

February 2010



CLAS

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HIGHLIGHTS

Culture and Language Academy of Success • Aspire. Affirm. Attain.

Dates to Calendar

March 3 – Shortened Day Wednesday – 2:00 Dismissal

March 6 – Parent Education Workshop – 9:00-2:00 at Orville Wright Site

March 17 – Shortened Day Wednesday – 2:00 Dismissal

March 19 – Schoolwide Field Trip to Tavis Smiley's America I Am Exhibit (2-8) and KidSpace (K-1)

March 29 - April 2 – Spring Break – No School

April 5 – Pupil Free Day – No School

Parents Become The Students

We Need 100 CLAS Families to Attend The Parent Education Workshop. Know Any?

Back by popular demand is the parent education workshop or what is commonly known as the PEW. Going back three years, CLAS consistently offered 3 PEWs during the course of the year - one in August/September, one in February and one in late April. With the recent facility challenges, we have only had the first PEW these past two years. Thankful to the requests of many parents, we are grateful to be holding a second one this year.

What is we have planned is outstanding. The focus this year is how as parents can we better serve our students educationally at home.

Headlining are two experts in the field of parent empowerment and parenting skills. Dr. Darlene Willis and Marsha Dodson have been educating parents from around the country for nearly 20 years. In addition, we will have our homegrown expertise in the areas of character building, family nutrition and fitness, Yoga, and technology. Childcare, lunch, and a community marketplace will be available as well.

To make this a successful event, our goal is for at least 100 families to attend! In the past, CLAS prided itself with no less than 80% attendance to all its community events. We are trying to build back to that rate starting with this event. We need our strongest showing of the year on March 6th.



Since we are offering multiple sessions, we are asking everyone to pre-register for the workshops. There will be limited seats in each workshop. Pre-registration forms are available at the school sites, downloadable online, or have been sent home with your child. Pre-register by Wednesday, March 4, 2010 and get the sessions you want. You may also register the day of the event, but there will be no guarantee that your session will be available.

PTO Manager Takes Tracking Community Participation Hours into the 21st Century

How Many Participation Hours Do You Have?

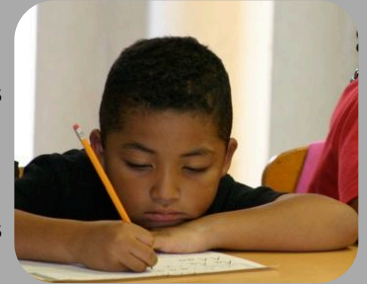
When you signed on to be a CLAS community member, you agreed to provide 42 hours of family participation time. Your time can be given by attending events, volunteering at the school sites, donating needed supplies or by offering a dime for your time (cash donation). Next month, your family will receive a statement indicating how many hours we have recorded for you. Families that do not complete their 42 hours are expected to do so prior to re-enrolling for new school year.

In order to help you and us keep track of the hours in an organized system, the CLAS Parent Organization (CPO) has implemented a CLAS participation hours management system known as PTO manager, which is now online and operational. PTO manager will allow families to enter and track their participation hours online, elect events for which they would like to earn hours, and inform CLAS of dates and times they are available. See your room parent for more information about the PTO and be on the look out for the letter next month indicating how many hours you have.

HOMESTUDY POLICY CHANGE EFFECTIVE SECOND SEMESTER

This week, CLAS started a new homestudy policy based on several reasons. One is that we pride ourselves in being research based. In examining the latest research on homestudy, we wanted to better align ourselves with that research (See Marzano's Classroom Instruction That Works). Second, our policy apparently has not been clear to our parents and to a certain extent our students. The new policy will bring a consistency at the different grade levels, which we hope will bring more clarity. Third, we wanted to address some concerns that have been raised over the past few months. While realizing that everyone will not be satisfied no matter what the policy is, we trust the new policy will allay some of the persistent concerns.

The purpose of the homestudy is to reinforce and/or to enhance content area skills taught (as opposed to learned) in class through practice and to provide an opportunity for developing strong study skills. All students are still expected to complete their homestudy completely and accurately. Homestudy will now be given based on research recommended time frames related to the students' grade level. For example, 1st grade will receive 20 minutes of homestudy, 2nd grade will receive 30 minutes, and so forth. Students not completing homestudy assignments will not be punished by being withheld from recess or excluded from events. Parents will be updated regularly regarding missing homestudy assignments



CLAS Renews Instructional Technology Laptop Initiative in Grades 2-8

Student advocates and students alike are excited to have our once famous laptop computer initiative positively impacting instruction again in grades 2-8. CLAS has received 120 Apple Macbook computers for use in grades 2-8 while laptops, LCD projectors, document cameras, LCD monitors and other multimedia teaching resources have been provided to the teachers.



Possessing the technology allows us to engage in powerful teaching and learning. Students have already been witnessed conducting online research, creating digital storyboards, presenting their own Powerpoint presentations on historical eras that they are studying, and composing and recording study-related songs and raps that showcase their knowledge of particular concepts they've learned. Students in grades 2 through 8 will also be integrating technology into their Unit 4 culminating projects.

Student advocates are beginning to use PowerTeacher electronic grade book, leveraging Study Island™ to administer online, standards-based assessments, and at the middle school, we are in the process of converting

grades 6-8 learning records to a Google Docs based form that will be provided to parents in June solely through online distribution.

SCHOOL SITE HIGHLIGHTS

- Pleasant Hill welcomes **Ms. Tamil Shellmire**, new CLAS staff member. Ms. Tamil is working as instructional support, primarily in Kindergarten. Tamil has just completed her Bachelors Degree from CSUDH in Liberal Studies and will be pursuing her teaching credential in the fall.
- Pleasant Hill put on successful fun Friday fundraiser, which included face painting and fun food store.
- Coliseum and CLAS celebrated the New Orleans Saints Super Bowl victory with **Mr. Erwin Woodard**, a lifelong Saints fan. We are delighted that Mr. Erwin has decided to remain in the CLAS family as instructional support plus at his site, supporting 3rd grade.
- School wide support for Bourbon Street Fish Fundraiser monies were due this week by Friday. Please return any monies or unsold tickets to your child's school site.



Tamil Shellmire

In case you did not know, there's no need to celebrate Black History Month at CLAS. We celebrate culture and heritage everyday of the year.