

Significant Jump in Academic Excellence for 1st and 2nd Formers

CPT Wayne Harris

Mentorship Coordinator

The recent announcement of the list of boys who earned Honour Roll awards and Commendable Achievements for the Easter term saw a significant spike in the number first and second formers making the list when compared to the previous Christmas term. While there were other increases from other form classes, this article will focus on the classes with mentors - 1st and 2nd Form.

Overall, the number of 1st Formers making the Honour Roll increased by a whopping 300 percent from 7 in Christmas to 28 in the Easter term. For 1st Formers earning the Commendable Achievement, there was a 43 percent increase from the Christmas term to the Easter term from 21 to 30 boys.

The 1st form class with the biggest increase was 1G. For the Christmas term, 1G had 2 boys earning the Honour Roll. But the Easter term 10 boys made the Honour Roll, which was a staggering 400 percent increase from one term. When asked what factors contributed to the increase, a first form parent who decided to remain anonymous notes, "I told my son I was not happy with his 70 percent average and that he needed to focus more. I made sure every assignment was complete and that he had time to study for all his tests. The results paid off when I saw his name and picture on the Honour Roll."

The overall increase, while seen as a positive reaction to the output of the Christmas grades may be attributed to other factors as well. For one there were no end-of-term exam, so there was less pressure on the boys. Secondly, one mentor notes that he is seeing a pattern with better grades related to improved behaviour. 2nd-year mentor and JC Old Boy Ian Williams adds, "I have seen a steady improvement in their behaviour and approach to their school work. Let us continue to encourage them as we see them through each stage and phase of their academic pursuit."

Another class that made tremendous stride was 1D. For the Christmas term, no 1D student made the Honour Roll and just 2 boys earned the Commendable Achievement. In contrast, for the Easter term, the data show five 1D boys making the Honour Roll and 4 boys earning Commendable Achievement. Overall, that is a 350 percent increase.

For 2nd Form, while the trend in an increase in academic excellence continued, the overall total number of boys on the Honour Roll was approximately 50 percent less than those for 1st Formers. 28 1st Formers made the list compared to 17 2nd Formers on the list.

Acting Principal Wayne Robinson asserts we would like to see these numbers increasing as they progress through the grades.

Nonetheless, like 1st Form, 2nd Form numbers were also remarkable. For the Christmas term, only 16 boys made the academic achievement list (7 Honour Roll and 9 Commendable Achievement). But for the Easter term, a whopping 57 boys made the list (17 Honour Roll and 40 Commendable Achievements), highlighting a 256 percent increase over the term.

Form 2A was the standout class with the biggest jump. For the Christmas term, only two boys made the academic list (1 for Honour Roll and 1 for Commendable Achievement). But for the Easter term, 12 boys made the list (3 on the Honour Roll and 9 with Commendable Achievement). Overall, that was 350 percent increase from one term to the next.

Lorna Wint-Watson, a parent of Honour Roll recipient David Watson of 2A, believes that the structure of the Easter term contributed to the increased achievement. She asserts, " [the Christmas term] exam pressure was missing which allowed the young men to be more relaxed and gained better grades." She believes that this boost will carry over into the summer term. She adds, "The trend should remain the same as the young men will remain highly motivated but the exam portion will now play a role in the overall performance."

Overall, all eight 2nd Form classes had an increase, only five of them had an increase over 200 percent. Ironically, the class with the lowest increase of just 25 percent, was the class that won both Inter-Form Quiz and Inter-Form football this year. That class was 2G, and Form teacher, Mr. Emmanuel Orane believes there are several factors that contributed to the increase. He notes one of them, "the parent consultation provided the opportunity for teachers to learn more about the students issue that they are going through to navigate different approaches to learning."

Mr Orane believes that mentorship played a role. He adds, "I believe the introduction of the mentor paid and assisted in the motivational aspect which encouraged them to excel, moreover, because of the promises of incentive based on performance from the mentor I believe this pushed them to improve as well."

While we would like to see more boys making the Honour Roll and earning Commendable Achievement, the recent success highlights what we, the stakeholders - parents, teachers, mentors, and students - can collectively achieve when we play our part in supporting the quality education of boys at Jamaica College - **The School for Champions!**