

Dear Families of Freshmen,

We are quickly approaching a busy time of year in our Introductory Physics classes and there are a few upcoming events of which I would like to make you aware.

1. **The Introductory Physics midyear exam** will be given in physics classes during the week of January 24<sup>th</sup>. The exam will be given during the long blocks for each class. The exam includes both multiple-choice and open response questions. The questions on the exam are similar in structure and format to the questions on the Introductory Physics MCAS exam. The physics teachers use the results of the midyear exam to help better prepare students for the high-stakes MCAS in June. For the students, the exam counts as a test grade in term #3. Physics classes will be completing review activities during the week leading up to the exam. If your child is absent on a day when he was scheduled to take the midyear exam, he should plan on taking the make-up exam on Monday, January 31<sup>st</sup> during X Block. If your child will miss the exam because he will be going on the NYC field trip, he should pre-arrange a time to take the midyear with his physics teacher.
2. During the month of February teachers and students will be discussing course registration and placement recommendations for science courses for next year. If your child is interested in being recommended for Honors Chemistry in grade 10, then he/she should speak with his/her physics teacher and request a copy of the placement guidelines. (The guidelines are also available from our department website, [www.tigerscience.us](http://www.tigerscience.us)) Students who would like to be considered for Honors Chemistry must inform their teachers in writing and must take the placement test that will be given during X Block on Monday February 7<sup>th</sup>. If you have questions about the registration and placement process, please feel free to contact your child's physics teacher.
3. The next unit of study for the Introductory Physics classes is Heat. One of the Cornerstone Activities for this unit is the Making of Ice Cream. A Cornerstone Activity is an activity that explores a big idea of the course and an activity that is completed by all physics classes. Making ice cream is an excellent way to investigate the big ideas of heat transfer, conservation of energy, and phase change as well as exploring the challenging concepts involved in the interactions between salt and ice. As you can imagine, this is an expensive activity but one that the students really enjoy and remember. Because the students are able to eat their products, ice cream or sorbet, we ask for a donation of \$1 per student to help defray the cost of the activity. The donation is not mandatory, but it does help the department, as would any additional donation. Some students ask if they can bring in a topping, and we welcome that if it is something that can be shared. Students with food allergies should discuss alternate options with their teachers.

If you have any questions about any of the above events, please feel free to contact your child's physics teacher.

Happy New Year!

Amy Winston

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