

# East Foundation Academy

November 2013

Volume 1, Issue 3

Rochester City School District

## Principal's Message

I am not sure if this is the case for you, but for me, Thanksgiving is the time of year I become a little bit more reflective and grateful for the many positive things in my life. It's the time of the year when I sit back and realize how fortunate I am for my family, well-being and the luxury I have of working alongside many of you. It's also the time of year we start to be reflective as a campus and begin to look at our current practices and if there are immediate areas we can enhance or improve. Realizing the challenges that our work inherently brings, we must also remind ourselves to focus on the things we can control and influence, such as our own approach with students and colleagues, our efforts in developing meaningful instructional experiences for students and lastly our overall attitude toward this very difficult work. As highlighted in this newsletter, we have continued to provide additional positive experiences for our students. We have also continued to highlight the various positive work many of you continue to exhibit. As you return from break, don't forget that the holidays usually bring about raised tensions for many of our students, so please keep that in mind as you welcome our students back.

Happy Thanksgiving to each of you, eat a ton and Go EAST!!!

*Anibal*

Principal

## Upcoming Professional Development to Check Out on Avatar!

IT\_eLearning: SMART Notebook - Rad Random Tools  
ARTS\_Book Study: Rethinking Curriculum in Art Education  
SS\_Writing in the Social Studies  
RTA\_SMART Notebook Interactive Games and Resources  
ITI\_Intro to Lexia: Core5 & Strategies  
IT\_Creating RCSD Classroom Websites (Part 1)  
IT\_Creating RCSD Classroom Websites (Part 2)  
IT\_Creating RCSD Classroom Websites (Open Lab)  
The Whole Package: Creating Differentiated Lessons Using the Multiple Intelligences  
RTA\_Bullying Prevention Introductions  
IT\_eLearning: SMART Notebook—Tips & Tricks  
IT\_eLearning: SMART Notebook—Introduction  
IT\_eLearning: SMART Notebook—Pull Tabs, Tables, and Toolbar  
RTA\_Follow up to: How Can Quality Questioning Advance Thinking, Learning, and Achievement?  
SS\_Classroom Management  
RTC\_Film Series: Learning about Kwanzaa and the Principles of Kwanzaa  
East\_Science Lesson Planning (Part 3)  
RTA\_How to Use SMART Board and SMART Notebook 11 Software (7th and 8th Grade Teachers) Classroom Management for the Middle Level Learner  
MTH\_Using Tape Diagrams (in Elementary or in Secondary sessions offered)  
GRN\_Loss Matters: Remembrances  
Essential Reports (NWEA)  
Climbing the Data Ladder

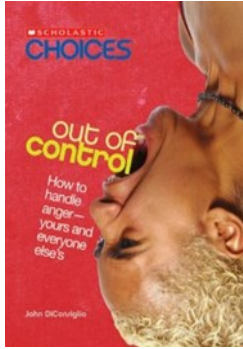


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**"I want to grow.  
I want to be better.  
You Grow. We all grow.  
We're made to grow.  
You either evolve or  
you disappear."  
— Tupac Shakur**

# Our Community Read: Out of Control

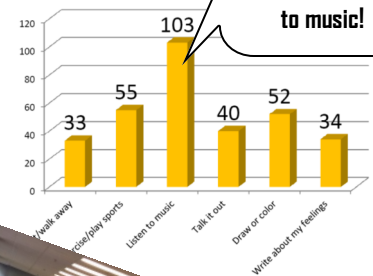


Throughout the month of November, East Foundation Academy students participated in a Community Read of *Out of Control*.

Students have read a chapter each week since the end of October and have participated in a variety of activities to engage with the text and reflect on their reading and anger, including:

- Analyzing what angered Bartolome de Las Casas, what actions he took in response to his anger, and the outcome of those actions.
- Completing an anger survey in which students reflected on what makes them angry and their reactions to their anger.
- Channeling energy into an area that we can control: contributing to the lives of others by donating food items for a local food bank.
- Creating book talks, posters, and brochures to consolidate their understandings over Thanksgiving Break!

As we move into December, consider how you might continue to refer to and build on the concepts that students read about in *Out of Control* and how you might further take the survey results into consideration in your interactions with students.



## Marking Period 1 Honor Roll

We had a full house at the Marking Period 1 Honor Roll luncheon! Students were presented with trophies, medals, and certificates for their hard work and enjoyed lunch with staff and their families. Again, kudos to Mr. Baldino, Ms. Hollomon, our wonderful counselors, and others who played a part in coordinating the celebration. The pride and enthusiasm exhibited by both our students and their families were truly highlights of the event.



## Our Guest Speaker

On Friday, November 8, Abraham Chol, a former Lost Boy of Sudan, visited East Foundation Academy and spoke with a group of student ambassadors about his experience to enrich our students' understanding of the concepts and themes addressed in *A Long Walk to Water* and to help build a stronger connection between the text they are reading and the issues in Sudan. Mr. Chol came to Rochester, NY, on April 3, 2001 as an accompanied minor and went to Franklin High School, graduating in June 2002. He

enrolled at MCC, later graduating with an Associates degree in May 2005 and transferred to the University of Rochester, from which he graduated with a Bachelors in Biology and a minor in Chemistry in May 2007. He authored the book "No Wings to Fly" that came out in July, 2011 and currently works at Xerox and lives in Webster, New York. The 7th Grade student ambassadors selected by our ELA teachers were attentive, engaged, and asked some very poignant

questions. Mr. Chol commented that this was the best group he has spoken to yet and truly appreciated their interest, attention, and respect.



# Report Card Workshops



Establishing a culture of learning must be a school-wide effort, and we would like to thank the Foundation

Counseling Team for their Understanding My Report Card initiative.

Following the first marking period, Mr. Crandall, Ms. Ocran, Mr. Detres, and Ms. Ewane-Sobe presented workshops to students to assist them in understanding and reflecting on their results for MP1. The workshop focused on the following components:

- Explanation of how GPA is calculated
- Explanation of how a Final Grade is calculated in each individual class
- Tips for students to be successful
- Opportunity for each student to find relevant information on their own Report Card
- Opportunity for personal reflection by each student on their Report Card

## Report Card Reflection Questions:

1. How many Marking Periods are there?
2. What was your GPA for Marking Period 1?
3. Some of the positive comments on my RC:
4. Some of the negative comments on my RC:
5. How many days were in the marking period?
6. How many days were you absent from Math?
7. What are the four core classes?
8. What was your most disappointing class?
9. How can you improve in your most disappointing class?
10. Number of positive comments:
11. Number of negative comments:
12. What are you most proud of with your report card?



# Visit to Monroe Community College

On Thursday, November 21, some of our 8th graders visited Monroe Community College. The main objective was to expose Foundation students as early as possible to the possibility of college. The field trip was a tremendous success for the students who attended. The college readiness presentation delivered by Mr. Matthew Lawson captivated the students. Presenters emphasized the importance of valuing opportunities given to us today and that a strong foundation in all core subjects will be the base for success in college tomorrow. The students asked

very intelligent questions about college and how to get there. Also, the teaching students that joined our students during the day were impressed with the questions and behavior of our scholars. They commended them for being involved in this college experience! This was a great way to give students positive exposure to the college environment, and it allowed them to interact with and relate to college students. Thank you to Mr. Detres for organizing the trip and to Mr. Detres, Ms. Ocran, and Ms. Paco for chaperoning!



# Do The Right Thing Dance

Foundation staff developed an incentive to improve school culture by challenging students to *Do The Right Thing* throughout the second marking period. Students worked hard to exhibit POWER behaviors in and out of the classroom. As a reward students where able to attend a dance on November 26th before Thanksgiving break. Close to 300 students from all classes and clusters where represented

at the dance. Students and staff had a great time because events such as these provide opportunities to build positive relationships outside of the classroom. The entire foundation staff worked together to make our first dance a success. In the future our goal is to incorporate incentives that will inspire students to consistently work harder thus fostering a positive and safe school environment.

*St. John Fisher College has agreed to welcome our students for their next experience on Thursday, January 16!*



## From the 7th Grade Office

The year is moving along rapidly. It is hard to believe that three months of school are over. As we head towards Thanksgiving I want to inform you of some of our accomplishments.

I have seen a decrease in disciplinary problems and an increase in students who are more focused on their school-work. This has occurred because of the increased maturity of our students as well as the involvement of staff members and parents. We are also taking steps to increase our attendance through the collaborative efforts of teachers, counselors, administrators and support staff. With the improved attendance and this improved attitude I hope that we can double the number of students who are on the Honor Roll from 75 to 150.

We have teachers who are dedicated to our students. A number of staff members give up their lunch period to allow students to eat in their classrooms. They also stay after school to help students as well as to run clubs for them. They do all of this while maintaining a full teaching load.

I am thankful that I am able to be here this year and I look forward to spending the rest of the year with a great bunch of students and staff..

Mr. Baldino



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### Introducing: Ms. DeFranco - Attendance Assistant

Ms. DeFranco started with the district in late 2006 in what was, at the time, the Attendance Department at Central Office. She spent 3 years in that position before being placed in Strategic Partnerships at CO and then working for a summer at SOTA with Rochester Summer Scholars where she was responsible for monitoring and addressing the program's attendance. According to Ms. DeFranco, after that "a miracle happened and Mr. Soler took me on as the Attendance Assistant in mid-September."

As East High's Attendance Assistant, Ms. DeFranco will support our goals of increasing student attendance through the monitoring of school-wide and individual student attendance data, outreach to families, and tracking attendance actions, among other things. WELCOME, MS. DEFRANCO!



# From the 8th Grade Office

Good news!!!!!!

East High Foundation 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy welcomes our first Student Government Body.

This is a diverse group of students who have demonstrated excellent character traits. The students are an example of the culture we are trying to establish in the Foundation Academy.

The students are excited as well. They will be organizing different events that will raise positive character awareness. Their responsibilities will not focus on developing good character only. Team building will be strongly encouraged as well. The goal is to create a sense of community and school pride coming from the student's perspectives.

Some of the events will be organizing a Debate Team of which different topics will be argued. For example, political views, community concerns and other topics students feel strongly about will be discussed. There will be other events and programs initiated by the students as we move to enhance our school culture and community.

The following students make up the Student Government Body.

Skyah Kynneddy  
Treniti Judkins  
Enya Oliva  
Miracle Reese  
Shylynn Taylor  
Tara Chhetri  
Antonio Marrero  
Bijay Thapa  
Jazdiel Maldonado  
Shydale Johnson  
Ronith Gurung  
Kaleb Sanchez



GO EAST!!!!!!!!!!

## Introducing: Ms. Custodio - Bilingual Clerical Support



Ms. Custodio has assumed the position of Office Clerk II Bilingual at East.

For the past three years, she worked as a per diem employee for Core Consulting and Staffing (formerly The Employment Store). During this time, she subbed for the RCSD as a paraprofessional and clerk. Per Ms. Custodio, she is "excited about being a part of the East team. GO EAST!"

Ms. Custodio can be found in the first floor main office and will assist with greeting parents and families, provide translation as needed, and offer clerical support to Ms. Rees as needed.

WELCOME, MS. CUSTODIO!

# Instructional Insights

As we settle further into the school year, it's clear that many have laid essential groundwork for improving student achievement through regular planning (Domain 1) and the establishment of strong rituals, routines, and classroom expectations (Domain 2). As we move into December, I would encourage you to take some time to reflect on these areas as they relate to your own practice and to set personal goals around how you might move these areas to the next level in your classroom. Additionally, consider building upon the foundation that you have established through these components of your practice and if you haven't yet, begin to take some risks in Domain 3: Instruction. Suggestions below!

- Ms. Rees

## Domain 1: Planning & Preparation

*Suggestions for taking our school-wide planning & preparation to the next level:*

- **Establish clear learning targets:** What will students know or be able to do by the end of the lesson? Figure this out first, and this should drive every instructional decision made during the planning of the lesson.
- **Focus on the “how”:** By and large, our staff has a strong handle on the content. When planning, focus your energy on the lesson's design - *How* will you present the content? *How* will students be asked to interact with the content?
- **Use of assessment and data:** Reflect on your systems of assessment and how often you use data to inform your day - to - day plans. Common planning teams should be strategically planning and administering common assessments and using the data in team discussions and long-range planning.
- **Plan for strategic differentiation:** Our students come to us with a variety of different backgrounds, skill levels, and prior knowledge. Consider how you might further use this individualized information about students during planning to ensure that each student is receiving appropriately challenging instruction. Sign up for PD in January/February!

## Domain 2: Learning Environment

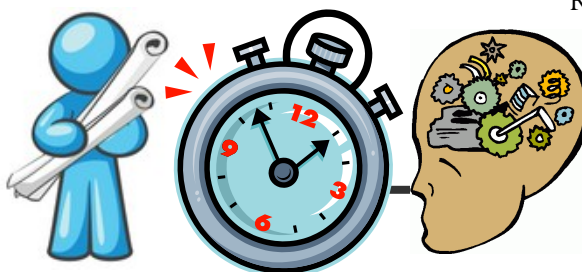
*Every minute matters! Consider these tips to further solidify classroom expectations & maximize instructional time & impact:*

- **Re-tool classroom procedures:** Take inventory of what seems to be working and what's not. Invite student input on this. Consider what you might tweak to improve classroom operations.
- **Facilitate student responsibility:** While re-tooling classroom procedures consider where you might now be able to offer students more responsibility for managing routines and materials and give you greater opportunity to maximize instructional time.
- **Continuously and consistently reinforce expectations by providing specific feedback:** Middle school students in particular need frequent reinforcement and respond more positive to encouragement and praise. Be cognizant of student behaviors and focus on using positive and specific language.
- **Organizing physical space:** During planning, consider the classroom arrangement that will best facilitate student accomplishment of the learning targets.

## Domain 3: Instruction!

*If we do what we've always done, we'll get what we've always got. Consider what you want to get that is different than what you've got in the past and what moves in Domain 3 might get you there.*

- **Communicate the learning targets with students:** Consider routines that you might incorporate to allow for discussion and student understanding of the purpose for each day's learning.
- **Facilitate genuine discussion:** Consider ways in which you can facilitate genuine discussion among students where you are further able to step aside. Think-Pair-Share, Accountable Talk Cards and Socratic Seminar would be great strategies to try!
- **Increase “You Do” time:** Be reflective of the I Do, You Do, We Do balance in your classroom. Push yourself and your students toward greater portions of You Do where students are the ones doing the work.
- **Closely monitor and facilitate engagement:** Consider what systems you have in place currently to monitor students engagement. Reflect on whether they truly assess cognitive engagement. Are silent students with eyes on you or eyes on the text enough?





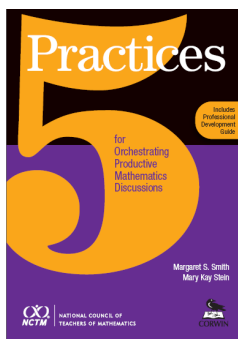
# Staff Highlights



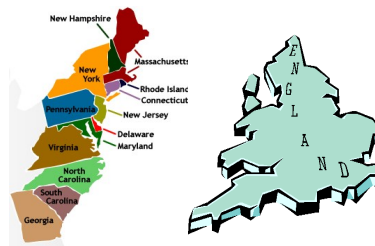
Big shout out to Mrs. Flaherty, Mr. Holland & Mrs. Mason for taking the lead in our community outreach initiative in which our staff and students collected over 26 boxes of food for Catholic Family Charities.



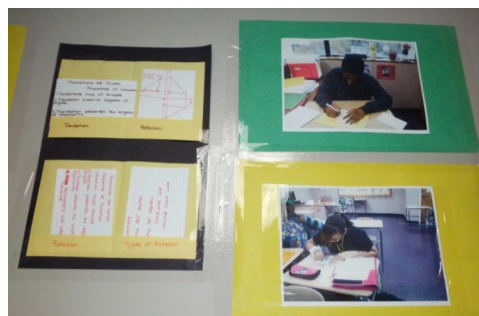
Ms. Winter has taken the initiative to plan and facilitate a professional learning opportunity through collaborative discussion of the text : *5 Practices for Orchestrating Productive Mathematical Discussions.*



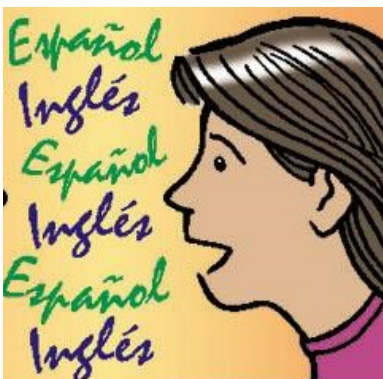
The District's interim Director of Bilingual Education, Ms. Miriam Cruz-Vasquez, has recently spent a significant amount of time in our building and in our Bilingual classrooms getting to know our Bilingual teachers and students and brainstorming ways to offer greater support for our Bilingual Program. Ms. Cruz-Vazquez expressed particular delight with the relationships and rapport observed between our Bilingual staff and students and the level of interaction, collaboration, and inquiry.



Mr. Gillett and Ms. Metzler recently engaged students in further understanding concepts of colonialism and trade through the use of a simulation in which students took on the role of a country or a colonial settlement and had to follow established trade rules to "play the game". In the end, students walked away with new perspective and deeper understanding of these essential historical concepts.



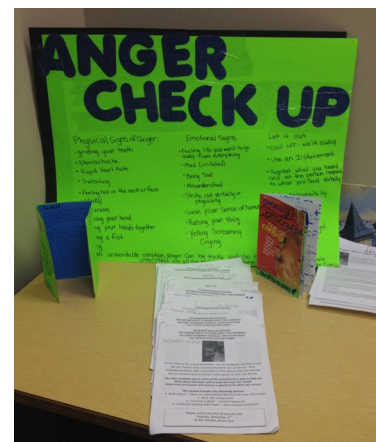
Ms. Paco has been hard at work sprucing up the 5th floor hallway by highlighting her students' efforts and achievements!



Ms. Rodriguez has recently been participating in a professional development series on Proactive Classroom Systems. Transfer of these ideas into her practice has been immediately evident as she takes risks and experiments with strategies like kinesthetic silent signals to enhance the classroom environment.



Kudos to Ms. Donlon for taking the lead on the East High Foundation Community Read *Out Of Control* Thanksgiving break activity.



- Ms. DeJesus
- Mr. Diaz
- Ms. Cotto
- Mr. Garcia
- Ms. Gungor
- Ms. Lee
- Ms. Patton-McShane
- Ms. Rodriguez
- Ms. Torres

# Important Information Around Student Attendance

**From: *The Importance of Being in School:  
A Report on Absenteeism in the Nation's Public Schools*  
by Robert Balfanz and Vaughan Byrnes, May 2012**

“America’s education system is based on the assumption that barring illness or an extraordinary event, students are in class every weekday.”

“Like bacteria in a hospital, chronic absenteeism can wreak havoc long before it is discovered.”

“Chronic absenteeism is not the same as truancy or average daily attendance – the attendance rate schools use for state report cards and federal accountability. Chronic absenteeism means missing 10 percent of a school year for any reason. A school can have average daily attendance of 90 percent and still have 40 percent of its students chronically absent, because on different days, different students make up that 90 percent.”

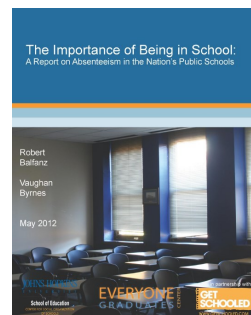
“Achievement, especially in math, is very sensitive to attendance, and absence of even two weeks during one school year matters. Attendance also strongly affects standardized test scores and graduation and dropout rates.”

“The negative impact chronic absenteeism has on school success is increased because students who are chronically absent in one year are often chronically absent in multiple years. As a result, particularly in high poverty areas, significant numbers of students are missing amounts of school that are staggering: on the order of six months to over a year, over a five year period.”

“Chronic absenteeism is most prevalent among low-income students. Gender and ethnic background do not appear to play a role in this. The youngest and the oldest students tend to have the highest rates of chronic absenteeism, with students attending most regularly in third through fifth grades. Chronic absenteeism begins to rise in middle school and continues climbing through 12th grade, with seniors often having the highest rate of all.”

“Attending school on a regular basis matters. It matters the most for our most vulnerable students who live in or near poverty. Millions of students are currently missing far too much school, with multiple detrimental effects. Chronic absenteeism is a key driver of the nation’s achievement, high school graduation, and college attainment gaps.”

“The good news is if we do measure and monitor absenteeism there is quite a bit that can be done to improve it with existing resources. Thus, as a nation we must act, to ensure that our students are ready, willing and able to attend school every day. Their future, and hence our future, depends on it.”



## What do we need to improve on?

Attendance Actions In Need of Improvement	Person	Timeframe
Submit accurate attendance daily before midnight via PowerSchool.	Teachers	Daily
Enter behavior incidents within 24 hours of their occurrence to auto-populate attendance accurately based on alternative placement.	Administrators	Daily
Call home when students are absent. Record action taken and results under Attendance Actions on a student’s page in PowerSchool.	Teachers	Daily
Call or conduct home visits when students begin to exhibit a pattern of chronic absence. Determine cause of absence. Implement attendance interventions. Record results under Attendance Actions on a student’s page in PowerSchool.	Teachers, Counselors, Administrators, Home-School Assistant, Attendance Assistant	When a student is frequently absent
Run 3, 5, 10, and 20 day attendance letters and sent to homes. Record action taken under Attendance Actions on a student’s page in PowerSchool.	Attendance Assistant	As students meet these thresholds
Complete Attendance Referrals for students with chronic absenteeism. Record action taken under Attendance Actions on a student’s page in PowerSchool.	Counselors, Administrators, Attendance Assistant	As students meet the 20 day absence threshold