

The Highland School

31 Highland Avenue
Midland Park, New Jersey 07432

Highland School Weekly Updates

September 23, 2022

Thank-you to all those who attended Back to School Night. As always, there was a good turn-out, which I am thankful for each and every time. Some districts, some schools, do not have the community involvement that Midland Park has been so lucky to sustain year after year. Thank-you for wanting to be involved in your child's education. We only get one chance at raising our kids and we do not want to mess that up, not just because we want great futures for our children, but also because we want our retirement years to be glorious. These kids will be a big part of that as they will make up the work force that drives the countries prosperity in our golden years. So let's do a good job.

Student Climate Committees:

Every year, throughout the year, Mrs. Scala formally meets with students to get a pulse of likes, dislikes, frustrations, and things kids get excited about. We met with the first student groups by grade level to get their feedback on being back in school--- I love how kids look at things. No surprises for us right now, but we will continue to get feedback from the students and are hoping some student concerns will remedy themselves as we get more and more into the routine of things.

Student Climate Committee Feedback	
<p>3rd Grade</p> <p><i>"The bathrooms are clean. My sister warned me that there are no paper towels, but that is why the bathrooms are clean."</i></p> <p><i>"The Gym is double the size of Godwin."</i></p> <p><i>"The students do not pay attention in the cafeteria."</i></p> <p><i>"We like how we can get ice cream and cookies."</i></p>	<p>4th Grade</p> <p><i>"The problems with Football have gotten a lot better since last year. Not as much pushing and yelling."</i></p> <p><i>"The cafeteria is noisy."</i></p> <p><i>"It takes a long time to get our food when we buy lunch."</i></p> <p><i>"I like my teachers and how we switch now."</i></p>
<p>5th Grade:</p> <p><i>"I do not understand why we can only get up once to throw away trash at lunch."</i></p> <p><i>"How old is the playground. Probably too new to ask for an update because I would ask for a zip line."</i></p> <p><i>Does the School or town own the back field, because I would like Field goals put up for football, a turf field, and some soccer agility equipment."</i></p> <p><i>"I know that if I have drama I can go to Mr. Galasso and Mrs. Scala or my teacher to help me. I know that 5th grade has a lot of drama. So, I might need Mrs. Scala a lot"</i></p> <p><i>"The cafeteria can get crazy, but it will get better. The playground is fun, but a lot going on in a small area."</i></p>	<p>6th Grade</p> <p><i>"I like the 6th grade but I am sad I don't have as much time with my teachers. We also have more work crammed into a shorter period of time, but I like all of the other things I get to do like video editing and writer's workshop."</i></p> <p><i>"The 6th grade teachers are a lot stricter than 5th grade, but that's ok because I like strict teachers."</i></p> <p><i>"The bathrooms are clean and I haven't seen any issues in the bathrooms yet."</i></p> <p><i>"I am still trying to get use to my locker with the lock but it will get easier."</i></p> <p><i>"The playground is good, especially when we can go on the field."</i></p>

Lunch:

Lunch, as you can see from student feedback above has been interesting. The district contracts with Pomptonian Food Service to run our lunch program, cook and serve food. The bigger the grade (4th grade has 90 kids in it) the more pressed for time we are. The lunch aides and the Pomptonian food servers are trying to make it go as smooth as possible. We have been tweaking the routine to find how we can make it more efficient. Pizza days and Mozzarella stick days continue to be the hardest as they are in high demand. Ice Cream and snacks too are in high demand. **Please check your balances as we will start having to make calls to for those in the negatives. To check your balances please contact:**

- Mrs. Teresa Hansen: Thansen@mpsni.org (Cite your child's first and last name, grade, school, and request account balance.)

NJSLA Test scores Spring 2022:

Last year's NJSLA test scores will be mailed out to student homes grades 4-6 at the end of this month. There are things to celebrate and things we have reflected on and have to improve. Since Vodi, this is the first true baseline data we have to build off of and have already started using the data from these state tests to identify gaps in our learning. Hence, the new Grammar curriculum, and the online common formative assessment we are going to utilize in math to target standards more specifically. There will be a Testing Presentation at the second Board of Ed. meeting in October.

Tic-Toc Docents needed:

The Tic-Toc program is an excellent program that exposes our students to art and culture. At the heart of the program are the volunteer Tic-Toc docents that push into our classrooms to do mini lessons and activities. Our first two collections are; [Flowers](#) and [Iconic Paintings](#) , which will be with us until December. To see the painting please click the links above.

- If you are interested in becoming a docent, PLEASE contact Mrs. Reyes: marimac20@gmail.com

Highland Picture Day:

Highland Picture Day will be on October 7, 2022. This year pictures will be inside in front of a Green Screen so we have more control over lighting, exposures, background and weather.

Health Curriculum Presentation:

The revised Health Curriculum, which is now compliant with state standards, has been a catalyst for some great discussions. To be as transparent as possible, because I know curriculum templates can be a little cryptic, the PTA is going to host a presentation with Ms. Bache and I on the new health curriculum and what instruction will look like in the classroom so parents can make an informed decision on what specific topics they would like to opt their child(ren) out from. All Curriculum can be found on the district website www.mpsnj.org under the Academics Tab → curriculum.

- **Topic:** Revised Elementary Health Curriculum
- **Date:** September 27, 2022
- **Location:** Highland School Gymnasium (changed from Media Center)
- **Time:** 7:30pm

OLD BUT ALWAYS RELEVANT INFORMATION:

Student Drop-Off:

- Hopefully everyone knows where they are going at this point; Grade 3= playground, Grade 4= Back of School (door 5), Grade 5 = Gymnasium entrance, Grade 6 = Back of School (door 6)
- **Drop-Off Timeline:**
 - 8:00am- supervision provided at each entrance.
 - 8:19am- students enter the building.

- 8:23am- **late bell sounds**. Outside doors will close. All students arriving who cannot get to their entrance by 8:23am, should then proceed to the front of the building to be let in through the main office. (when in doubt, go to the main office)
- 8:25am- Morning announcements begin.

*** If it is raining, students will be let into the school at 8:00am from their same regular entrance: grade 6 will then go to the cafeteria, grade 5 will be in the music room hallway, grade 3 and 4 will be stationed in their hallway outside their classrooms.

The Car Line:

- All across America the drop off car lines at elementary schools can be stressful. We have been doing okay so far considering over 300 students are being dropped off in a 20 minute span- THANK-YOU. Traffic is not backing up to the intersection of Prospect and Godwin as much.
 - **Reminders of things we can do to keep the car line moving:**
 - **Pull all the way up as far as you can go, then let out your child(ren).** Have student exit the vehicle on left side whenever possible (safer).
 - Have student water bottles and backpacks ready to go, like a paratrooper ready to jump out of a plane. When the car stops it's a "Go, Go, Go."
 - Pre hug and kiss your child prior to getting in the car. Those are important things, but safety of kids during drop off is too. We want to avoid cars passing in line as much as possible.
 - **If you find yourself U-turning anywhere, you are doing something illegal. Let's try not to do illegal things.**

After School Pick Up:

After the bell rings at 2:50pm, students are released with the expectation that they will be watched, picked up by parents, or head to aftercare. There is limited supervision outside after school. Students who misbehave may be held accountable for their actions.

Students will be released from the same door they entered in the morning so we do not have a stampeded going out of one door. Please arrange a spot for your child to meet you or your 'picker-upper'.

Highland School Student/Parent Handbook:

Every year the Student/Parent Handbook is embedded into the student academic planner that the PTA so graciously provides. In the handbook is information related to the school, i.e. code of conduct, absences, bell schedules, and other important information. It is also posted under resources on the Highland homepage. Please use this as a resource prior to calling the main office.

- [Highland School Handbook 2022-2023](#)

Sincerely,

Peter Galasso, Principal

