Clarification

As you know, Excel Academy has a very strict dress code policy. The Excel Academy dress code aims to improve the educational environment for all students. Specifically, we have a dress to foster a sense of school identity and community, to prepare students for the expectations related to professional attire that future institutions, organizations and employers will have, to ensure that our students focus on learning instead of clothing, and to increase school safety and security by making the presence of visitors/outside immediately apparent, amongst other reasons. The Excel Academy dress code is not intended to suppress speech or expression. Students have alternate ways to express themselves through, among other things, verbal and written speech in the classrooms.

We would like to remind families and students of – and clarify – one specific part of the dress code:

Dyed hair or a hairstyle that serves as a distraction—as determined by the school— is not permitted.

To clarify, temporary (i.e. short term) dying of hair color is not allowed. Longer-term hair color adjustment is allowed only if the chosen hair color is a naturally occurring hair color (e.g., brown, black) and if it does not significantly alter the appearance of an individual student.

If families have questions about this policy, we strongly encourage you to meet with a school administrator prior to any hair color adjustments are made.

Student Recruitment for 2008-2009 School Year

We would like your help with our student recruitment efforts for next school year! **We are currently accepting applications for 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades for the 2008-2009 school year.** As has always been the case, Excel Academy is open to students from all MA districts including Boston, Chelsea, Everett, Lynn, Revere and Winthrop.

Please help us spread the word! Applications are available at school and on our website: www.excelacademy.org.

To motivate you to help us, we have arranged a student recruitment contest. The contest is very simple. We are going to keep track of how many applications come in through the hard work of your family. How are we going to do this? On every application that you distribute for Excel, **write your child's full name and their homeroom on the top right-hand corner of the application.** When completed applications are returned to us, we will note your child's name and give your family credit for that application.

Prizes! The family who has the most applications received no later than 12:00 p.m. on 02/29/08 will receive a \$50 Macy's gift card, and the child of that family will also receive a \$50 gift card to Barnes & Noble. *(Please note: Applications returned after the deadline will not be considered part of the contest, though we will still be very grateful for them.)*