



Eighth graders celebrate their successful completion of the eighth grade with Ms. Martin, Health/Fitness teacher, following their Commencement ceremony.

EXCEL GRADUATES URGED TO CREATE VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Excel Academy Charter School's mission is rooted in the belief that every child can succeed when held to the highest academic and behavioral expectations. The Class of 2008 illustrates what is possible when such a culture of achievement is fostered, as they experienced success in the classroom, at enrichment, during sports and around the community during their three years at Excel Academy. These students, their friends and family along with Excel faculty and staff gathered together in June to recognize their accomplishments at a commencement ceremony held at the Hilton Hotel.

Claudia Torres, a recent graduate of Boston University School of Law and long time supporter of Excel Academy, gave the keynote address. A child of Colombian immigrants who moved to the United States at age five, Ms. Torres shared her story of being labeled a "below average" student and then realizing that she could she succeed if she held herself to the highest expectations. She understood the benefit of being immersed in a culture of achievement, and recognized how the graduates contributed to such a culture at Excel Academy. Ms. Torres urged students to never forget the values that they acquired at Excel and challenged them to apply those values in all of their future endeavors. She encouraged the Class of 2008 to create a vision for the future and execute to achieve that vision.

This message resonated with the Class of 2008, whose accomplishments are a testament to the strength of the school's program and the great investment students have made in their futures. This fall, Excel Academy graduates will continue pursuing their goal of higher education while attending some of the area's most prestigious college-preparatory high schools, including Phillips Andover Academy, The Rivers School, St. John's Prep, Boston University Academy and Boston College High. An impressive 97 percent of the Class of 2008 achieved admission to competitive college preparatory high schools, and faculty and staff are confident that Excel graduates are prepared to succeed in these intensive environments.

A NOTE FROM OUR LEADERS

Dear Friend,

This summer at Excel Academy, many of us have had the opportunity to reflect on the school's past and current achievements. The Class of 2008 exemplified the progress this organization has made in its first five years of operation. Our MCAS scores, high school admissions rates, and personal success stories indicate that we are accomplishing our mission: Excel's students are graduating prepared to succeed as they move on to high school and then college. Judging by impromptu visits from students throughout the summer, it appears that our returning students are anxious to get off to a strong start and live up to the high expectations set by our school, and new students are eager to live up to the high bar set by prior classes of Excel students.

While we are proud of the success of our program and the continued dedication of our students, we believe that now is not the time to be complacent. On the contrary, it is a time to evaluate and envision future goals, and challenge ourselves to reach new heights. New and returning administrators, faculty and staff have embraced this challenge, and engaged in conversations that leverage existing knowledge and foster new, innovative solutions. This kind of collaboration characterizes the 2008-09 Excel team, and will drive our efforts to improve and refine our program in the year ahead.

Excel significantly impacts the trajectories of our students' lives largely because the Excel community remains focused on the trajectory of the school. Ask Excel students about community, and they will tell you that "the strength of the wolf is the pack, and the strength of the pack is the wolf." The strength of our community gives each of us exceptional power; and at the same time, each individual's dedication and commitment is necessary to build and maintain that strong community. As members of the Excel Academy community "wolfpack", we thank you for your continued support of our mission, and we look forward to building on our individual strengths to make Excel one of the strongest public middle schools in the nation.

Ann Waterman Roy
Executive Director

Komal Bhasin
Principal

INSPIRED FRIEND OF EXCEL SEEKS 'NO MEAT' SUPPORT

Everyday at Excel Academy, students are encouraged to challenge themselves as academics, athletes and leaders. Their enthusiasm to tackle any and all challenges and demonstrated ability to persevere recently inspired a friend of Excel Academy to follow suit. Jeremy Kugel of Silver Spring, MD, a long time supporter of the school and self-proclaimed lover-of-meat, has committed to a 'No-Meat September for Excel Academy.'

Kugel announced his plan on July 6th, and plans to chronicle his quest throughout the month of September on a blog. He has asked his family, friends and colleagues, many of whom know Kugel's carnivorous habits firsthand, to bet against his ability to go the month without meat. So far he has secured over \$2,200 in pledges from skeptical individuals, and all of the money will be donated to Excel if Kugel proves successful in his endeavor. Kugel hopes to celebrate his success, and that of Excel Academy, by hosting a 'BreakFast RibFest' at the stroke of midnight on October 1st.

"I want to raise money for these kids. Sure, I could bike across Iowa, looking for sponsorships like everyone else. But that would be the easy way out," Kugel expressed on his blog. Acknowledging that Excel's predominantly minority and low-income students face many obstacles on the path to higher education, Kugel commends their recent successes with MCAS examinations and competitive high school placements and looks to honor their achievements. By sacrificing his routine four servings of meat a day for the sake of the school, Kugel provides just one example of how Excel Academy benefits from the support and creativity of its friends and community members. *To support Jeremy Kugel's No Meat September for Excel Academy, visit his blog at www.nomeatseptember.com.*

CLASS OF 2008 HIGH SCHOOL PLACEMENT RESULTS

Amherst Regional High School (ABC Community Schools program) (1)	Chelsea High School (2)
Beacon Academy (3)	City on a Hill Charter (3)
Boston College High School (1)	Fenway High School (3)
Boston University Academy (1)	Malden Catholic (4)
Catholic Memorial (1)	MATCH Charter (4)
	Newman School (1)
	North Cambridge Catholic (2)
	Northeast Vocational (1)
	Peabody High School (1)
	Philips Andover Academy (1)
	Pioneer Charter School of Science (7)
	Revere High School (2)
	The Rivers School (1)
	St. John's Prep (1)
	St. Mary's School (1)

Karen Morales (left), who will attend Phillips Andover Academy this fall, receives her diploma and congratulations from Mr. Tamura.



Students celebrate academic success and friendships forged at Excel Academy during the Commencement ceremony.

OUR COMMUNITY OF SUPPORTERS

We hope you are excited about our students' success and enthusiastic about the possibilities for the year ahead. Excel Academy students provide one of the most informative perspectives about our program and how it propels them to their destination of higher education. We invite you to visit the school and see how our students are being challenged to go above and beyond every moment of the day; we invite you to be inspired by their commitment to the future. To schedule a visit, please contact Audra Peek at apeek@excelacademy.org or 617.561.1371.

Excel Academy depends on the support of individuals, corporations and foundations to fund the programs and supports we provide for each student. If you are interested in making a gift to support Excel Academy, please visit www.excelacademy.org or mail your gift to:

Friends of Excel Academy, Inc.
P.O. Box 285268
East Boston, MA 02228

We sincerely appreciate your support!

DEVELOPMENT NOTE

Katie Dankleff, our former Director of Resource Development, has transitioned into the Dean of Administration position at Excel Academy. In this role, Katie is streamlining the daily operations of Excel Academy so that the school can strengthen its ability to deliver one of the top public middle school educations in the nation.

Audra Peek, a graduate of the University of Virginia, replaces Katie as the Director of Resource Development. While Katie will still be available at Excel, please direct all future development related inquiries to Audra.

Established in 2003, Excel Academy Charter School currently serves 200 fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students from East Boston, Chelsea and surrounding districts. The school's mission is to prepare middle school students to succeed in high school and college, apply their learning to solve relevant problems and engage productively in their communities.

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