



# EPIC Academy Newsletter

DECEMBER 2009

## TRIMESTER 2 KEY DATES

- 1/4 Back to School
- 1/11 New School Hours Start
- 1/19 EPIC Open House for 8th Graders 5:30-8:30
- 1/29 Progress reports mailed
- 2/26 Progress reports mailed
- 3/15-3/16 Final Exams
- 3/18-3/19 Student Led Conferences
- 3/22-3/26 Intensives

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Preparing each student with the 21st century skills necessary to revolutionize society and ensure college and career success.

Dear Parents/Guardians:

The first ever trimester at EPIC is now in the books! Even though being new has a few bumps in the road, we have made great progress, organized, and have many positive things to reflect on as 2009 comes to a close.

December's newsletter features a few student success stories, updates on new programs, news, and previews important changes for Trimester 2.

As always, we thank you for your continued support in working with us to make EPIC the amazing high school we envisioned.

Sincerely,

Mr. King  
Principal

## Important Changes for Trimester 2

### School Day Hours & Schedule

EPIC will be changing its school hours in order to provide more time preparing students for academic success and college. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday will start as normal at 8:45 AM but will end earlier at 3:20PM to allow for after school programs before it gets dark. Wednesdays will start at 9:50AM and run later, until 2:35PM, with students going to each of their classes. Lunches will be served on Wednesdays. This schedule change begins on **Monday, January 11th**. This change affects the following items:

- Afterschool programs 3:30-4:30PM
- Homework assistance Tuesday & Friday 3:30-4:00
- Detention Wednesdays 2:45-3:45 (4:45 for students with make up detention)

### Honors Credit

Starting Friday, January 15, students can elect to do honors assignments to earn honors credit in any core course (Biology, History, Algebra, Language Arts). If you would like your student to participate in this program, please contact Mr. King at [mking@epicacademy.org](mailto:mking@epicacademy.org) or call (773) 535-7930 and leave a message.

### New Dean of Students

We would like to welcome Mr. Baker, the new Dean of Students & Safety at EPIC Academy. We look to Mr. Baker to bring structure and consistency to ensure that students are safe and learning in classes.

# Trimester 1 Legend: Jayson Jennings



*“We want our school to be non-violent, and I don't want anyone to mess up the whole plan for where our school is going.”*

Jayson Jennings is a freshmen student at EPIC with a friendly smile, easy-going demeanor, 3.0 GPA, and big aspirations to start his own barber shop business.

In the first trimester, he established himself as a difference maker. On two occasions he physically restrained students who were going to fight. When other students laughed as a peer stuttered through an answer in class, Jayson stood up and asked them to reconsider why they were laughing at someone struggle. When a student in his fitness class was arguing with him, he walked away from a fight, an act we are told is impossible for teens to do in the inner city where 'respect means everything.' He holds doors for young ladies, moves desks for teachers, keeps his groups on task, and offers to collect his friends' lunch trays.

I interviewed Jayson to better understand what makes him tick, how he feels about his growing legend, and how we can inspire other students to make similar choices that will make life better for everyone.

**Jayson, You have earned 34 merits for some pretty amazing things. How do you feel?**

*I feel really proud of myself. Last year, at my [elementary] school, no one paid me any attention, so it feels good that people are recognizing it.*

**What motivates you to stand up and take action?**

*For the student who was stuttering - I did that because I know that if it was me, I would not want anyone laughing at me. It's just not funny. It also makes me feel good to stick up for someone else. The other things, like stopping fights from happening - we want our school to be non-violent, and I don't want anyone to mess up the whole plan for where our school is going.*

**Do you think it is possible for all students to do the things you do in and out?**

*Yes. They just need to put effort into it.*

**What might motivate other students to follow your lead?**

*For me, it is a part of my personality. Most people would say rewards. I think they would like rewards, or if they feel like they might get something, it will motivate them to do it.*

What makes Jayson's story unique is not exactly what he does - from being considerate to throwing himself in harm's way - but how easily he garners the courage to act. He does not contemplate, consider what might happen to him, or create excuses for non-action. He knows what is right, puts others first, and acts on it.

## December Legend

Sydney Simmons stepped up in his Language Arts intensive class. According to Mr. Nelson & Ms. Scott, Sydney was far and above the leader of both classes. He had his work done far ahead of schedule, and ended up

being the Editor and Chief of their online newspaper because he knew how to navigate the webpage building software.

He setup appointments with students to layout and post their stories,

and held them to high standards.

Mr. Nelson, who nominated Sydney, said “He basically built and designed the webpage for us.”

*“Sydney built and designed a webpage for us!”*

- Mr. Nelson

# Dating Violence Program for Teens

December brought a new partnership with a well-known community organization to EPIC Academy and a unique opportunity for some of our students. Family Rescue, a well-known organization in the South Chicago community which provides counseling, support and shelter services to survivors of Domestic Violence, began young men's and young women's groups here at the school.

Dating violence is increasingly affecting the lives of our teens. More and more teens find themselves in abusive relationships and we want our students to be aware of their resources and know who to turn to.

The Family Rescue curriculum, entitled "No More Pain" addresses topics such as preventing violence in relationships, building healthy relationships, and also building self-respect. The groups last 16 weeks, and at the end these students will

understand what teen dating violence is, how to seek help if they see or experience it, and they'll be resources for their friends and family who may be going through it.

If you want more information on Family Rescue or know someone who may be affected by domestic violence please contact them directly at 773.375.1918. If it is an emergency, call the City of Chicago Domestic Violence helpline 1-877-863-6338.

## 8th Grade Recruitment

EPIC is gearing up to recruit current 8<sup>th</sup> graders for our 2010-11 freshmen class.

We will have an open house for interested 8th graders on Tuesday, January 19th at EPIC.

Interested parents and students can come for a 30 minute information session anytime between 5:30-8:30.

If you would like to help at the open house, please call us at (773) 535-7930.

Applications are available in English and Spanish. Interested parents can get an application in one of three ways:

- Download from website [www.epicacademy.org](http://www.epicacademy.org)
- Visit our main office
- Call (773)535-7930 and request an application

## Message from the New Dean of Students

It is with great pleasure that I extend a heartfelt welcome to the parents of EPIC Academy. I would also like to wish you a very prosperous and Happy New Year. My name is Marcus Baker, and I am the new Dean of Students. I am so delighted to become a part of the EPIC family. If I could just tell you a little bit about myself, I became a professional educator to make a difference in the lives of young people. Growing up in a single parent home in the inner city of Chicago, I experienced firsthand the tremendous need for positive role models in my community. The mere fact that I entered the field of education is a testament of the positive individuals that had a powerful influence on my life. As the Dean of students I will work diligently to create an academic environ-

ment where every student can achieve academic excellence without distraction.

As we begin a new trimester, I look forward to meeting each parent and keeping open lines of communication throughout the rest of the school year. Know that no question is too small when your child is concerned. If you have any further questions for me about what can be expected in the near future, please don't hesitate to contact me at the school.

Marcus C. Baker  
Dean of Students

# January 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 Holiday Break Ends	4 Start of School	5	6 ACT Practice Testing	7	8	9 Girls B-ball 9am @ King HS
10	11 <u>New School Hours</u> -MTRF 8:45-3:20 - Wed 9:50-2:35	12	13	14	15	16 Girls B-ball 10am @ King HS
17	18 NO SCHOOL MLK, Jr. Holiday	19 8th Grade Open House 530-830	20	21	22	23 Girls B-ball 10am @ King HS
24	25	26	27	28	29 Progress reports mailed to parents	30 Girls B-ball 10am @ King HS
31						

## Reminders & Notes

### **Check Your Student's Grades & Attendance**

Keep up with your student's grade and attendance online. Visit [www.epicacademy.org](http://www.epicacademy.org) and click on **Parents**, and follow the link **My Student's Grades**. You can then enter your login and password to check on your student's progress. If you do not have a login or password, please contact Ms. Diaz at (773) 535-7930.

### **Homework Every Night**

Your student should be getting homework every night in their two core classes that day. The homework is posted on our website [www.epicacademy.org](http://www.epicacademy.org). If you follow the **Parents** link and then select **Homework**, you can view it. It is updated each Sunday night for the following week.



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