



Welcome Back to School Everyone!

I am very pleased and happy to welcome you to the Fall 2015 Semester at New Dawn Charter High School. Whether you are new to the school or one of our returning students, we are so please to have you join us this year.

While NYSED does not allow us to discuss our results on the Regents exams, our students continue to pass the majority of these exams at a very high rate. Congratulations to all the students and teachers for the January, June, and August 2015 Regents results. And congratulations to all our new graduates, we are all very proud of the hard work you did to accomplish your goals. Below are the pertinent issues that we will be addressing this year.

New Staff and Promotions

Please welcome our new staff: Mr. Gorkhover our new math teacher; Ms. Tiscareño our new Guidance Counselor; Ms. Eddy our new Social Worker; and Ms. Laureano our new Aspiring Teacher. We have also had some promotions this year. Ms. Fields is now officially our Parent Coordinator; Mr. Wolf is the Student Wellness Associate; Ms. Millan is taking over the Human Resources activities; Ms. Smith is our new Counselor; and Ms. Bryant is our new Special Education Teacher. All other staff who were here in June will be returning so things will be smoothly moving forward this year.

Grading:

New Dawn has a policy of not punishing students through grades based on attendance. We believe that there are students who have other responsibilities that keep them from school (child care, illness, etc.) and they should not be punished if they are capable of completing the work. Please understand all students think they are capable of doing this but in reality, based on our data, only a few students can actually complete their work with poor attendance.

Even though the vast majority of students are not academically successful with low attendance, we also believe that students should never feel at any point in the year that there is no way they can improve their grades. No one should ever be forced by circumstances to give up. We always want to give students every opportunity to succeed, thus we do not grade on attendance. However, this policy has had a negative impact on student attendance. Going forward our grading policy will change. This year the following schedule will be used for grading:

Quarter 1: Any grade 55 or above will remain that grade. Any grade below 55 will be raised to a 55 in accordance with standard practice.

Quarter 2: All grades will remain exactly where they are, **NO GRADES WILL BE INCREASED TO 55** in quarter 2 of either semester.



Semester Grade: An average of Quarters 1 and 2.

Why this was changed: Last year a student who got an 83 during the first quarter of the semester decided (s)he would be happy with a D so quit attending the second quarter and obtained a 0. This 0 under our old policy would have been increased to a 55 giving the student a grade of 69 for the semester. Thus the student passed the course but then when it came time for the Regents exam, did not have the necessary knowledge to pass it.

New Policy: This year, this same student who receives an 83 during the first quarter and a 0 the second quarter would get a semester grade of 41.5 and would not be allowed to take the Regents exam because they had not been attending.

It is very important that students understand this new policy. It is of the utmost importance that students attend class regularly in order to pass the Regents exams and graduate.

Regents Exams:

The New York State Department of Education has class and work attendance requirements before students can sit for an exam. These will be strictly enforced this year. We want to give students all the chances possible to succeed but if students are not at least willing to attend class we cannot risk our status as a ‘School in Good Standing’ to take a risk on them. Students need to take responsibility for the consequences of their own behavior. We provide many supports to help students, students must do their part. Good attendance is not an unreasonable expectation for a high school student regardless of his or her age.

Vision

We will continue to grow our Three R’s: Responsibility, Respect, and Resilience. These are very important charter traits needed for continued success in the world today. We focus on these three R’s throughout the day and particularly in our Advisories. We will continue to develop this very important component of our program. We expect students to show responsibility by coming to school and completing their school work; to show respect towards students, staff, and themselves; and resilience by continuing to work towards graduation even when things get tough.

Internship Program

Parents and students must all understand that the Internship Program is a key element in our educational model. Therefore, all students with more than 10 credits must attend an internship in order to remain enrolled at New Dawn. This is an integral part of our model and it is as important as the school day work. Please be aware that if you student does not attend you will be required to come to the school for a meeting to develop other options including identifying a more appropriate school setting. This year a big change is that there will be time in each of the Advisories set aside to address the skills needed to develop thinking and writing so that the Internship Program is more tightly aligned to the



educational program. All students will be expected to write a research paper for internships.

We all look forward to another extremely productive year. Families should feel free to visit the school whenever they like—although we can't promise we will be available for meetings—please come and visit your student's classes. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 347-505-9102 or sasmussen@ndchsbrooklyn.org

Everyone have a wonderful 2015-2016 school year.

Dr. Asmussen