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Assistant Principal
Sabrina
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Good Attendance Leads to Success

Being present at school is one of the most consistent determining factors in student success. Countless studies that have tracked positive vs. negative outcomes cite student attendance as a correlative factor. Grades, discipline and graduation rates have all been linked to how often students are absent. Of course, there are legitimate reasons to miss school. Illness, family emergencies, once-in-a-lifetime opportunities and medical appointments are all good reasons to be absent, arrive late or leave early.

Elementary-aged students have been excused for other reasons as well. Many parents feel that missing school for trips and other cultural events is legitimate and even beneficial. Most educators understand this parent perspective. However, as public school educators we must treat attendance policies as an equity issue that is clearly linked to positive academic outcomes for all.

Occasional absences quickly add up. Students who enter school at kindergarten and miss an average of 10 days per year until they graduate high school will miss 140 days. There are 180 days in a school year; that student would have missed almost an entire year of school. A student who has a chronic attendance issue misses an average of 25 days a year. If this pattern applies from kindergarten to senior year, the student will have missed 325 days altogether.

Late arrivals and early dismissals also add up. You may have seen that we are now applying the criteria used to determine excused or unexcused absences to early dismissals. In fact, the District is working on a tool that will calculate the number of minutes each student misses as the result of arriving late or leaving early. That's how much we believe in the importance of being at school.

If your child does need to be late or leave early, please communicate with Ms. Dickey, at bjdickey@seattleschools.org.

You can help us determine whether the time spent away from school is excused if you bring in a doctor's note or proof of an appointment.

As our state and the District refine and revise their attendance policies, even our youngest students are being held to the compulsory attendance law. Why? Simply put, you can't learn if you're not at school. Even within the 180 school days, the hours focused on learning core subjects don't provide a ton of time to ensure that students master grade-level standards. Our time is precious!

EVENT CALENDAR

TOMORROW, Fri., Sept. 30: "Homework" is topic at Coffee with Assistant Principal Sabrina Kovacs-Storlie, 9:15-10 a.m., Library. Bring your questions! See details on this page.

Mon.-Fri., Oct. 3-7: Conflict Mediator Trainings, 8:15-9:30 a.m. All Grade 4&5 applicants have been accepted. Adult volunteers still needed: <http://tinyurl.com/TMmentors>.

Thurs., Oct. 6: Advanced Learning applications due. Start the process (including testing) for admission to Highly Capable Cohort, Spectrum and other Seattle Public Schools Advanced Learning Programs. See www.seattleschools.org/advlearning for details and forms, or ask in the office ASAP.

Fri., Oct. 14: No school for students. Day of professional development for teachers.

Sat., Oct. 15: School Board member Stephan Blanford community meeting, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Douglass Truth Library, 2300 E. Yesler Way

Tues., Oct. 18: PTA General Meeting, 6-6:30 pm: Social time & potluck. (Bring snack or dessert to share if you wish.) 6:30-8 p.m. Meeting featuring a presentation by School Counselor Meghan Kaloper. Everyone welcome! You do not need to be a PTA member to attend the meetings.

→ Full year of events online at www.tmlink.org!

TUTU'S PANTRY

Week of Oct. 3: Grade 2 families are asked to donate non-perishable foods (in bins in the front hall). *Not in that grade? Donations welcomed from all.*

Friday Morning in Library

Coffee to Focus on TM's Homework Policies



The year's first "Coffee with the Principal" will focus on "Homework: Developing Good Habits or Enforcing a Traditional Chore?" Assistant Principal Sabrina Kovacs-Storlie will present information and take questions, 9:15-10 a.m. tomorrow (Friday, Sept. 30) in the Library!

Homework – how much to give, and whether or not to give it at all – is a hot topic in Seattle. You may have seen a piece on KING-5 news about it or read posts on Facebook. Lots of parents are talking about homework and weighing in. Ms. Kovacs-Storlie will discuss research, why people are questioning this educational tradition, and describe TM's approach.

The coffee is provided by the PTA; bring your cup! Questions welcomed at the event or in advance: askovacsstorli@seattleschools.org. If you cannot attend, look for information from the presentation to be available online in the near future.

Equity Team Asks Board to Make HCC Changes

The HCC Equity Team, one of TM's Equity Action Teams, recently sent School Board members and District leaders recommendations focused on improving HCC racial and socio-economic equity. The Board will hold an Oct. 5 "working session" focused on Advanced Learning, and it is hoped that members will consider the TM group's document, which has five core recommendations:

1. Give all 2nd graders opportunity for HCC via "universal testing."
2. Do strategic outreach to high-potential students from underrepresented groups.
3. Make admission process more accessible for less-privileged families.
4. Use "local norms," race and socio-economic status as factors in admissions decisions.
5. Make appeals process clear and equitable, including ceasing to accept private tests.

The team is asking the community to contact the School Board in support of these ideas. Further information and the full document are both available at <http://bit.ly/HCCequity>.

Incarcerated Parents Can Conference with Teachers

The state Department of Corrections offers incarcerated parents the opportunity to set up parent-teacher teleconferences in October and November. If this applies to your family, please contact DOC's Bea Giron at 253-680-2626 for information or visit <http://www.k12.wa.us/Incarceratedparents>.

Conflict Mediator & Recess Mentor Training is Next Week

All 4th- and 5th-grade students who applied to become Conflict Mediators have been accepted into the program and will begin training next week! Fifty students signed up! Training will be Oct. 3-7, 8:15-9:30 a.m. in the Library. If your student will be attending, please be sure they arrive on time.

A few volunteers were needed as of Thursday. See <http://tinyurl.com/TMmentors>.

Teacher Debby Halperin Wins White House Honor



Debby Halperin

Grade 2/3 teacher Debby Halperin was honored at ceremonies in Washington, DC, earlier this month for winning a Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Just two K-6 teachers are honored from each state every other year, chosen by a panel of distinguished scientists, mathematicians, and educators, following an initial selection process at the state level.

Winners receive a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation to be used at their discretion, and are invited to Washington, DC, for the ceremony, educational and celebratory events, and visits with members of the Administration.

In a White House news release, President Obama said, "The recipients of this award are integral to ensuring our students are equipped with critical thinking and problem-solving skills that are vital to our nation's success."

Before arriving at Thurgood Marshall

this year, Ms. Halperin taught at Laurelhurst Elementary for 16 years. She says she first developed a deep curiosity about mathematics education while teaching in a one-room elementary school that she founded. For the next 20 years, she investigated and studied the development of logical thinking in children, using her classroom as a research laboratory.

The White House news release noted that Ms. Halperin inspires her students to think deeply about mathematics and fosters a love of logical thinking, a passion for learning, and above all, intellectual autonomy.

Previously, Ms. Halperin served as a teacher leader in the Expanding the Community of Math Learners project, a collaborative venture of the University of Washington and school districts. She facilitated professional development classes helping teachers better understand their students' thinking and to encourage mathematical conversations. She holds a B.A. in social ecology from Pitzer College and M.A. in human development from Pacific Oaks College.



Day of Caring Brightens TM

The United Way Day of Caring effort on Sept. 23 was a huge success, thanks to more than 40 Puget Sound Energy volunteers (including CEO Kimberly Harris). Look at what they accomplished:

- A new path along the Pillars of Diversity to help improve access from MLK Jr. Way to the parking lot.
- Fresh paint on the curb along the no parking and bus zones.
- Mulch around the front tree in the pickup area and other areas.
- Weeding of all the front garden beds.
- Help with paperwork in the front office.
- Help with organizing library books.
- Reading with 1st-graders.

Many thanks also to TM parent-volunteer Colleen Daly for organizing the effort.

Shopping at Amazon.com, Office Depot, Bartell Drugs and other businesses? Your purchases can support TM! See <http://bit.ly/ShopforTM>.