

COMMON GROUND HIGH SCHOOL

PARENT NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2011

In the midst of the snowiest winter we can remember with many snow days, we are working hard to squeeze the most out of every minute in the classroom. Common Ground is deep under a few feet of snow, and we all look forward to spring!

Despite missed time, students are hard at work in their Trimester 2 courses. Seniors are reflecting on their time at Common Ground and gearing up for their service projects in Senior Seminar.

In Ms. Foran's Western Literature class students can be found acting out selected scenes from the Greek tragedy, *Oedipus Rex*. When they are not

acting, they are writing letters from "beyond" in response to the ancient Sumerian tale of *Gilgamesh*. While writing these letters, students explored what it means to be "human" and how to honor that condition.

Mr. Stone's Environmental History Class, students are exploring how the transition to industrial jobs, housing and pollution combined to produce serious changes in the health and lifestyles of Americans.

In Ms. Johnson's Science Investigations, students are performing CAPT Lab tasks that they will be questioned on during the Science portion of the test. The Science Investigations course is de-

signed to help students prepare for the CAPT test in March.

Meanwhile, over half of our students participate in after school programs daily. Students work on homework, receive rigorous academic enrichment, make soy candles in art club, volunteer at the soup kitchen, and figure out ways to make us a leading green school and campus.

As we head into the end of Trimester 2, students and staff are preparing for the upcoming CAPT tests, backpacking trips, and eagerly awaiting for the first signs of Spring.

CAPT schedule and details will be in the mail shortly.



Upcoming Events

See Below for Details:

Saturday February 12:

PLT Meeting, 9-11 am

February 23, 24, 25:

Classes will meet from 8am-2:50pm

After school programs will run from 3-4pm.

March 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17:

CAPT Testing

Monday March 28:

Awards Banquet, 5:30-7:30p



Parent Nights and Family Programs

We are happy to offer an extensive calendar of workshops and opportunities for families to be involved with the Common Ground Community. Please join us for our upcoming family events! For more information, question, or to become involved please contact Amy Champagne at 203-389-0823 x1206 or email: achampagne@commongroundct.org

Parent Leadership Team

Saturday February 12, 9-11am

The PLT reviews school policies, plans fundraisers and events, and provides advocacy support for the school community.

Awards Banquet

Monday March 28, 5:30-7:30

Join us to celebrate the success of our second trimester. Family style meal and awards.

Parent Workshop

Sex Ed for Parents

5:30-7:30pm

Join us for a comprehensive workshop brought to you by Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE). Representatives from PPSNE will teach you about how and when to talk with your student about sex. In addition, gain information on important resources to help keep your child safe.



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ENVIRONMENTAL HONORS

Common Ground is excited to offer an Environmental Honors program for students with keen interest in the environment, strong academic performance, and a growing base of leadership skills, experience and understanding.

Qualifications:

In order to apply to the Environmental Honors program, students must have a "B" average or above in multiple Environmental Courses. In addition, students must have a career Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 or above.



Expectations

Students admitted to the Environmental Honors Program will be expected to:

- Envision, plan, and complete a major Environmental Leadership Project
- Meet regularly with the Honors Program Coordinator, and advisor, staff, and mentor as appropriate
- Present Environmental Leadership Project to multiple audiences
- Participate in Extracurricular Leadership experiences above and beyond the school day. Participation in extracurricular programs will be monitored by the Honors Program Coordinator as substantial engagement is required to complete the program.
- Research and Initiate an Environmental Internship in the community.
- Participate in Honors Program activities, functions, and events.

Environmental Honors Project

Once students are accepted to the program, students will work with the Environmental Honors Program Coordinator to plan an major Environmental Leadership Program. Each project will be different, but all must include a substantial amount of research, active engagement with the community, written reflection & publication, and a oral presentation. Students will be responsible for completing an Honors Project, but all Honors students are coached throughout by the Environmental Honors Program Coordinator, and Environmental Honors Advisor, additional teachers and staff, and community mentors when appropriate. To complete the Honors Project, students may be offered an independent study period for one trimester.

Post-Project Requirements

Post-Project Honors Students must maintain academic requirements listed above as well as complete their Environmental Internship (as necessary), and continue participating in extracurricular environmental leadership opportunities.

Benefits

Environmental Honors students will benefit from our new program—these benefits include scholarships, academic recognition on transcripts, authentic independent learning, support in finding internship experience and connections to higher education opportunities.

Environmental Courses

AP Environmental Science
 Biodiversity
 Documenting New Haven
 Ecologia/Harvest
 Environmental Justice
 Environmental History
 Environmental Research
 Environmental Science
 Food & Environment
 Green Architecture
 POWER
 Sustainable Design

Environmental Opportunities

Community Service Club
 Environmental Leadership Club
 Envirothon
 Environmental Ventures
 Green Jobs Corps
 Student Ambassadors
 Student Government
 Community-based Environmental Organizations

For more information please contact
 Jeremy Stone, Environmental Honors
 Program Coordinator
 (203) 389-0823

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Technology At Common Ground High School

Common Ground is invested in helping our students become responsible 21st Century citizens through the effective use of technology. A \$150,000 grant award brought brand new Epson projectors in every classroom, over 100 laptops and desktops, and access to state of the art software programs to Common Ground.



At Common Ground, we provide students with a safe and stimulating learning environment. Our goal is to use technology to help provide our students with the understanding and skills needed to use the Internet to enhance and increasing their learning through education and research. Use of new technology will open our students up to endless academic opportunities from on-line classes to partnership with students in other towns, states, and even countries. In order to keep our students safe while using all of our new computer equipment and other technologies, we have put into place an Acceptable Use of the Internet policy*.

The use of the Common Ground High School network is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use, including any violation of these conditions and rules may result in cancellation of the privilege as well as disciplinary action.

Thing parents should know the following about our Acceptable Use Policy:



1. In order for students to remain active users, their account must be in support of and consistent with the education objectives of Common Ground High School.
2. Students will respect the right to privacy of others. They will only access or look at information on the computer if they have permission of the owner of that information. Students will only use their assigned account and will not share their password with anyone.
3. Students will respect the property of others, including the school. Students will not make changes to, or delete, computer programs, files or information belonging to others, without prior permission. In addition, students will not view, use, or copy passwords, data or networks that they are not authorized to see or use.
4. Students will never get together with anyone they meet over the Internet without first checking with and getting permission from their parents and/or a teacher.
5. Students will not distribute private information about others over the Internet.
6. Students are expected to treat all equipment with care— they will not destroy or damage data, network, files, or other resources that do not belong to them without permission.
7. Students will not make illegal copies of games, music, or other materials.
8. Students will not plagiarize the work of others.
9. Students may not send, copy, or create any material that violates the school code of conduct (such as pornographic material, threatening, rude, discriminatory or meant to harass another).
10. Student work is not private. The teachers and staff at Common Ground High School can look at and monitor any student work, including but not limited to email.
11. Students are only allowed to use the Internet and school computers for work, and nothing else.
12. If a student does not follow the school's rules for the Internet and computers at school, he or she may not be allowed to use it anymore. A student caught misusing and not respecting our policies may even result in suspension or expulsion from school.



* See enclosed policy for a detailed explanation.

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After School Academic Support Programs

Common Ground High School offers a wide array of academic programs daily after school. Our programs run Monday-Thursday from 3:00-5:00pm and on Fridays from 1:30-3:30pm.

As part of our after school programs, we offer intensive academic supports, which include Homework Center, Academic Support Labs, and Tier II Interventions. Each of these programs, if assigned, are mandatory. We are extremely serious about academic success and expect our students to attend all of their scheduled after school requirements. These programs are put in place to help all of our students improve academically and get the individualized support they need. To help promote academic success after school we have put the following Academic Supports Policy in place.

- All academic supports are mandatory.
- Students are expected to be on time and ready to work. All students will be expected to stay for the entire session from 3-4pm.
- No electronics (such as cell phones, music players, or other devices) are allowed.
- If a student is unable to attend their scheduled support session, they must speak with appropriate school staff (Ms. Sam, Ms. Camille, or Mr. G). You cannot get permission to miss a support from any other school day staff.
- After school supports are an extension of a school day and treated as though they are a 6th class. We expect students to make up their missed time and work just as we would if they missed a day of school. If students are absent from their support for **ANY REASON**, they will make up their session during our Friday lab. Friday lab runs from 1:30-3:30. If a student has exceeded two hours of makeup time, they will be scheduled to make up the remaining time during a Saturday detention.
- Students who miss academic labs will receive disciplinary action in addition to making up missed time.
 - First Skip: make up missed work, disciplinary warning
 - Second Skip: make up missed work, lunch detention
 - Third Skip or greater: make up missed work, Saturday detention (9-11am Saturday morning)
- Students who skip a Saturday detention will be placed on In-School Suspension until a parent comes in for a meeting with school administration.
- In some cases, students may be removed from after school supports based on performance, attendance, and behavior:
 - *Successful Completion*: Students who are excelling in their classes as well as in their after school supports will have the opportunity to reduce their number of academic supports. If a student earns a B+ or higher in their referring class and have met "goal" or higher in their after school support, may be eligible to reduce their number of support days.
 - *Academic Probation*: Students who consistently miss their after school supports or are disruptive to their classmates after school will be placed on Academic Probation. Once a student is placed on Academic Probation, they will be removed from their after school support for the remainder of the trimester. They will return to their scheduled after school supports at the start of the next trimester. While on Academic Probation, students will not be allowed to participate in ANY after school programs or in school day activities such as dances, hikes, athletics or other social events.
- Parents should always call or send a letter in to the appropriate school staff member if their child will miss a support session.
- Important Contact Information
 - Tom Gaudio, After School Programs Coordinator, tgaudio@commongroundct.org
 - Camille Seaberry, Coordinator of After School Academic Supports, cseaberry@commongroundct.org
 - Samantha Smith, Homework Center Coordinator, ssmith@commongroundct.org
 - Amy Champagne, Assistant Director of Student Affairs, achampagne@commongroundct.org

All after school program staff can be reached at: (203) 389-0823 x1205