



# DaVinci Connection

## DATES TO REMEMBER

### High School Coordinator's Town Hall Meeting

Wednesday, February 1  
6:00 pm  
Room 302

### School Board Election

Friday, February 3-Friday,  
February 10  
(Poll closes 5:00 p.m.)

### Facilities/Technology Committee

Monday, February 6  
4:30 pm  
Room 305

### Policies/Procedure Committee

Monday, February 6  
6:00 pm  
Room 302

### Technology Committee

Monday, February 6  
6:00 pm  
Room 305

### Communications Committee

Tuesday, February 7  
5:00 pm  
Room 302

Find more upcoming events on the DaVinci Academy home page, or go to the "Calendar" page for future important dates.

<http://davincicharterschool.org/Calendar.aspx>

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[www.davincicharterschool.org](http://www.davincicharterschool.org)

## STAFF CHANGES THIS YEAR

(by *Terry Moffatt, Academic Director*)

- Holly Fischer has accepted the position of Instructional Coordinator. Holly is well respected by the teachers and will do a great job in this position!

- Of course, this left Holly's kindergarten position open. This position was offered to two of our existing paraprofessionals who have the respective license. It was decided to split the job between the two teachers so that it would not overwhelm either of them. Cristina Mitchell will take the morning class, and Karen Carter will teach the afternoon class. They will do a great job with the kindergarten students!

- Abby Arrowsmith resigned as the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, and Alissa Savering was hired for the position. To assist Elizabeth Andringa and Clara Jackson with the Response-to-Intervention (RTI) program (given Alissa's move), a general education paraprofessional was hired. Deborah Peterson began at DaVinci Academy on January 9. She has worked for 12 years as a para, plus has experience with data entry, making her a very qualified candidate.

- With the two paras teaching kindergarten and the loss of Carrie Gess at the end of November, it was necessary to hire another special education para. One of our parents, Denise Young, applied for and accepted the position. Denise took over for Marcia Bouwman when she was out, so she knows the school very well and is a great addition!

- Therese O'Meara was hired as the third special education teacher. She comes from Lionsgate Academy and has a great deal of experience. The special ed team is now at full strength and has been working hard to get everything in order in that department. Under the direction of Caroline Carritt, Special Education Director, the team underwent training during intersession week and is now ready to go.

- The last middle school position was filled before break. Matthew Brossart's first day at DaVinci Academy was January 9. He has made a great start as part of the middle school team!

As you can see, there has been quite a bit of movement and filling of positions. However, we are on the right track now and are at full strength in all areas. We have a strong, dedicated staff, and we all look forward to a great rest of the year at DaVinci Academy!

## VOLUNTEER CORNER

(by *Lee Swearingen, Volunteer Coordinator*)

When volunteering at DaVinci Academy, please sign in and out at the HelpCounter kiosk located at the front desk, and take a "Visitor" badge. Not only does this log your hours, it also allows the school to know who is in the building at all times.

*Current Volunteer Opportunities:*

- Moving locker shelves
- Lunch or recess supervision
- Fundraising and Technology Committee members
- Catalog unused curriculum books
- Catalog current technology equipment



## BUDGET, FINANCE, AND AUDIT COMMITTEE UPDATE

*(by Doug Hiatt, Finance Committee Chair)*

Our November 2, 2011, article explained the purpose of the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee (often referred to as just the Finance Committee), the basic fund system used by DaVinci Academy to keep track of revenues and expenditures, and information about the Finance Committee goals for the 2011-12 fiscal year; so we won't repeat those here. We want to provide an update on the fiscal health of DaVinci Academy and explain the work the Finance Committee will do over the next several months.

Through the first half of the year, DaVinci Academy has spent about 47% of budgeted expenses and has received payments of about 42% of the budgeted revenue. Barring unforeseen items, DaVinci Academy is on



track to spend about 3% less than budgeted which will help maintain our fund balance at the 35% level. This is important because of the 40% holdback explained in our November article. Due to the 40% holdback, the state has withheld a little over \$1 million from the payments due to DaVinci Academy that will be paid 75% on July 15, 2012, and with the remaining 25% to be paid on October 30, 2012. In addition, charter schools will not receive any general education payments from the state during the months of March, April, May, and June.

While a lot of regular school districts and charter schools are having a difficult time managing cash flow and are having to borrow, DaVinci Academy will be able to manage our cash flow despite the holdback. This means that money does not have to be diverted from educational expenditures to pay interest. DaVinci Academy does have a \$150,000 line of credit to use if needed, but we should be

able to make it through this year without needing to draw on it.

In the second half of the year, the main work of the Finance Committee is to develop the budget for the next school year and to work on about 20 vendor contracts. The budget work has already begun, and a proposed budget will be presented to the Board in April for comments with a final budget presented in May. In February, bids will start being obtained for the contracts and will be reviewed at meetings as they come in. In addition, we are currently in the process of submitting our application for the school finance award, and the required items to renew our line of credit.

If you have questions or concerns related to budget, finance, or audit, let me know at [dhiatt@davincicharterschool.org](mailto:dhiatt@davincicharterschool.org).

## POINSETTIA FUNDRAISER

Thanks to all who supported the 1<sup>st</sup> annual poinsettia sale at DaVinci Academy. Your contributions not only made the winter concert more festive, but also directly benefited the music department. We raised \$150, which went toward paying the wonderful pianist who accompanied our concerts. Because of your thoughtful contributions, less money was needed out of the operating budget. Every little bit helps to further enrich your child's education!





## BULLYING POLICY

(by Gregg Eldred, Student Development Coordinator)

At DaVinci Academy, we believe that a safe and civil environment is needed for students to learn and attain high academic standards and to promote healthy human relationships. Bullying, like other violent or disruptive behavior, interferes with students' ability to learn and teachers' ability to educate in a safe environment.

As defined in DaVinci Academy's Bullying Prohibition Policy (#514), "Bullying" means any written or verbal expression, physical act or gesture, or pattern thereof, by a student that is intended to cause or is perceived as causing distress to one or more students and which substantially interferes with another student's or students' educational benefits, opportunities, or performance.

Bullying includes, but is not limited to, conduct by a student against another student or a group of students that a reasonable person under the circumstances knows or should know has the effect of:

1. Harming a student or a group of students;
2. Damaging a student's property or a group of students' property;
3. Placing a student or a group of students in reasonable fear of harm to person or property;
4. Creating a hostile educational environment for a student or a group of students; or
5. Intimidating a student or a group of students.

DaVinci Academy's Bullying Prohibition Policy also states that an act of bullying, by either an individual student or a group of students, is expressly prohibited on school property or at school-related functions. This policy applies not only to students who directly engage in an act of bullying, but also to students who, by their

indirect behavior, condone or support another student's act of bullying.

Reporting Bullying - Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of bullying, or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute bullying, shall report the alleged acts immediately to the School Director or designee. A person may report bullying anonymously. However, the school's ability to take action against an alleged perpetrator based solely on an anonymous report may be limited.

If your son or daughter feels they are a victim of bullying, it's important for them to tell a staff member. The school will act to investigate all complaints of bullying and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school who is found to have violated this policy.

In September, our 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students attended a Courage Retreat presented by the Youth Frontiers. The retreat addressed issues relating to making good choices and bullying. In October, our middle school students participated in a survey, answering several questions related to their classmates and school environment. ***A few of the questions and their responses are listed in the tables on the next page.***

According to the data, since the retreat, our students have a positive outlook on their classmates and school environment. We are looking into future programs for our students to participate in and to continue to educate them about bullying and bullying prevention.

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

-- Maya Angelou



## Courage Retreat Data

I am responsible to all students in this school, not just my friends.

| Students                    | Strongly Disagree | Disagree  | Agree      | Strongly Agree |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|----------------|
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Girls | 0                 | 0         | 3          | 8              |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Boys  | 1                 | 3         | 21         | 5              |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Girls | 0                 | 0         | 4          | 5              |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Boys  | 0                 | 0         | 5          | 5              |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Girls | 0                 | 0         | 4          | 3              |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Boys  | 0                 | 0         | 6          | 4              |
| <b>Total Percent</b>        | <b>1%</b>         | <b>3%</b> | <b>53%</b> | <b>43%</b>     |

Since the Courage Retreat, I have stood up for someone who was being bullied.

| Students                    | Strongly Disagree | Disagree   | Agree      | Strongly Agree |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Girls | 2                 | 2          | 4          | 4              |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Boys  | 2                 | 8          | 16         | 5              |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Girls | 0                 | 2          | 2          | 4              |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Boys  | 1                 | 2          | 4          | 5              |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Girls | 0                 | 2          | 1          | 4              |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Boys  | 0                 | 2          | 5          | 4              |
| <b>Total Percent</b>        | <b>5%</b>         | <b>22%</b> | <b>40%</b> | <b>33%</b>     |

Students at this school treat classmates with respect.

| Students                    | Strongly Disagree | Disagree   | Agree      | Strongly Agree |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Girls | 0                 | 1          | 9          | 3              |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Boys  | 0                 | 4          | 18         | 6              |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Girls | 0                 | 0          | 6          | 3              |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Boys  | 0                 | 2          | 8          | 0              |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Girls | 0                 | 2          | 4          | 1              |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Boys  | 1                 | 4          | 6          | 0              |
| <b>Total Percent</b>        | <b>1%</b>         | <b>17%</b> | <b>65%</b> | <b>17%</b>     |

Students at school care about me.

| Students                    | Strongly Disagree | Disagree   | Agree      | Strongly Agree |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Girls | 0                 | 1          | 7          | 4              |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Boys  | 2                 | 3          | 17         | 5              |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Girls | 1                 | 2          | 3          | 3              |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Boys  | 0                 | 1          | 8          | 1              |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Girls | 0                 | 2          | 3          | 2              |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Boys  | 2                 | 5          | 4          | 0              |
| <b>Total Percent</b>        | <b>5%</b>         | <b>18%</b> | <b>56%</b> | <b>21%</b>     |



# PTO PLACE

## UPCOMING EVENTS

February 1-29 – Read-a-Thon

## GET TO KNOW YOUR PTO

### ***Natalie Dahlquist, PTO Teacher Liaison***

Natalie Dahlquist has been a kindergarten and Leo's Garden teacher at DaVinci Academy since its opening in 2008. She graduated from Bethel University in 2008 with a B.A. in Elementary Education and Spanish Education.

### **Q. What do you love about DaVinci Academy?**

A. I love the close-knit staff and supportive parents. It is really nice how everyone works as a team for the good of the students.

### **Q. What do you love about DaVinci Academy PTO?**

A. I love connecting with the parents. They want so much to help the teachers, and I enjoy giving them a teacher's point of view. It is also fun spending time with the parents outside of school hours and growing relationships with them. We have some fun parents!

### **Q. What do you do in life outside DaVinci Academy?**

A. I enjoy singing and am a member of two choirs, one of which will travel to Ukraine this summer. I attend Eagle Brook Church in Lino Lakes and enjoy being part of a women's Bible study. I also enjoy reading, playing piano, and spending time with my family and my kitten, Imogene.

## NEED GAS OR GROCERIES?

Did you know that the PTO sells gift cards (Scrip) to many gas stations, grocery stores, and restaurants around town? For every card that is purchased, a percentage of the sale goes to DaVinci Academy! Just a few of the cards we have on-hand are: Cub Foods, Bath & Body Works, Chuck E. Cheese's, Kwik Trip, Starbucks, Target, Walgreens, and Walmart/Sam's Club. To buy a card or place an order, contact [Tammy Ness](#). If you don't see what you're looking for, check out [www.shopwithscrip.com](http://www.shopwithscrip.com); there are thousands to choose from!

## GUEST SPEAKER RECAP

At the January 24 PTO Meeting, child therapist Heidi Gajda presented a highly-recommended parenting technique called "1-2-3 Magic," by Dr. Thomas Phelan. She went through the basic STOP and START behaviors and explained why talking to your children too much is not always a good idea (when you're

disciplining). Children are NOT little adults. They cannot reason the way adults do no matter how much talking or reasoning we try to do with them. The theory is to stop all the talking and emotion during discipline. Consistency is key! If you give in once, you give the child all the power! For more information, find the "1-2-3 Magic" books and DVDs at your local library or at [www.parentmagic.com](http://www.parentmagic.com).

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Do you need to get your 40 volunteer hours? The PTO is looking for volunteers to help collect pledges for the Read-a-Thon during all lunch hours in February, between 11 am and 1 pm. We also need volunteers to help with the Book Swap at the beginning of February, Wednesday morning reading times with moms and dads on March 8 and 15, and the All-School Celebration on March 1. Various help is needed, so please contact [Dina Lantzer](#).

We still could use extra hands with the silent auction and spaghetti dinner in April, so please contact [Lisa King](#).

## READ-A-THON BEGINS ON FEBRUARY 1

February is "I Love to Read Month," and DaVinci Academy students will celebrate by reading! We will kick off our annual Read-a-Thon on February 1, and it will go all month long.

Have you ever really considered how much a million is? DaVinci Academy students are about to find out! Our reading challenge is a million minutes! That is 87 minutes per student per day for the whole month of February! Our monetary goal is \$10,000 in pledges.

Some fun reading events are being planned, so join the DaVinci Academy community in this month of reading. Watch for a Read-a-Thon packet and Calendar of Events to come home with your child. The All-School Celebration for reaching our goals is on March 1. If our goals are met, Mr. Eldred, Mr. Klabunde, and Mr. Hobot will all sleep on the roof that night...SO LET'S GET READING!