

TIGER NEWS

Combined School and PTSA Newsletter

J.R. Tucker High School

2910 N Parham Road, Richmond, VA 23297-4433



August 2009

A Note from the Desk of

DR. GWEN MILLER, PRINCIPAL

It is with excitement that I welcome our Tucker Tigers to the 2009-2010 school year. This is a big year for our seniors as they prepare for their graduation and life beyond J. R. Tucker High School. It is always our hope that the parents and guardians of the Class of 2010 enjoy this memorable journey as much as the students! Our sophomores and juniors will experience more demanding courses, try different extra-curricular activities, visit colleges with family or friends, and foster friendships. Finally, the Class of 2013 will walk our campus for the first time as they begin their high school journey.

The Tucker staff and upperclassmen are ready to welcome and support the freshmen through our new Freshman Academy and Tiger Hall. Please read the article about this new addition to the Tucker campus for the 2009-2010 school year. Also new at Tucker this year is the implementation of the Virginia Advanced Study Strategies (VASS) grant which pertains to our Advanced Placement (AP) program. VASS is a non-profit corporation affiliated with the *National Math and Science Initiative*. You will receive more information about this in the near future. During this school year, we have more students than ever enrolled in AP classes!

As always, our academic expectations at Tucker are high because we have found that our students work hard and achieve academic success. During the 2008-2009 school year, Tucker achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Here is a 3-year chart of our SOL scores:

Subject	2009 Pass Rate	2008 Pass Rate	2007 Pass Rate
English	91.62%	90.23%	89.01%
Math	94.30%	91.82%	87.46%
Social Studies	95.55%	94.94%	93.42%
Science	91.05%	88.82%	86.83%

Finally, I encourage you to go to the HCPS website to read the new student dress code. We have been charged with enforcing this dress code. The four areas that the administrative team feels will be the most problematic at Tucker are the following:

- The following items **may not** be worn on school grounds during regular school hours: bandanas, do-rags, headscarves, hair picks, wave caps, large combs, brushes, and rollers.
- Dresses, skirts, shorts, athletic shorts, and other similar clothing **may not be shorter than four inches above the knee**, even when worn with leggings or tights.
- All female tops must be **at least two inches wide at the shoulder**.
- Students **must wear pants on the hips, secured above the buttocks**.
NO SAGGING PANTS!

I feel confident that our students will abide by the new dress code expectations as well because they are great kids! We are going to have a great year. GO TIGERS!

Students, did you know that the **S** in PTSA stands for YOU?

We are taking applications to fill open Freshman and Sophomore student PTSA board member positions. Board members attend board meetings, attend general membership PTSA meetings, communicate between their grade level and the PTSA, and help with various activities and projects. It is a wonderful opportunity for you to help your PTSA do all that it can for Tucker High School.

Applications can be found on the PTSA website at www.jrtuckerptsa.com.

Important Dates!

- Laptop Distribution
 - September 14, 2009 – 12th grade
 - September 15, 2009 – 11th grade
 - September 16, 2009 – 10th grade
 - September 17, 2009 – 9th grade
 - September 18, 2009 – Spillover
- September 21, 2009 – Back-to-School Night (7:00 p.m. approx 2 hours)
- September 24, 2009 – Freshman Connections (HR during AE)
- September 28, 2009 – Staff Development at Tucker
- September 29, 2009 – Senior Convocation at (9:00 a.m.) Parents are invited to attend this special event.

Attention all Tigers!

If you would like to submit a school event, sports results, information about your club, or, a news article for inclusion in an upcoming issue, contact Suanne M. Brady, Newsletter Chairman at newsletter@jrtuckerptsa.com

Tiger Hall

Easing the Transition: Freshman Academy set to bring change in 2009-2010

On the J. R. Tucker campus, Building 10 has been converted to Tiger Hall, home to the new Freshman Academy. Ninth-grade teachers from the four, core subject areas will have their classrooms here. A reference room has been converted to an office for the ninth-grade assist. principal and a conference room for the teachers in Tiger Hall. There will also be an office for a school counselor who will work closely with the ninth graders.

Why a Freshman Academy? For most incoming freshmen, the fear of high school is overwhelming. Not knowing where to go, class expectations, and making new friends are parts of what make freshman year so challenging. Perhaps this is why statistics show that 1-in-3 freshmen fail at least 1 course during their freshman year, and the national retention rate is higher than any other grade. J.R.Tucker wants to alleviate these problems and trends by implementing a new transition program with the Class of 2013. These students will be the first class to participate in Freshman Academy which will provide instructional support, mentoring, tutoring, and study skills.

What is the freshman mentoring program?

The mentoring component is called the Kick-Off Mentor (KOM) Program and will consist of upperclassmen (juniors and seniors) who will provide activities and opportunities to ease social anxiety and answer questions for the 9th graders. Four to five mentors will be assigned to each freshman homeroom. Mentors have lessons and activities geared to meet the needs of the freshmen during particular time periods in the year. The mentors were screened and picked by a panel of Tucker teachers/administrators to ensure that they meet the qualities of a mentor.

What are the Freshman Academy goals?

- To reduce 9th grade retention and increase the on-time graduation rate
- To decrease the amount of 9th grade disciplinary actions
- To increase attendance
- To increase 9th grade involvement in school activities



Other components of Freshman Academy:

- All teachers in Tiger Hall will participate in at least one Professional Learning Community. These small groups will meet throughout the year to share information and learn from one another.
 - Ninth graders will have the opportunity to receive tutoring from our National Honor Society peer tutors and help with their writing in the Writing Center which is located in the library.
 - Girls Night Out – This is an evening of information and fun. Girls will participate in sessions involving etiquette, study skills, make-up, healthy lifestyles, and much more. The evening ends with dinner and prizes.
 - Gentlemen's Club – The purpose of this organization is to address concerns and issues relevant to male students in the areas of academics, social skills, and decision making. This group will meet monthly to discuss such issues. Topics will include, "how to tie a tie," "how to prepare for a job interview," "how to treat a lady on a date," etc.
 - Lessons during Academic Extension – Students will receive lessons provided by teachers and school counselors regarding many topics such as study skills, organizational skills, grade point averages, technology, and internet safety.
- Lockers – All ninth graders will be assigned to a locker. They will be taught effective ways to use their lockers and organize their backpacks.
- College tours – In October, all ninth graders will board buses and tour a college for an entire morning.

The Class of 2013 will feel at home in Tiger Hall!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome back to school from the J. R. Tucker PTSA! I feel like I was just writing my end of year message. I hope that you and your family had the opportunity to relax a little this summer and get rejuvenated for the upcoming school year. Please take the opportunity to read the new PTSA brochure. As our children get older, we become less and less involved in their day to day lives, the PTSA is a great way for you to stay involved. We provide a monthly eNewsletter so that you can keep up-to-date with school events. The PTSA organizes and hosts a huge Party all Night, drug and alcohol free After Prom party to keep our students safe. To help get students ready for this important lifetime event we're providing a "make wise decisions" seminar in school during the month of March. We also have a large Refresh committee, working with the school to improve the grounds. Additionally, we will be holding our Annual College Night, our 2nd Dance Marathon (with proceeds going to the JRT Scholarship) and our end of the year Rally to celebrate all of the talents of JRT!!!

What can you do to help?

- 1) Give us your email address so that we can communicate this news to your family! (High school students don't bring home flyers, have you noticed?)
- 2) Join the PTSA! Remember we are a PTSA meaning that not only parents, family & friends can join but also your student!
- 3) Make a tax deductible donation to the PTSA! Any amount that you can afford will help us provide these programs, as well as, the Free Agenda we give every student!
- 4) Volunteer when you can! Our events are lots of fun not only for our students but also for the parents who volunteer.
- 5) Attend our programs and spend some time with the JRT community!

I look forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming events or at a Spirit Night! If you ever have any questions or suggestions, let me know.

Helena Lythgoe, PTSA President