



LEARNING • ACHIEVEMENT • GROWTH • DIRECTION



POCANTICO HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL

599 Bedford Road • Sleepy Hollow, N.Y. 10591 • 914-631-2440 • fax 914-631-3280 • www.pocanticohills.org

October 2017

Dear Families,

What a fall season it has been! I don't ever recall enjoying all but one day where students were outside during their recess time in the months of September and October. Indeed, it has been a busy month, and on behalf of our staff we want to thank the many of you who took the time to meet with our teachers to discuss your child's progress. While we look forward to having another formal opportunity to schedule parent-teacher conferences again in the spring, please know that we value a healthy partnership between our school and families. Parents should always feel welcome to reach out directly to their child's teacher or to myself with any questions or concerns that might arise during the school year.

As we begin to move into November, we are delighted to welcome Think Ahead Chess to our school to provide classroom chess instruction for students in grades 1 through 6. Students should expect three periods of chess instruction per month from November through February. Our director, Ms. Alanna Katz, is a chess master, ranked in the top 5% of all competitive chess players in the master division. Her assistant, Abby Marshall, is a former high school national chess champion! (Google her. She has her own Wikipedia page!) Both have extensive experience teaching chess in schools including the Avenues School in New York City and Haldane Elementary School in Cold Spring as well as several other public schools in New York City.

Aside from our new chess program, the first marking period will be ending on November 8th. As we continue to move forward in our work together, I look forward to healthy discussions that move us towards a standards-based report card. Please know that middle school will be assessing students' performance using letter grades. Cumulative GPAs for the purposes of Honor Roll and Jr. National Honor Society will continue to be calculated numerically but a student's report card will indicate a letter grade.

Most importantly is our good work specific to emotional intelligence. I am delighted with the interest and commitment our staff has demonstrated in recognizing the need for a school to be emotionally intelligent in its efforts to nurture a healthy school culture and climate. Our new School Charter was recently presented to staff and will be posted to our website. An attachment is included in this month's newsletter. This Charter is now visible in every classroom at Pocantico.

Additionally, many teachers have started to introduce the Mood Meter to their students, helping them to identify their emotions as they develop an understanding of how emotions impact our relationships with one another and our ability to learn. Many classrooms have a version of the Mood Meter visible in their classroom. Personally, I have enjoyed the opportunity to do some of this work directly with our students and explain the relationship between the body and mind or energy and pleasantness when identifying a specific emotion. A common Mood Meter that is being used in our

building is attached. I look forward to duplicating this work with staff and students with our families during future presentations in the evening.

Certainly, October has been a busy month at Pocantico culminating with the annual Halloween party sponsored by the PTA and the Halloween parade. Such events give us the opportunity to celebrate our close community and our rich diversity. We should look forward to our winter middle school play performance—Willie Wonka—that will be held on December 2nd at 2:00 and 6:00 pm at the Morse Elementary School in Tarrytown. Indeed, students at Pocantico are fortunate to have such wonderful opportunities to build healthy relationships with peers from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Pocantico is a special place, and I look forward to our continued good work together.

With Warm Regards,

Brent B. Harrington--Principal