

## BELL Scholars Society

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## Hello 5th Grade BELL Families!

### Welcome to the BELL Scholars Society, BELL's Alumni Program for former BELL scholars

**DESEA ESTE BOLETIN INFORMATIVO EN ESPAÑOL? LLAME AL 617-740-0454**

[www.bellnational.org/alumni](http://www.bellnational.org/alumni)

[www.facebook.com/BELLScholarsSociety](http://www.facebook.com/BELLScholarsSociety)

## Connect with the BELL Scholars Society on Facebook!

Want to see **up-to-the-minute resources** related to your scholar's education, **share tips** with other BELL families, or see **photos and videos** from BELL Scholars Society events? **Then join our community on Facebook.com!**

**STEP One: Connect to the BELL Scholars Society by adding "Gillian at BELL" as a friend.**

1. Go to [www.facebook.com/BELLScholarsSociety](http://www.facebook.com/BELLScholarsSociety)
2. Log into facebook using your existing account or by creating a new one: "Sign Me Up" (if you don't yet have an email address, you can create one in less than 2 minutes at [www.gmail.com](http://www.gmail.com) or [www.hotmail.com](http://www.hotmail.com))

3. When my page comes up "Add Me As A Friend."

**STEP Two: Interact with other BELL Scholars Society Families at the BELL Scholars Society group**

1. Once you've added me as a friend, I will invite you to the BELL Scholars Society group. Or, you can search for it yourself and then hit "Request to Join Group"
2. Use the Group page to post comments or ideas on the Wall, or start a Discussion Topic



Visit <http://www.facebook.com/BELLScholarsSociety> to connect with "Gillian at BELL" and then get access to the BELL Scholars Society group (above)

**STEP Three: Enjoy the benefits of your connection**

1. I will be posting links, tips, and important dates and events regularly; you will be the first to see them!
2. You can also see "Videos" from previous events and even photos of some of your scholars! *(Everything is privacy protected!)*

## 5th Grade BELL Scholars Society Bulletin

For 5th Grade Scholars and their Families

BELL'S ALUMNI NEWSLETTER, FOR SCHOLARS WHO WILL SOON BECOME BELL ALUMNI

**DESEA ESTE BOLETIN INFORMATIVO EN ESPAÑOL? LLAME AL 617-740-0454**

## Welcome to the BELL Scholars Society!

Welcome scholars and guardians to the BELL Scholars Society! The BELL Scholars Society is a way for BELL alumni – former BELL After School or BELL Summer scholars—to keep connected to BELL and stay ahead in school.

**Who can become a member of the BELL Scholars Society?**

Any former BELL scholar who is currently in 6th grade or above can be a member of the BELL Scholars Society. But first, they need to be **inducted** during a special Induction Ceremony during which they will learn the BELL Scholars Society Core Values and pledge to reach their goals. Your 5th grade scholar's Induction Ceremony will take place during Closing Ceremonies of BELL After School. After that, your 5th Grader will become a member of the BELL Scholars Society. We hope that you can attend your scholar's induction!

**What are the benefits of membership?**

- You and your scholar will be invited to **fun and informative dinners, workshops, and events**. These

events help with study skills, college planning, school selection, and give your family a chance to have fun, eat great food, and meet other BELL families.

more on School Choice), **afterschool and summer programs**, and **support services** that will help scholars excel in school and develop positive behaviors.

- Your scholar will have the opportunity to play a **leadership role** in BELL as a member of our Youth Council (information on this to come).



**The BELL Scholars Society exists to provide continued support for BELL alumni to enhance their educational achievements, self-esteem, and life opportunities.**

- You and your scholar will receive **exclusive information** about Boston-area events and programs, as well as tips to help your scholar succeed!
- Your scholar will be eligible for BELL Scholars Society **scholarships**.
- We will help your family get connected to **great schools** (see Pg. 3 and the attached calendar for

**What does membership cost?**

The BELL Scholars Society is 100% **free!**

To stay involved, all you have to do is complete our Information Form that we send out each year. (This Form will also make you eligible for BELL Scholars Society Scholarships—so make sure you complete it!)

**How can I learn more?**

Check us out online ([www.bellnational.org/alumni](http://www.bellnational.org/alumni)), or on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/BELLScholarsSociety](http://www.facebook.com/BELLScholarsSociety)).

Winter 2010

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### Meet our Alumni Program Manager!



Gillian Pressman is the Program Manager of BELL's alumni program, the BELL Scholars Society. She works out of the BELL Headquarters (60 Clayton Street, Dorchester). Before coming to BELL in 2008, Gillian attended Princeton University, where she graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Religion and was actively involved in Outdoor Action, a wilderness education program, and numerous student dance groups. She is very excited to meet the next generation of BELL alumni!

## \*Look Out for Your BELL Scholars Society Ambassador at Site\*

Starting this year, every site has 1-2 BELL Scholars Society Ambassadors who represent BELL's alumni program at BELL.

Your site's BELL Scholars Society Ambassador will have introduced him- or herself to you when you received this newsletter. However, if you have not yet met your BELL Scholars Society, ask your Program Manager for an introduction!

Each BELL Scholars Society has received training on the following areas. Consider this person your resident expert on the following:

### 1. School Choice.

Not sure what your options are? Need help making the decision? Need a reminder about important dates or deadlines? Ask your Ambassador!

### 2. College Planning.

It is never too early to start thinking about college. Whether you are interested in working with your scholar to start setting goals for college or for their career, or you want to learn about how to start saving for college, or you have

high-school-aged children who are applying to college now, your Ambassador is the person to talk to.

### 3. BELL Scholars Society events and updates.

This person will be the first to tell you about upcoming events and initiatives related to the BELL Scholars Society. And if you have any further questions, ask your Ambassador!

**Introduce yourself to your BELL Scholars Society Ambassador. They love to meet you!**

## Scholar Spotlight: Q & A With Alex Ervin

Every newsletter, we will feature an outstanding BELL alum in our "Scholar Spotlight." This month, our Program Manager, Gillian Pressman, sat down with 6th grader Alex Ervin!

**Gillian:** What activities are you involved with after school?

Alex: I do Homework Club through my school and go to the Boys & Girls Club. There I do a lot of technology stuff, like working with Photoshop and doing projects. I also play football for the Pop Warner Football League. Our team, the Brookline JP Patriots, has won both the state and national championships. I play tight end.

**G:** What are three things you are very good at?

A: Sports. I play football, I'm good at basketball, and I'm kind of good at soccer. I also am good at science and at math.

**G:** What is your favorite subject in school?

A: Science. We've been doing Electricity in school. We are learning about voltage and electrical safety. Like, not to put a paper clip in an outlet, because you'll kill yourself.

I like Electricity. Although, I like Magnetism better.



**Alex is an 11-year-old BELL scholar. He is a talented football player and is great at science and math.**

**Photo: Alex at the BELL Scholars Society's September 2009 Back to School Barbeque**

**G:** What do you want to be when you grow up?

A: A criminologist. There are different kinds of criminologists. Some study the behavior of criminals. Some of them investigate crimes. And some of them work with criminals; not bad, just like helping them when they are in jail. I want to be the kind that studies their behavior. It sounds cool.

**G:** Who is your favorite music artist

or actor right now?

A: I like Will Smith. He's funny and he's in the type of movies I like. Which are movies that have "not real" things in them. Movies with robots and aliens and stuff. Although, I guess some robots are real.

**G:** What is one goal you have for the rest of the school year?

A: To finish my homework faster. To do that, I would have to understand it better. The people at Homework Club can help with that, and I can get a tutor in my school.

**G:** What is one challenge you faced in the last year and how did you overcome it?

A: ELA [English Language Arts]. I had to write a piece. To overcome it, I started seeing someone to help me with it (the Literacy Specialist at my school). I then had to get a strategy for how to do it. The hardest part of writing was starting it. I had to get a strategy to figure out how to start a piece. After that, it was easier.

**Do you know an outstanding scholar? Email us at [alumni@bellboston.org](mailto:alumni@bellboston.org) or call (617) 740-0454.**

## THIS MONTH'S FOCUS: SCHOOL CHOICE

The final half of 5th grade has just begun, and middle school is right around the corner. Your scholar will likely be attending a different school next year, and choosing the right school can be a big factor in your future success. Work with your scholar to make the best choice!

### WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS?

Public schools • Pilot public schools  
• Charter schools • Private schools  
Have you considered all? Your scholar

- \* Opportunities for parent involvement
- \* Graduate services (does the school help scholars prepare for the next step; i.e. high school, college, or vocational school?)
- \* School culture. Are students expected to work hard? Do teachers believe that students will succeed?

ditional ones? How important is it to you that the teams do well in city or state championships? Do you want a school where only a small group of students participate in sports, or a school where everyone plays a sport?

4. Do you want a school with a gym? A library? A pool? A computer lab?

5. Racial diversity; is it important to you that there are many students of color at your school? Do you want a school with student groups for students of color?

**\*Record your scholar's answers and refer back to them as you make your school choices!**

**Both Boston-area middle schools below admit students regardless of grades, test scores, or income. However, look at the difference!**

SCHOOL A	SCHOOL B
98% of students passed ELA MCAS	83% of students passed ELA MCAS
94% of students received "Advanced" or "Proficient" on ELA MCAS	40% of students received "Advanced" or "Proficient" on ELA MCAS
98% of students passed Math MCAS	69% of students passed Math MCAS
87% of students received "Advanced" or "Proficient" on Math MCAS	37% of students received "Advanced" or "Proficient" on Math MCAS

has a wide-range of choices, and most of them are free or give out financial aid!

### WHAT MAKES A GOOD SCHOOL?

We recommend you look carefully at your scholar's school to see whether it will prepare your scholar for the demands of college and the workplace. Some factors to consider:

- \* MCAS scores and AYP status (does the school prepare its students to meet national and state standards for math and reading?)
- \* Core curriculum and courses (are students challenged by their classes?)
- \* Support services for students who need extra help
- \* After school programs available

### QUIZ YOUR SCHOLARS: WHAT DO THEY WANT IN A SCHOOL?\*



1. Do you want a small school (around 50 students per grade), a big school (300 or 400 students per grade), or somewhere in between? If you consider the pros and cons of each (i.e. more students and teachers vs. smaller class size and closer relationships with teachers), which wins out?
2. Do you want a strong arts program? A strong music program? A strong computer or technology focus? A chance to learn a career or technical skill? What other passions do you want to be able to pursue?
3. Sports: Do you want a school with lots of offerings or just the tra-

### HOT LINKS

For more on school choice, see our website at [www.bellnational.org/alumni](http://www.bellnational.org/alumni)

For more on Boston Public School options, see <http://bostonpublicschools.org>

For more on Charter Schools, visit each school's website. See <http://charterschoolsboston.com> for a list

For more on private schools (YES, you CAN afford them!), see [www.aisne.org](http://www.aisne.org)