

## **FRESH NEWS from Highland | 10.29.18**

### **From the Desk of Ryan Henderson, Principal**

Dear Highland Families,

It's time for another Fresh News from Highland! We have had a great start to this school year. Every day I meet a new student or a new family member and it is wonderful to see what each new face brings to our school. Also every day I get the chance to celebrate the growth of students I have worked with over the past three years. What a wonderful privilege to be able to witness a student gaining a skill, dropping a bad habit, maintaining a relationship, taking a risk to share their ideas, owning their personal challenges and working to overcome them! Our theme this year as a staff is Growing Together. The goal is everyone growing in their skills, and also growing closer together as a community.

As a principal, it makes me incredibly proud to see how hard everyone is working this fall on our goal area of math. This year we have powerful new materials, Ready Math and iReady and equally powerful math strategies. The overall goal of our math teaching and learning each day is for students to deeply understand what math is and how it works. When I was a student, math was something "done to me" -- not something I did or knew how to do. When math time came, I hid away like a turtle into his shell. Your children are learning to do just the opposite. By taking the mystery out of math and helping students to understand that they can build their math skills through effort and "productive struggle" we are helping your children to not have the same Math Baggage that is so acceptable among adults. If you want to get at the heart of this, check out [this powerful video](#).

#### **Thank You!**

It was wonderful to see so many of you at fall parent-teacher conferences. I was able to sit in on a number of conferences and it is great to see the positive connections already built and the goalsetting that the "village" in a child's life can take part in.

#### **Did you know?**

Last year we had 70% of our office disciplinary referrals for students using their body to solve a problem (physical contact, physical aggression, fighting, etc.) My message to students in my class visits this fall is that we are trying to "be safe with everyone, no matter what." If we as adults use our bodies when we are upset, we lose relationships, can lose our jobs, and get in trouble with the law. To help us meet our goal in this area of reducing physical conflicts, each teacher will be teaching additional lessons in our Second Step curriculum that Mr. Hedges, our counselor, teaches to students throughout the year.

#### **Every Day Counts**

This week I reviewed attendance so far for our Highland Hornets. I made contact with families who have a high number of absences at this point in the year, as well as those for whom arriving at school on time is a challenge. The goal of my communication is always removing barriers to at school, on time, full day attendance. It's never about questioning or shaming; it's always about working together to help children be here so they can learn. We recently a helpful resource on our Highland website: [Top Ten Ways to Get Your Child to School On Time](#)

#### **Habit of the Month: #1: Be Proactive**

This month we have focused on students being proactive. Mrs. Bernstein's Brainiacs taught us what being proactive looks like. The sign in my office says, "Be Proactive: You are in charge of you." This is one of the

habits that is countercultural. In America in 2018 the culture is really to think about our personal responsibility *after* we think about how we can blame someone else for what they have or have not done. This habit is empowering that we can be in charge of our own actions, attitudes and moods. How powerful to give 5-11 year olds this sense of agency!

### **Lost & Found**

Our Lost and Found is getting pretty full. Next time you are on campus, please check out to see if your child has left a (valuable) layer of clothing and it has ended up in the Lost & Found just beyond the office.

### **Family Survey Results**

A summary of your responses to our annual family survey (previously ThoughtExchange) is [linked here](#). Overall we were pleased with the feedback we received. It was a great reminder to us of the awesome privilege we have as you entrust us with your children each day. Areas where we can improve are currently being processed by our school's Rep Team, which includes a broad cross-section of Highland staff.

### **Field Trip Policy**

It's important that each family knows the district policy on field trip volunteers. In order to maintain safety for students that volunteers are responsible for parents who come as volunteer helpers MAY NOT bring a sibling. This will allow you to focus fully on the child whose trip you are attending and more importantly ensure that everyone is safe.

### **Friendly Faces**

There are a LOT of new faces in the Highland staff, and I thought it might be helpful for you to know who's who. Because our most powerful work is done in teams, here are the teams at Highland in 18-19...about 90% of the overall staff are pictured on the attached PDF. And in the next couple of weeks our handy wall of photos in the office will be fully updated with staff pictures.

### **Reach Out!**

Remember we are all here to help you, so don't hesitate to reach out. You can set up a face to face chat through Mrs. Hagen at 425.335.1585, text me at 360.618.2284 or just reply to this message. I can either help you or connect you with who can best address your question or concern.

### **Coming up -**

Value Village clothing drive - going on NOW through 11/2

Veteran's Day - no school - Mon 11/11

Nacho Night Mon 11/19

Highland Night at Silvertips Sun 12/9

PTA Winter Wonderland Dance Fri 1/18

Thanks for a great start to the 2018-19 school year!  
Mr. H

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*Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.* -Martin Luther King, Jr.