

# Early Enrollment Program Newsletter

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## “FIRSTS” for EEP

### *Blackstone Academy Charter School*

*“We Succeed Because of Who We Are”*

The **first independent charter school** to participate in the Early Enrollment Program is located in Pawtucket, RI. Blackstone Academy Charter School (BACS) opened its doors on September 16, 2002, as a college-preparatory high school and currently has 165 students enrolled. Students from Pawtucket and Central Falls must apply for admissions and are chosen by a publically held lottery. Each year there are usually 300 ninth graders on the waiting list after the lottery.

As an independent charter school, BACS is accountable to abide by the same federal and state regulations as other public schools; it is not run by a local school district but by their own private non-profit agency. BACS grew out of the SPIRIT Educational Program (a year-round educational enrichment program) whose staff recognized the need for a small alternative secondary school for Pawtucket and Central Falls.

With a 93.8% attendance rate and a graduation rate of 86.5% for the 2011-12 school year, BACS has much to be proud of. In May, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education unanimously approved the reauthorization of Blackstone Academy Charter School for another five years. In addition, BACS is the first Rhode Island charter school to be reauthorized under the new Department of Education evaluation system. In July, RIDE designated BACS as a “commended” school, the highest classification in the state. With only six other RI secondary schools receiving this designation, BACS is the only urban non-exam high school to be commended.

Principal Kyleen Carpenter attributes part of the school’s success “to the fact that the majority of the founders are still here and keep the mission and spirit of the school alive through the many changes that we have gone through.” Carolyn Sheehan, Director of BACS, believes that by sticking to the school’s mission of “community involvement and improvement,” they are able to achieve their success. A personalized learning environment helps to create a strong sense of community. The student -teacher ratio is small, advisories are held every day with the same teacher and group of students, each student is well known by at least one adult, and each day begins with a student-run Community Meeting.

In addition, all teachers are certified, hands-on learning is emphasized, and interdisciplinary learning is encouraged. Community involvement includes partnerships with RISD, the RI Philharmonic, The Music School, Brown University including its medical school, The Children’s Crusade and the Rhode College School of Social Work.

*...continued on Page 6 BACS*



## ***Barrington High School is ALIVE with MUSIC***

***Barrington High School's Music Department is an EEP first for a few reasons. Every music teacher*** on staff is an approved EEP instructor. Barbara Hughes, Celeste LaBonte, and Nahum Mitnik share the teaching of Music 201: Survey of Music, Music 203: Elementary Music Theory, and Music 150: Electronic Music. Of special recognition in an already impressive department is Nahum Mitnik who is also the **first EEP music** instructor to be approved to teach three courses: Music 201, Music 150: Electronic Music, and Music 150: Advanced Digital Audio Production.

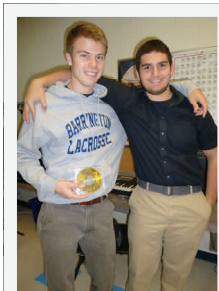
On staff at Barrington High since 2001, Nahum earned a BM in Music Education from the University of RI and holds a Master's of Science in Instructional Technology from the University of Bridgeport. He has a plethora of titles in the department, the latest of which seems to bring him great personal and professional satisfaction: Teacher of Advanced Digital Audio Production (ADAP). In place of the sounds of instruments or singing which are the hallmark of most music rooms, Room 823 is set up with computers, printers, and digital equipment, all of which are essential components for the course. Every few months Barrington High School's cafeteria is transformed into a Coffee House, offering coffee, tea, desserts and live musical performances. ADAP students construct a stage and audio system. Students and community members



who pay a nominal cover charge are treated to an evening of all genre of music performed by BHS students. The prelude to the evening's entertainment is only the beginning of a process for the ADAP class. From that point, students busily work in groups editing a rough recording of a Coffee House session, burning tracks for the CD, making labels for the distribution of Coffee House CDs, or creating a flyer for the next Coffee House session. On a recent visit to the class, EEP staff witnessed Quinn busily constructing a flyer advertising the next Coffee House, while Steve, Billy and Joe burned tracks for the current CD. Nahum explained that the funds raised at the Coffee Houses are put toward \$3,000 in music scholarships; the latest event realized \$400! He proudly noted that "all students in the class participate toward the total creation of the CD, including complimentary distribution to the artists who performed the Coffee House numbers."

While some members of the class have had some professional music training, others are self taught. Elliot had experience singing with the San Francisco Boys' Choir before moving to RI. There are piano players in the class, as well as young men who play bass, guitar, and harmonica. When asked if anyone were pursuing a career in music, all students said "No," but they would continue to play "as a hobby" and "for relaxation." Ryan is planning a career in Video Production; when asked why he was taking Mr. Mitnik's course, Ryan quickly responded, "Audio is an essential skill to learn for video production;" he felt that he would be well prepared for his college study having taken Advanced Digital Audio Production. It's evident that all students are well prepared to work independently, seeking "Mr. Mitnik's help if we really get stuck; he's always there if we need him...but he lets us go with our ideas." Nahum feels that the pre-requisite of Electronic Music has really helped students succeed in this

"maiden voyage" of ADAP, and we couldn't agree more!



**...proudly displaying a finished product**

**Nahum Mitnik likes what he hears....**



## ***North Kingstown High “Skippers” Create Personal Financial Plans***

Thanks to Rich Garland, EEP Finance 203 instructor at North Kingstown High School, there are nearly two dozen students who are much more financially savvy now than they were when the school year began. This is the ***first time that EEP has participation from North Kingstown High*** and with this endeavor comes ***another first***; Rich is the ***first EEP instructor to teach Finance 203: Personal Finance***. Even after leaving behind a career spanning over thirty years in business and technology and retiring from IBM as an executive, he enters his classroom everyday looking as if he’s in the corporate world. His impeccable business demeanor meshes with his attention to detail in the lessons he creates.

Every class begins with a challenge to students in the form of a “Do Now”, as he directs attention to the board at the front of the room. “Where did the term “Blue Chip” originate and why?”, he reads, as the students follow.



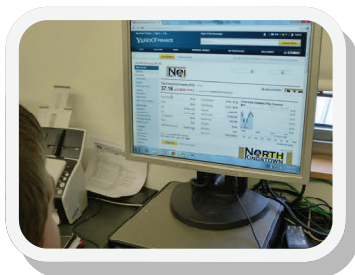
***Good or bad news from Dow Jones ?***

Within a few minutes students are abuzz with a flurry of information they garner from the computers sitting in front of them; as they share their newly found material, he reminds them of the previous day’s lesson on “common and preferred stock.” Within five minutes from the start of class, the students in Finance 203 have preparation for the work they will do that day: “How to evaluate, buy, and sell stocks to create, then increase, the value of your portfolio.” Students busily address the task at hand. Josh explains that “everything Mr. Garland says and everything we have to do is available for us online, so if we miss something there’s no reason why we can’t catch up!”

Every student is given \$10,000 (fictitious, of course) to invest; “The goal of the class is for students to create short term goals (e.g. money towards college tuition) and long term goals (e.g. retirement plans), and to develop financial plans and investment portfolios that support the achievement of those goals. They track their net cash flow, analyze their net worth, review the financial indicators associated with their chosen stock, and create a financial plan,” explains Rich; “It’s important they have something they can carry on after high school.” From the sights and sounds of this class, all students are taking their task seriously! Isabella, a hopeful theatre major in college, emphasizes that she took the course because, “financial stability is important for EVERYONE!” Filippo, an exchange student from Rome, articulately notes that “the technical language is not so easy to understand; the word ‘stocks’ for example, is ‘azioni’ in Italian, but the concepts of economics are an international issue; it’s the same for everyone.” Nick is elated because “I just gained \$500!”; Alex is equally as excited over his \$436 gain, but more importantly because “I knew nothing when I started this class, but I’ve learned a lot.” While some students, like Alex, indicate an interest in majoring in finance in college, most students concur that taking the class is one of the best choices they made. Brianna and Meagan admit that their mothers strongly encouraged them to register for the class; both young women equally admit that their mothers “were right”; they are learning life skills in Finance 203.

When Rich submitted his resume to EEP for consideration, he stated that as a teacher, he wanted to “significantly contribute to building high performance leaders while still in their early stages of learning.” By all appearances, he is doing just that! His commitment is evident, his teaching technique is effective, and he couldn’t feel more rewarded as a teacher than in hearing

James say that “this class is so interesting; EVERYONE is vested.”



***...North Kingstown High and the start of Finance 203 class***



## Congratulations

We are pleased to announce that the following teachers are among the newest EEP Instructors for 2012-2013:

**Richard Garland**, North Kingstown HS, Finance 203

**Jason Goffe**, Woonsocket HS, Biology 111

**Marc Hamlin**, Exeter-West Greenwich HS, English 100

**Scott Maynard**, Cranston East HS, Economics 215 and Political Science 202

**Robert Stewart**, Woonsocket HS, History 150

**Marion Wrye**, St. Mary/Bay View, English 100

**Jennifer True**, Smithfield HS, Chemistry 103

We are pleased that the following EEP teachers, who have been inactive for one school year or longer, are back in the EEP ranks!

**Gregory Decoteaux**, Middletown HS, Physics 101 & Physics 102

**Susan Dillon**, Central HS, English 100

**John Horton**, Blackstone Academy Charter School, Biology 111

**Amy Kalif**, Middletown HS, Spanish 113

**Lauren King**, Cranston West HS, Spanish 113

**Howard Lancaster**, Chemistry 103, Seekonk HS

**Alfred Pannone**, Cranston West HS, Italian 113

**Michael Werth**, Classical HS, Math 240

We welcome a new EEP on-site at the following high school:

**Debbie Licciardi**, Johnston HS

### RETIREMENT

We extend our deepest appreciation to **Natale Urban**, Italian instructor, who retired from **Cranston High School West**. As an EEP instructor, she was an invaluable advocate and resource for EEP and for her students. We offer our sincerest congratulations to Natale!

### Introducing EEP's Social Media Manager

Hello, my name is O'Key Casey. As the Technical Administrator the Early Enrollment Program, I am responsible for establishing and managing social media for the EEP. I am a resident of Providence, RI by way of New Orleans, LA, which I shall always call home. Entering my third year of college, I am an independent student at RIC majoring in finance and computer science.

Please help me by kindly posting or emailing your thoughts or suggestions for making EEP Facebook more relevant and effective. Tell me what exciting and interesting events are occurring at your school. Together let us highlight the achievements of your students and faculty and increase the reach of the program to better serve our students and their communities.

I look forward to working with you all.



# EEP BULLETIN BOARD

## Requesting RIC Transcripts

### “How to” information for your students:

Go to <http://www.ric.edu/recordsoffice/pdf/transcriptrequestform.pdf>  
Students should download and complete the form. There is a place to circle “EEP student”, so students don’t need to know their EMPLID (student ID) to request a transcript. The completed form should be mailed to

Rhode Island College Records Office  
600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue  
Providence, RI 02908

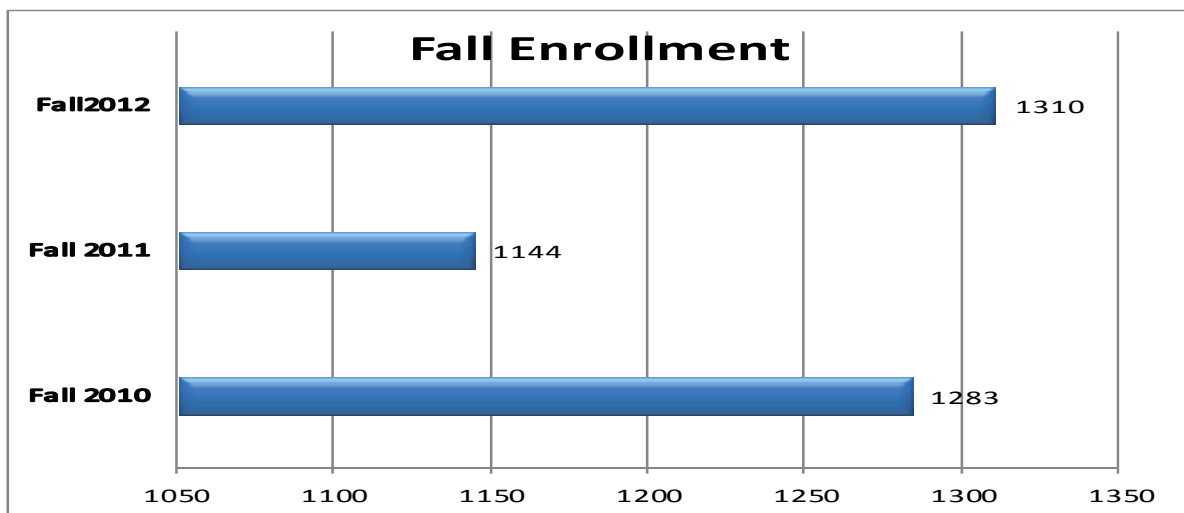


Please keep your camera handy! Email us photos (jpg format) of you and your students at any time during the year. Be sure you have parental permission to use the photo of an EEP student. Who knows? Your photo(s) may appear in an EEP Newsletter or one of our annual publications.



### NEWS FLASH!!!

Fall 2012 Enrollment for EEP is up 14.5% over last year with a total of 1310 students.





*...continued from Page 1 BACS*

We are proud to have Blackstone Academy Charter School as part of the EEP family, commend them for all their success, and congratulate them on their tenth anniversary!



**John Horton, Biology 111 instructor, has been on the BACS staff since 2003.**

Students at BACS had lots to say when asked their opinion of the school; their comments reflect the same enthusiasm as the professionals in their building:

Fantasia said, “This school gives me what I need to succeed. I have learning challenges and receive lots of one on one attention with my teachers. They take the time to help me.”

Manuela noted that “teachers are very helpful and are always there for us.”

Claudia smiled and stated, “Our teachers really think we are going somewhere. We are a community.”

Jocelyn feels that “this school is different. They really care about us.”

And Qiana reflected, “Coming here for my freshman year, I was apprehensive. But my classes were small, I received one-on-one attention, my teachers were friendly and I was encouraged to ask questions. We have a real sense of community because everyone knows everyone!”



**Biology 111 Students**