



"Leadership is communicating to people their worth and potential so clearly that they come to see it in themselves."
- Stephen R. Covey

[Interactive Website Links](#)



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Upcoming Events

SEP 21 - SEP 22

SCHOOL CLOSED - ROSH HASHANAH
PS 23 (31R023) Richmondtown

OCT 6, 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM

PTA WELCOME BREAKFAST
PS 23 (31R023) Richmondtown

OCT 9

SCHOOL CLOSED - COLUMBUS DAY
PS 23 (31R023) Richmondtown

OCT 20

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS DAY - WEAR PINK
PS 23 (31R023) Richmondtown

NOV 7

NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS - ELECTION DAY
PS 23 (31R023) Richmondtown

NOV 23 - NOV 24

NO SCHOOL - THANKSGIVING RECESS
PS 23 (31R023) Richmondtown

DEC 25 - JAN 1

NO SCHOOL - WINTER RECESS
PS 23 (31R023) Richmondtown

JAN 12

COLLEGE AWARENESS DAY
Wear your favorite college shirt
PS 23 (31R023) Richmondtown

From the Principal's Desk

September/October 2017

By Paul Proscia, Principal of PS 23

I hope everyone's summer was one filled with happiness and memories that will last a lifetime. As I blinked my eyes we are already into the 3rd week of school; time seems to go by faster and faster as you get older. On behalf of Mrs. Mazza and the rest of the PS 23 staff, I would like to thank you for a very smooth opening of school year. Students have adjusted well and as I have gone from classroom to classroom, they are already engaged in learning. Welcome to our new families and welcome back to our returning families. We are a school that prides itself in collaboration, support, and dedication. We strive to provide timely, ongoing communication to the entire PS 23 community and will continue to push all of our students to meet and achieve higher standards academically, as well as blossom socially.

Family Handbook

Students have brought home a copy of our family handbook, which was created to provide clarity on our policies, expectations, and to act as a guide in helping you be actively involved in our school and your child's education in a positive manner. Please use it as a resource to help your child grow into a positive and academically enriched individual in an environment that encourages the individual talents of each student. It provides information about ***Class Schedules, the 2017-2018 School Calendar, Emergency Readiness & School Closing procedures, Emergency Contact Information, Photo/Video Permission, Cell Phone Policy, Student Attendance Expectations***, as well as other pertinent information about our school's policies and functioning. In an effort to streamline and consolidate all necessary school opening parent sign offs, we have condensed all sign-offs to two pages at the end of the handbook. If you have not done so already, please complete the last page sign-off form (front to back) and return

it to your child's teacher within the first few days of school.

Leader in Me Implementation

As we continue along on our Leader In Me journey this year, we will be infusing the 7 Habits of Happy Kids leadership habits and life lessons into our curricula and further build reflection and feedback (our instructional focus this year) into activities. Teachers will carry on with implementing Student Leadership Notebooks, which are key in motivating and empowering students to take charge of their own learning, instill a growth oriented mindset, serve as a visual score tracker for each student's progression, and understand the importance of the tracking of goals. Depending on the grade level, students will be taught to set and monitor goals, record information about what makes them special as an individual, track their learning and celebrations, and journal their reflections. Like last year, we have a Classified Board in our student cafeteria where students can apply for grade specific school-wide leadership jobs such as Morning Broadcaster, Tech Team, Science Buddy, Lunch Accountant, Grade 1 Leaders, Kinder Lunch Buddies, and Attendance Associates. We are preparing our students to function independently, so we want students to apply for roles they are interested in and take responsibility to carry out the duties during their term of service.

7 Habits Booster Shot

Habit 1- Be Proactive (*foundational habit*); *Basic Definition-* "You're in charge"; *Highly Effective Practices-* *Pause and respond based on values of mutual benefit and integrity, focus on what you have influence over (not only on concerns).*

**Habit 2- Begin With the End in Mind;**

Basic Definition- "Have a Plan";

Highly Effective Practices- Define what the outcomes and desired results are before acting, develop a personal purpose or mission statements.

Habit 3- Put First things First; Basic

Definition- "Work First, Then Play"; Highly Effective Practices- Focus on your highest priorities (school work and relationships), block out the unimportant, plan activities accordingly.

Habit 4- Think Win-Win; Basic Definition-

"Everyone Can Win"; Highly Effective Practices- Build the emotional bank account with others, have a balance of courage and consideration, consider what is a win for others as well what a win is for you. Remember competition is good because it can drive us to be better, as long as it doesn't compromise values of sportsmanship and a "win at all cost" attitude doesn't develop, where getting your way is the only way.

Habit 5- Seek First to Understand, Then

to be Understood; Basic Definition- "Listen Before You Talk"; Highly Effective Practices- Value others input. Look to truly understand another person and listen with empathy and understanding. Express your point of view respectfully.

Habit 6- Synergize; Basic Definition-

"Together is Better"; Highly Effective Practices- Value differences and seek to find new and improved solutions that are spirited in mutual benefit.

Habit 7- Sharpen the Saw; Basic Definition-

"Balance Feels Best"; Highly Effective Practices- Renewal of your mind, body, spirit, and heart (social/emotional), through learning, writing, reading, and teaching (mind); healthy eating, exercise, and rest (body); spending time reflecting and doing things that you love to do (spirit); building strong social connections to others by effectively communicating feelings and thoughts and spending quality time together (heart).

Growth Mindset & Failing Forward

We are entering year 6 of the Leader in Me initiative. Like in past years, we will use school-wide books of the month linked to monthly leadership virtues and the 7 Habits. We will continue our monthly PTA sponsored Leader and Humanitarian Breakfast to honor our chosen class leaders and humanitarians of the month. Students are chosen based on their abil-

ity to apply the 7 Habits in their actions, lead by example, take charge, help and give back to others, use a win-win mindset to solve problems, set expectations and goals and do what it takes to achieve the goal, make progress to learn and grow socially as well as academically, and synergize by working well with others to achieve that goal. We don't just reward students who perform well academically. It is much different than the traditional "student of the month", where only the highest academically performing students receive an award. We strongly believe that part of learning and growing is learning how to "**fail forward**" and learn from mistakes. In order to learn children (and all people for that matter) need to make mistakes. Sometimes the mistake happens on a class assignment, on a test, in a relationship, and even behaviorally. So, we don't only reward the "highest achieving" academic student, we look to also encourage students who have made mistakes but have shown an ability to learn and grow from their errors. We reward good leadership and humanitarian behavior. It's about learning how to be a better human being and PS 23 community member each day. In other words, we are preparing our students for life by educating them to have a "**growth mindset**".

2017 Instructional Focus

Our school curriculum continues to evolve. Our instructional team led by Ms. Mazza continues to update and perfect our ELA and Math curriculum maps to include checks for understandings and assessments for learning. In the Spring of 2017 the percentage of students in grades 3-5 performing at or above grade level on the 2017 NYS ELA exam has increased by 3% from 61% to 64%. There was slight 2% decrease going from 70% to 68% of our grade 3-5 students performing at or above standards. We strive to improve this year. This year our instructional focus is:

"If our feedback to children is clear & focused and children develop skills to be able to self & peer assess, then we will develop more independent, assessment capable, learners."

New School Year Hope & Excitement

I know this year will be rewarding and filled with many opportunities to make the world a better place. With that said, I would like to share a quote from the late great spiritual and political leader Mahatma Gandhi, "**You must be the change you wish to see in the world.**" The world can be a crazy place, however it's up to us to make the changes needed to make the world better. Children are watching and listening and they are looking for role models. If children have positive role models then they fare better in life. Be the positive change agent your child needs. Your support and dedication is welcomed and appreciated!