Spring Has Sprung! Goodbye Old Man Winter and Hello Spring! The Spring Season is a beautiful time of year, a time of flowers blooming, birds chirping and beautiful sunlight. As the sunlight becomes more prevalent, people, plants, and animals are beginning to emerge from their wintry modes to step outside, bloom and otherwise welcome the sunshine.

In Atlanta Public Schools, Spring also marks two very important times of the year; Spring Break and the administering of the Georgia Milestones Assessment. Atlanta Public School’s Spring Break is April 4th-8th. This can serve as a great time for students to review various skills and concepts learned throughout the year and brush up on their test taking skills. Check with your child’s school to get information on upcoming testing workshops and/or testing resources that will be sent home. In addition, please see the test taking tips below

Before the Test

- Students should spend a significant amount of time practicing and reviewing information.
- Ensure that your child is getting at least 8 hours of sleep.
- Students should eat a well-balanced breakfast each day of the test.
- Students should arrive to school on time.
- Create a calm and relaxing environment for students before school. Encourage students to think positively.

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March 2, 2016 was National Read Across America Day! Parents, you are aware that reading and literacy is our focus for this 2015-2016 school year. You can always find the focus for Sylvan Hills and APS outlined in your handy dandy School-Parent Compact Brochures!

Read Across America Day promotes reading, particularly for children and young adults. This day coincides with the birthday of American children author and writer, Dr. Seuss. Our very own Classroom with a Cause celebrated the day with several of our top accelerated readers servicing our feeder elementary schools, Finch and Perkerson Elementary. Our scholars read to 2nd and 3rd grader students some of Dr. Seuss’ most famous books such as, Green Eggs and Ham and The Cat in the Hat. Celebrate Reading every day!

See pictures below and to the right.

Parents of the Month

Each month we acknowledge our parents, grandparents, and guardians who dedicate time to impact the community of Sylvan Hills. This month we recognize 5 parents who have done an outstanding job with being engaged!

We say congratulations to the 5 parents who were voted and decided for our 2016-2017 GO Team: Ms. Alma Clark, Ms. Chiquita Brown, Ms. Keiota Fountain, Mr. Russell Miller, Sr., and Mr. Wayne Taylor, Jr.

Beginning July 1, 2016, APS will become a Charter System. This new model will allow Sylvan Hills more freedom and flexibility to find new ways to increase our Golden Bear scholars’ achievement. With the GO Team, parents, educators and community members can now share in the decision-making process. These Golden Bear parents will be the voice of our parents in the decisions about our children’s education. Congratulations to each of you and thank you for your continued dedication to the Golden Bear family.

FREE EBOOKS!

Open Ebooks is a new initiative from the First Book organization. Open Ebooks has partnered with quality trade publishers like Hachette, Macmillan, Penguin Random House, HarperCollins, Simon and Schuster, Bloomsbury, Lee and Low, Candlewick and more to provide free access to thousands of high quality ebooks to Title I schools. These are not the low quality Lerner, Abdo, Capstone, etc. educational press books that vendors are constantly pushing, but high quality and award winning literature.

Since Sylvan is a Title I school, you can retrieve access codes and pins for all of your students so they can read all these books from any phone or tablet! Visit this link to get started: https://appsto.re/us/cQiN9.i For complete details please visit: http://openebooks.net/getstarted.html.

IF you’re in the Main Office, STOP BY the “Parent Corner” for weekly information, fill out a comment card, customer service survey or set up a Parent Teacher conference. Thank you to Ms. M. Grimes and Mrs. M. Jackson for your help!
All parents and family members want to help their children succeed in school. By working together with schools and teachers, families can help their young children succeed. 2016 presents many opportunities for you to support your child. Your our P.A.W.S Parent Group (Parent Resource Center, PTSA and GO Team) are putting in place some parent programs and initiatives that rely on parent and family support for student success.

It takes a village to raise a child. We can’t expect teachers to be the only ones educating our children. Research proves that when families become involved in their kid’s school life, grades, behavior and well-being improve. So, if you want to make the teacher’s job a little easier, check out these top things teachers want from parents.

- Get to Know Your Child’s Teachers
- Read to Your Child or Encourage Your Child to Read
- Get Involved With the School
- Value Education

These are just a few tips of ways you can get involved with the school, do some teaching of your own and lead the learning cause by example, you become an invaluable part of your child’s success in and out of school. The teacher will thank you, and one day, your child will too!

For more tips, visit www.education.com/slideshow/what-teachers-want-from-parents/takes-a-village/.

-Amy Bizarri

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**SPRING IS IN THE AIR! cont.**

**During the Test**

- Students should ask for help if they do not understand the directions.
- Read all answer choices before marking an answer.
- Students should pace themselves. Do not spend too much time on any one question.
- Go back to any questions that were skipped and answer them.
- Students should make the most intelligent guess on questions that they are unsure of the answer to.
- Use the process of elimination on multiple choice questions:
  - Eliminate the two wrong answers
  - Choose the best answer from the 2 remaining answer choices
  - Students should return and check after finishing test to make sure all questions have been answered.

When students follow these simple steps, they will likely experience success with their testing experience. For more strategies and test taking tips, check out http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/classroom-solutions/2011/04/state-assessments-test-taking-skills-and-review-strategies.

- Tameeka Daniels, FAES
Each month, The Parent Corner shines some Golden Glow on scholars, administrators and staff members who are shining bright in the halls of Sylvan Hills Middle School! This month we recognize:

Our March Teacher of the Month Ms. Alicia Gilchrist. Ms. Gilchrist joined the Sylvan Family this year as our vocal music director and she has been highly impactful on changing the climate and culture of Sylvan in and out of the classroom. We salute you MS. Gilchrist on your wonderful contributions and recognize you for your hard work.

We recognize our all of our teachers, families and scholars who supported the Spirit Night with our neighborhood partner Chick-fil-A!

We also recognize our students who participated in the Google Virtual Exploration with Mrs. T. Vincent.

Our Student Life Committee has sponsored the latest t-shirt fundraiser. Friday, April 1 is the last day to show your support by purchasing SHMS paraphernalia. Fill out an order form and return to the school. Parents, you can also place your order online at https://www.spiritandpride.com/sap/SAPResult.

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Who doesn’t love this time of the year when the cold, wet weather is in our review mirrors and sunnier warmer days are on the horizon? This season is a crucial time of the year as we close out this school term and begin preparing for a successful school term next year. In order for our children to have every opportunity to succeed now and in the future, we all must come together.

When schools and families join forces, they form a dream team of support in their student’s education. I notice the work our Parent Liaison, Ms. Parkmon, is doing up front and behind the scenes to build and sustain effective family engagement. The effort is not without its challenges. While Sylvan has moved the needle with increasing parent engagement with our P.A.W.S Parent group and new GO Team members, we have only a 30% increase in the engagement of parents participating. There’s no easy answer for how to best involve parents. However, I can guarantee you that every parent/guardian counts! Every parent/guardian makes a difference! During these last few months, you are invited and welcomed to join in with our efforts to increase parental involvement.

Have a safe Spring Break!  

Mr. A. Portee, M.S.
~Principal