

# DaVinci Connection

## DATES TO REMEMBER

Grad Writing (Grade 9)  
Tuesday, April 16

MCA Reading (Grades 3-8)  
Tuesday-Thursday,  
April 16-18

Special Education Advisory  
Council (SEAC)  
Thursday, April 18  
5:30 pm (Dinner)  
6:00 pm (Program)

School Musical Performance  
"Schoolhouse Rock Live, Jr."  
Friday, April 19 6:30 pm &  
Saturday, April 20 2:00 pm

School Board Meeting  
Monday, April 22  
6:00 pm

Information Night  
Tuesday, April 25  
6:00 pm

MCA Math (Grades 3-8)  
Tuesday-Thursday,  
April 30-May 2

Spaghetti Dinner/  
Silent Auction  
Thursday, May 2  
6:00 pm

Communications Committee  
Tuesday, May 7  
5:00 pm

K-2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Music Concert  
Tuesday, May 7  
6:00 pm

MCA Science (Grades 5 & 8)  
Wednesday-Thursday,  
May 8-9

3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> Grade Music Concert  
Thursday, May 9  
6:30 pm

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

## **Compensation Committee – Moving Forward Behind the Scenes (by Dale Lieb, Compensation Committee Chair)**

I believe all of us appreciate that the success of any school is highly dependent on the quality of its people – administrators, teachers, and staff. At DaVinci Academy, we are fortunate to have a very talented, dedicated group of people who are constantly focused on delivering a quality learning experience for our children. Attracting and retaining these professionals is a challenge we take very seriously, and that is where the work of our Compensation Committee is so important. The committee is made up of school board members, parents, administrative staff, and teachers. We welcome more participants to help in these efforts and are grateful for those who currently participate.

The majority of our work is done behind the scenes, where salary ranges, bonus programs, and employee benefits are closely scrutinized. A lot of effort has gone into comparing our overall compensation program with those of other charter schools. It is critical that we are able to offer an attractive, competitive compensation package in order to attract and retain quality educators.

Since our last update, we have revised and improved administrator bonus plans to reflect the Leverage Leadership goals being implemented by our administrators. The Q Comp bonus program for our teachers is well underway. Q Comp could potentially allow all teachers to earn an additional \$1,500 annual bonus, without adding any costs to DaVinci Academy provided we meet the state's requirements and our mutual goals. Obviously we have school budget constraints. The great news with this new Q Comp program is our school budget remains intact since the state funds most of the program. This is a result of the strong

collaborative effort between the state, our administration, and the teachers to create the first Q Comp program for DaVinci Academy. We continue to work toward making it a successful, ongoing program for our school.

Another immediate task before us is to review and recommend new compensation and benefit plan changes for the 2013-14 school year. These recommendations will be coordinated with the Finance Committee so we are within next year's school operating budget. We work closely with the Finance Committee to assure that we maximize resources and employee satisfaction in an attempt to motivate each staff member to reach their personal potential at our school and remain within our budgetary limits.

All of these efforts attempt to improve staff job satisfaction and morale while achieving our key goal of attracting and retaining our DaVinci Academy staff, our most treasured asset after our students.

## **REMINDER: MCA READING TESTS THIS WEEK!**

All students in grades 3-8 are taking the MCA reading test this week. Please help support your child by ensuring they come to school well-rested and well-fed.

## **ART FAIR UPDATE (by Kat Larson, Art Instructor)**

DaVinci Academy students spent two consecutive art classes brainstorming ideas for their individual Art Fair projects. Students listed topics they have learned about in their science classes that could be crossed over into artistic expressions, just as our namesake Leonardo DaVinci would have done! Each student has completed rough draft sheets with sketches and supply lists included, as well as a notation of how they plan to tie their project to science.

*Cont. on page 2*



*Cont. from page 1*

Students will receive their 6"x6" canvases this week, and may begin working on their projects outside of class, if they haven't begun already.

It's important to remember that, because we're shooting for a gallery-feel this year, student projects must not exceed the canvas dimensions, as far as perimeter is concerned. However, as long as the final work can be hung alongside other student pieces, the dimensionality can increase in depth. Students are allowed to use a different canvas material if they so choose, as long as they use the 6"x6" piece provided to them as a size guide – no artwork may exceed the height and width of the provided canvas paper.

We are excited to see what creativity students showcase in their DaVinci Art Fair projects! There has been a very positive response as a whole to this year's theme, and the outcome will likely make Leonardo very proud! Keep up the great work DaVinci scientist artists.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL PRESENTS...**

*(by Caroline Carritt, Special Education Director)*

This Thursday, April 18, Bonnie Jean Smith will bring an understanding of how to use the IEP (Individualized Education Program) to make sure your child is making meaningful progress. This workshop will explore skills parents can use to become more effective advocates for their child. Come learn these skills, which include: understanding your child's disability, knowing your school district, knowing your rights and responsibilities, using clear and effective communication, understanding the special education process, and knowing the dispute resolution option.

"Use the IEP to Help Your Child: Skills for Effective Parent Advocacy"

Presenter: Bonnie Jean Smith, Advocate, PACER Center

DaVinci Academy of Arts and Science

Thursday, April 18

5:30-6:00 pm (Dinner)

6:00-8:00 pm (Program)

Please RSVP to [Mary](#) or [Caroline](#). All are invited!

### **BELL SYSTEM**

*(by Gregg Eldred, Student Development Coordinator)*

A new bell system was installed over spring break. The bell system serves to alert staff and students in the case of an emergency or drill, and to alert students in the morning. At 7:55 am, the bell rings for about one second to alert students that school will start in five minutes and that they should be getting to their classroom. The bell rings again at 8:00 am to signify to everyone in the building that the school day has begun. Students should be in their classrooms when the second bell rings at 8:00 am. Students who are not in class at that time could receive a tardy.

In the event of an emergency or a lock down drill, the bell will be rung manually three times followed by an intercom announcement that will describe the situation or announce the drill. The bell will alert everyone and ensure that all staff and students can hear any announcements that follow the bell.

### **JUNE 14 – GOLF TOURNAMENT FUNDRAISER**

*(by Mary Walker, Golf Tournament Chair)*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual DaVinci Academy Golf Tournament is on Friday, June 14, at Majestic Oaks Golf Club in Ham Lake, MN. All stakeholders are encouraged to be part of this event through volunteering, golfing, sponsoring, donating, and/or attending dinner. Together we can make this happen and raise funds to offer our children unique and encouraging opportunities at DaVinci Academy! Contact [Mary Walker](#) to volunteer, commit with sponsors and/or golfers, or to ask questions. If you need help approaching employers, friends, or family, or if you need brochures or sample letters, also contact Mary.





## **SCHOOLHOUSE ROCK LIVE, JR.**

*(by Stephanie Severson, Middle School Language Arts)*

DaVinci Academy will present "Schoolhouse Rock Live, Jr." on Friday, April 19 at 6:30 pm and Saturday, April 20 at 2:00 pm. General admission tickets are \$3; student tickets are \$1; and ages 5 & under are FREE. Tickets will be available for purchase at the door. "Schoolhouse Rock Live, Jr." features the book by Scott Ferguson, Kyle Hall, and George Keating, and music and lyrics by Lynn Ahrens, Bob Dorough, Dave Frishberg, Kathy Mandry, George Newall, and Tom Yohe.

"Schoolhouse Rock Live, Jr." is a one-act musical medley of songs from the famous cartoon shorts that appeared on Saturday mornings on ABC during the 1970s. Originally conceived as short, educational "commercial breaks" in between classic Saturday morning cartoons, "Schoolhouse Rock" songs soon became as popular as the shows they aired between. Those songs have now taken on a life of their own in schools as teachers share songs with their classes that they remember as kids. Songs such as "Interplanet Janet," "Interjections," "I'm Just a Bill," and "Conjunction Junction," all appear as part of Grammar, Math, and America Rock. "Schoolhouse Rock Live, Jr." is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI).

## **UNPLUG AND READ**

*(by Stephanie Severson, Middle School Language Arts)*

Random House Children's Books is strongly promoting this year's [Screen-Free Week](#), April 29-May 5. They are urging kids and parents everywhere to Unplug and Read. [Click here for the web page](#). They recently published this [video](#) in which four well-known author-illustrators (Bob Staake, Chris Raschka, Dan Yaccarino, and Tad Hills) call for kids to unplug and spend their time doing other, more active things.

I thought it would be fun to practice some graphing skills and encourage reading, along with a few other fun activities during the Screen-Free Week. We'll send home a sheet that will encourage your students to track their minutes in three categories: reading, games, and nature. Any time they spend reading will be tracked in their reading minutes.

Time spent playing games as a family or with a friend can be counted in game minutes, and any time spent outside playing, riding bikes, or taking walks should be tracked in nature minutes.

The graphing page will come home on Friday, April 26, and must be returned on Monday, May 6. Then we'll have some fun combining student graphs into classroom graphs, classroom graphs into grade graphs, and grade graphs into school-wide graphs.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

If your child is missing glasses, chances are good that "the Brendas" have them at the front desk. Come to the office if any of these items belong to you.



## **A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!**

Volunteer Appreciation Week is next week; April 21 through April 27. We would like to express our appreciation to each and every DaVinci Academy volunteer. So far this school year, 230 volunteers have put in approximately 4,500 hours! And those are just the hours that were officially recorded! We will have drawings and treats throughout the week to honor our volunteers. On behalf of the entire staff, thank you again— we couldn't do this without each and everyone of you.