Hello Bronco Students and Families!

Wow. I can’t believe we’re already past the holidays and into the New Year! I guess what they say is true: Time flies when you’re having fun. We sure have accomplished a lot in the first half of the school year. We welcomed over three hundred new students to Bernal and helped them get acquainted to their new surroundings. We welcomed many new staff members (including myself) and made them feel right at home. Families enjoyed awesome band concerts, boys and girls basketball games, and other great events. Students not only worked hard in class, but also participated in after school clubs, sports, noon-time activities, homework center, and dances.

Teachers celebrated fantastic student achievement scores from last year’s state tests. They also teamed up to create engaging student lessons, analyze student achievement data, monitor student progress, and create intervention plans for struggling students. But it wasn’t all work and no play for Bernal’s teachers. They enjoyed a weekend staff and family picnic, ate too much at the staff holiday potlucks, and secretly gave gifts to one another as secret snowflakes.

Parents, a friendly reminder that we have plenty of opportunities for you to get involved at Bernal. From Home and School Club, Hispanic Parent Group, and Koffee Klatch, there are many ways for you to “remain involved without being too involved”.

Wishing you and the family all the best for 2016.

Jamal Splane
Principal
Counselor’s Corner. Presented by Mrs. Alves and Ms. Reed.

Conflict Resolution

Teens can be moody and argumentative and disagree with their parents and friends regularly.

Four styles:
- Avoid or Deny the existence of conflict
- Get mad or blame the other person
- Use power and influence to win at the other’s expense (Bully Position)
- Appear to compromise but subtly manipulate the other person

Steps to Resolve Conflict

Set the stage:
- Agree to try to work to find a solution peacefully.

Ground rules:
- Be an Active Listener
- No name-calling
- No blaming
- No yelling
- No interrupting
- Use “I” statements

Gather perspectives or each other view of problem.
- Each person describes the problem from his/her perspective.
- Listeners pay close attention. Use active listening to be sure information was heard correctly.
- Ask clarifying questions.
- Pay attention to the other person’s need to feel respected.

Find Common Interests
Create Options
Evaluate Options
Create agreement
Check Back to see how the agreement is working.

To Avoid Problems

Use the Defusing Technique: Agree w/the other person. Acknowledge that the other person has a right to view things differently. “I know that I said I would call you last night. You are absolutely right.”

Think before you speak.

Thought and Feeling Empathy: Try to put yourself in the other persons shoes. See the world from their eyes.

Exploration: Probe about what else the other person is thinking of feeling.

Stroking: Find positive things to say about the other person, even if the other is angry with you.
Community Services/ Outreach

The 3Waves Information Dissemination & Referral Program at Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI)--funded by the Department of Alcohol and Drug Services (DADS) Prevention Division--will present to our parents and student body about Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) with a focus on Prevention this Spring, 2016.

Bernal is currently coordinating with AACI on the parent and student presentations, which will focus primarily on addiction and the brain along with the particular effects of Marijuana, Ecstasy, and Underage Drinking. Upcoming dates for the presentations is TBD.

Advisory

Advisory is off to a great start this school year! The Monday Advisory lessons, designed and implemented by Bernal Staff, support students in forging positive relationships to peers and the school and building connections and competence around topics that are meaningful and relevant to life outside of school.

November and December Advisory Lessons were about Conflict Resolution. Starting January 4th, students will engage in lessons on tolerance, sensitivity, cultural awareness, racism and gender identity. For a list of future Advisory topics, refer to the Bernal School Loop Homepage and click on the Advisory banner. Ask your student(s) about what they learned in Advisory on Mondays to extend the thinking and learning from school to home.

PBIS and Behavior

Our top 3 reasons for students receiving school consequences are:

#1—Dress Code Violations
#2—Excessive Tardies (students who arrived late to a class 5+ times this semester)
#3—Unsafe Play

Our PBIS Team will meet on January 25th to discuss creative and positive responses to address issues of Dress Code, Tardiness, and Safety.
Curriculum Update

All 7th grade students at Bernal have been reading the novel *A Long Walk to Water* in their English Language Arts classroom. This novel has a cross-content relationship to social studies and takes a deeper look at the refugee experience of a particular group of people who have become known as “The Lost Boys.” We were beyond excited when of these “lost boys,” Gabriel Tor, made himself available on his day off to come and speak with the students regarding his experiences. His story is amazing and hopefully was very inspiring to our students. It is amazing what adversity he was able to overcome just to be here today! His ending message was clear: enjoy the freedom and liberties you have as a student, with the world open to you. You have the teachers, resources, and support to do anything you want in life. Appreciate it and relish in it!

Some of the resources shared in relation to today’s presentation...

- The music of South Sudan: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XwZDBPVvDOI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XwZDBPVvDOI) by Amira Deng

- Gabriel's personal online travel journal with pictures from his trip to S Sudan: [https://gmtor.shutterfly.com/](https://gmtor.shutterfly.com/)

- The organization Gabriel volunteers to support: [http://hopewithsouthsudan.org/](http://hopewithsouthsudan.org/)

More about the novel... *A Long Walk to Water: based on a true story*

*A Long Walk to Water* is based on the true story of Salva, one of some 3,800 Sudanese "Lost Boys" airlifted to the United States beginning in the mid 1990s. Before leaving Africa, Salva’s life is one of harrowing tragedy. Separated from his family by war and forced to travel on foot through hundreds of miles of hostile territory, he survives starvation, animal attacks, and disease, and ultimately leads a group of about 150 boys to safety in Kenya. Relocated to upstate New York, Salva resourcefully learns English and continues on to college. Eventually he returns to his home region in southern Sudan to establish a foundation that installs deep-water wells in remote villages in dire need of clean water. This poignant story of Salva's life is told side-by-side with the story of Nya, a young girl who lives today.
The Cooking Club made some delicious Clam Chowder and Minestrone Soup right before Winter break.