

January 10, 2025

Dear PHA Families,

Happy New Year! It's wonderful to welcome our students back to campus. The energy and excitement they bring make this time of year truly special. I hope you and your family had a restful and joyful holiday season. We are ready to jump into the new year with enthusiasm and focus, working together to help your child thrive.

The next few months are among the most important for solidifying learning. As routines are firmly in place, we can push students toward deeper understanding and mastery of key concepts. I encourage you to take a few extra minutes this weekend to read your child's grade-level newsletter. It offers insights into what they're learning and provides ideas for at-home activities. Taking a little time to discuss these topics with your child can strengthen their understanding and allow them to learn from any new ideas or insights you may be able to share.

[4th Grade January Newsletter](#)

[5th Grade January Newsletter](#)

[6th Grade January Newsletter](#)

Thank you for being an essential part of our school community. Your involvement and support make a lasting difference. Here's to a productive and inspiring start to the year!

Warm regards,

The UE Leadership

Amy O'Connell & Nerecesa Pires

### **UE in the News!**

This week our fifth grade scholars were featured in the Commissioner's Weekly Update, a publication from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, that is shared with schools across the state! Check it out→

### **2. Picture of the Week:**

As part of learning about checks and balances in government, fifth graders at Prospect Hill Academy Charter School in Somerville participated in a simulation where they were either Supreme Court justices or representatives in Congress and debated and voted on proposed bills. (Photo courtesy of Prospect Hill Academy Charter School)



## CAMPUS UPDATES

- **Winter Coat Drive-** We are collecting gently used or new warm coats, scarves, gloves, and mittens for individuals of all ages and sizes. Coats can be for children and adults, and all donations are greatly appreciated. Each campus has a cardboard box where you can drop items off starting on Monday, December 16th. If you would like to support PHA families participating in the Thrive program with a monetary donation, please click [this link](#).
- **WinterFest Celebration** - Our second annual winter dance will take place on Friday, January 24th from 6-8 PM! While students are in the cafeteria dancing the night away, we invite their families to join us upstairs for a UE guardian gathering which will include a potluck dinner. If you would like to contribute a dish or would like more information on the family event please reach out to Nereida Tejeda at 716-202-0301 or at [ntejeda@phacs.org](mailto:ntejeda@phacs.org)

## UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES: PHA & Beyond

- **PHA Board Meeting RSVP** - If you wish to attend any of the upcoming PHA board meetings, please [complete this form](#) to indicate which meetings you'd like to receive an invitation to and an email address that you can be reached at. For security purposes, you will receive a link to the meeting (hosted on Zoom) via email an hour or two before the meeting begins.
- **Please join the Special Education Parent Advisory Council at PHA!** On the evening of January 17 from 6:00 - 8:00 PM, the PHA Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is hosting a virtual workshop about Basic Rights for students and families during the Evaluation and Eligibility Process of Special Education. Topics include:
  - Relevant Laws
  - Referral and Consent to Evaluate
  - Required and Optional Evaluations
  - Team Meeting Process & Eligibility Determination
  - Differences between an IEP and a 504 Plan
  - Free and Appropriate Education & Least Restrictive Environment
  - Parent/Caregiver Participation and Response to IEP
  - Procedural Safeguards

Anyone interested in this topic is welcome to attend. Pre-registration is required -click [here](#) to register.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

- **Monday, January 20:** MLK Day - NO School
- **Friday, January 24:** WinterFest Dance & Family Potluck
- **Friday, January 31:** Dress Like a Teacher Day
- **Friday, January 31:** End of Quarter 2
- **Friday, February 14:** Quarter 2 Report Cards Sent Home
- **Monday, February 17-Friday, February 21:** February Break - No School
- **Friday, February 28:** Celebrate Your Culture Dress Down Day
- **Friday, March 14:** Quarter 3 Progress Reports Sent Home
- **Monday, March 20:** Professional Development Day - No School

- **Friday, March 28:** Sports Dress Down Day
- **Friday, April 11:** End of Quarter 3
- **Friday, April 11:** Decades/Eras Dress Down Day
- **Friday, April 18:** Half Day - Noon Release
- **Monday, April 21-Friday, April 25:** April Break - No School
- **Friday, May 2:** Quarter 3 Report Cards Sent Home
- **Friday, May 16:** Quarter 4 Progress Reports Sent Home
- **Monday, May 26:** Memorial Day - No School
- **Friday, May 30:** Hat Dress Down Day
- **Friday, June 13:** Vacation Vibes Dress Down Day
- **Monday, June 19:** Juneteenth - No School
- **Friday, June 20:** End of Quarter 4 / Scheduled Last Day of School
- **Friday, June 27:** Quarter 4 Report Cards Sent Home

### **LINKS TO HELPFUL RESOURCES**

- **[UE Frequently Asked Questions](#):** Please see this document for answers to common questions families have about the Upper Elementary Campus. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have additional questions that are not covered here.
- **[Counseling Referral](#):** Please complete this form if you believe your child requires extra support or check-ins, and a counseling team member will contact you shortly.
- **[Principal Office Hours Sign-Up](#):** Use this sign-up to add an appointment to my calendar. We can meet via phone, online, or in person. Feel free to ask questions, discuss your ideas for our school, or get to know one another!
- **[School Improvement Plan](#)** - Our campus three year school improvement plan is linked here and can be found on the PHA website. This document outlines student learning outcomes and the strategic objectives we will be focused on for the next three years.