

10 August, 2009

Dear Middle School Parents,

Welcome to the 2009-10 school year! The Middle School team is looking forward to an exciting and productive year with your children and you.

This year I'm joined by eight new staff members in Middle School:

Mr. Joe Bonnici – 8th Grade English and Humanities

Mr. Jess Bossung – 6th Grade English; Drama 6, 7, 8

Ms. Allison Fahey- 6th Grade English and Humanities

Ms. Susana Fairlie – 7th and 8th Grades Math

Mr. Mike Hancock – 8th Grade PE

Mr. Steve Maday – 6th Grade Science

Mr. Jeff Shirk – 6th Grade Science; 6th and 7th Grades Learning Differences

Mr. Joel Walsh- 7th Grade English and Humanities

In the Guidance Department, Ms. Roxana Remy will continue her work with 6th and 7th grade students while Ms. Holli Hebl will be counseling our Grade 8 students. Together with our core of returning Middle School teachers, we form a dedicated and experienced team that offers your children a challenging and developmentally appropriate educational experience.

In addition to the new teachers, we are joined by over 20 new students who have come to us from schools around the world, including Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Germany, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Peru, Taiwan and the U.S. Teachers, students and counselors will work to make them feel welcome in these first weeks as they get established in their new grade levels and routines.

The Middle School at FDR strives to provide a challenging, enriching and developmentally appropriate education for your child. The highest priority for teachers and administrators is to help your children learn as students and grow as well-rounded individuals. Academically, the IB Middle Years Program (MYP) that we follow from Grades 6-10 is challenging in that students gain knowledge and skills in the content areas as well as develop thinking, learning and decision-making habits and attitudes so that they can continue to learn throughout their years of formal education and into adulthood. To provide our students opportunities to develop a wide variety of talents, our program includes elective courses offered in the school day as well as a variety of extracurricular activities and sports offered from 3:30- 5:15.

To address the social and emotional needs of our adolescent students, we work to help them feel secure, respect their own and others' individuality and celebrate their accomplishments. This year, we are implementing an Advisory program so that every student has an adult advocate and a "home base" in Middle School. Advisors are planning instruction and activities that will help individual students, build cohesion within the Advisory group and grade level and promote a sense of community throughout the Middle School.

We invite and encourage you as parents join us as partners in our learning community. Parental involvement is an integral component of student achievement. When parents are involved, students achieve more and exhibit more positive attitudes and behavior. What can parents do to participate?

- ▶ Read through your child's Handbook to become familiar with Middle School expectations and practices. Please make special note of our policies on Attendance, Tardies, Electronics and Uniforms.
- ▶ Keep the lines of communication between home and school open by establishing a "family time" to talk about school. Also, read your child's agenda; check the Weekly Bulletin, Friday Envelope, Friday Messenger and Power School. Let your child's advisor, teachers, administrators and counselors know about good news or stresses involving your child and family.
- ▶ Encourage your child to read for pleasure. This year, we'd like to continue with the enthusiasm and emphasis on reading generated by *Roosevelt Reads!* last year. Silent sustained reading time is built into the schedule and individual classes. In addition, the Media Center and teachers will host activities and events to motivate students and maintain interest in reading.
- ▶ Attend school events such as Back-to-School Afternoon, student-led conferences and other special activities scheduled throughout the year. This allows you and the school staff to know each other and to learn about ways to help one another.
- ▶ Encourage good study habits and model them in your own endeavors. Stress effort and the importance of being on time. Set up a quiet place in which your student can study. Take a look at your child's agenda; ask him or her to show you their courses on the school's web-based application, Moodle. Using these tools, help him or her organize and manage time and assignments.

Because of the postponement of the beginning of the school year, some of our annual events and deadlines are already upon us. Here are a few beginning-of-the-year reminders:

- The New Parents' Orientation, an introduction to the Middle School program will be held on Tues., Aug. 11th at 9:00 a.m. in the Little Theater.
- Middle School Back-to-School Afternoon, an opportunity for you to meet your child's teachers and learn about his/her classes, will be held on Wed. Aug. 12th from 1:30-4:00 p.m.
- Informational sessions for the Classroom Without Walls trips will be held on the following dates and times: Grade 6, Monday 17 Aug. at 10:10 a.m.; Grade 7, Tues., Aug. 18th at 1:35 p.m.; Grade 8 at 1:35 p.m. All meetings will take place in the Little Theater. The deposit of \$200.00 is due by Fri., Aug. 21st to confirm your child's participation in the trip.

The Middle School team and I look forward to meeting and working with you and your children this year.

Sincerely,

Sheryl Salem
Middle School Principal