

[People] may be said to resemble not the bricks of which a house is built, but the pieces of a picture puzzle, each differing in shape, but matching the rest, and thus bringing out the picture.

Felix Adler

We opened this school year with a renewed dedication to honoring diversity and preventing bullying. On the second day of school, the students attended an assembly that was designed by their teachers to reiterate the RAMS Rules. Funny skits reintroduced the rules and reinforced the need to follow our school rules. (You can find a listing of these simple but powerful rules on the inside of our student folders.) This year, we also included an additional pledge to make our school-- “**No Place for Hate.**” In this initiative we join not only our Middle School and High School in this important project, but many other schools throughout the state who are taking steps to develop school environments that are anti-bias and anti-bullying safe havens. We will continue with several more projects during the year to expand our understanding and acceptance of all and increase our knowledge of ways to avoid bullying.

Preparing for the flu season is another high priority for us this year. We are educating our students on the ways to help prevent contracting and spreading the flu, especially the H1N1 flu, through both our audio and video broadcasts daily. Our Channel 21 News Studio held a poster contest in September with the theme: “What To Do So You Don’t Get the Flu.” After judging thirty-nine entrees, eight winners were announced: Cara Brunner, Leah Dombroski, Cooper Freeman, Lydia Houser, Brynn Montoro, Chloe Park, Nicole Vogt, and Sebastian Wood.

If your child displays flu-like symptoms, it is important to keep him/her home until he/she has been fever free for a full twenty-four hours. If the doctor confirms the illness as flu of any variety, including H1N1, please inform our school nurse as we are keeping records of flu incidences this year.

Maintaining a safe school demands the efforts of both the school and the home. You have received an Elementary School Parent-Student Handbook and were asked to sign that you have read and discussed with your child the policies and procedures contained within. Please pay particular attention to the **Prohibition of Weapons Policy**, Policy #5114.2. Be sure that your child understands that items listed within that policy and any other item that may be construed to be a weapon within the guidelines listed are not to be brought to school. It is a good

idea that you and your child get into the habit of quickly checking any pockets in their apparel, back packs, and their lunch bags before leaving for school. Talk seriously to them, as we do here at school, about how to handle a situation in which another student may display or offer them an item that would be considered a weapon under this policy. District personnel will again be meeting with students in age appropriate groups to explain and discuss the policy. Two additional policies that you should note are the **Bullying Policy**, Policy #5115.1 and the **Gang Policy**, Policy #5115.2. These are also designed to keep all students and staff safe. If you have any questions or would like to discuss these issues with me, please call me at school so we can set up an appointment. With care and diligence, we can continue to keep our schools safe.

The beginning of the new school year is also the time to create your child's school routine with an early bedtime to ensure a good night's sleep. Provide a well-balanced breakfast after a wake up call that allows an appropriate amount of time to get ready. A cheery farewell that gets your child out the door in time to catch the bus and arrive at school on time is imperative. After a busy school day, remember to provide some down time and perhaps some quiet sharing time when you and your child can share the highlights of the day. Homework time needs to be determined so that it allows your child adequate time and appropriate space to finish tasks in a timely manner. Family dinner hour can also provide interesting conversation about newly learned ideas and concepts and allow family members to share the excitement and enjoyment of the day. Relax time and/or recreational reading time is a way to unwind before bedtime. Setting a daily routine with your child that can be followed except in unusual circumstances is a key to a successful school year.

Another key to a successful school year is to create a positive home school connection. I encourage all parents to get to know their child's teacher(s) early in the school year. Remember, the teacher is your most important ally in providing your child with a sound education. The teacher is with your child about six hours out of each day, influencing and teaching him/her. They get to know your child in the school setting, which is different from the home setting. It is important that communication between school and home be strong, as it is very likely that your child behaves differently in each setting. Working with the teacher to develop strong lines of communication will ensure that both of your child's greatest advocates are working toward the same goals. Good relationships grow when communication is positive on both sides. Don't wait

for a problem to contact your child's teacher(s) and remember to be patient and listen to both sides of the issue when a problem does arise. You can call the school at any time to inquire about the best time to contact the teacher. Teachers have voice mail and email accessibility and they are attentive to returning either in a timely manner. Be sure that you leave detailed information on how to best contact you. Attending school-sponsored events on a regular basis connects you appropriately and routinely to school personnel. When you do have a parent/teacher conference scheduled it is wise to carefully plan what you'd like to have addressed, making a list to bring along is a good idea. Maintaining good relationships and open lines of communication will make your respective jobs of parenting and teaching more effective, ensuring your child's success in school and life.

Enjoy the 2009-2010 school year!