

From the Office of the Superintendent

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope the summer has been filled with wonderful experiences which include relaxation and enjoying precious time with family and friends. But it is time for children to come back to school and resume the journey of learning. By now, with very few exceptions, you should have received students' bus assignments. If you have not, please contact our Transportation Department. Most often the public assumes that the summer is downtime for our schools. In fact, it is quite the opposite. This summer we housed nearly 700 students in extended year programs that ran until the middle of August. This kept our schools in full operation including our transportation department, pupil personnel services and many of our school nurses. Additionally, the summer provides the opportunity for us to complete facility upgrades like replacing areas of the roof at the high school, erecting additional trailers at Applegarth, recruiting additional staff and making updates to our curriculum and textbooks. These are just a few things that we have been working on to prepare for the opening of school on September 8, 2009.

We are anxiously awaiting the arrival of your children. Many of our teachers have been engaged in professional development to enhance their effectiveness and our maintenance staff is working very hard to get our buildings ready. I have been working with the Board of Education to develop our new Vision and Mission Statements along with our Board Goals for the year. Once we get some feedback from our staff and formalize this process, I will be sharing all this information with you.

Additionally, I was fortunate enough to attend a Summit on the Pandemic Flu. It is expected that there could be a substantial outbreak this flu season. We are reviewing our Pandemic Influenza Management Plan to ensure that it is consistent with CDC recommendations. So although there is no pandemic now, we need your help to reduce the risk of exposure.

- **Please keep children home who are sick. We are suspending perfect attendance awards this year to discourage children from coming to school sick.**

- **Teach your children to wash their hands often with soap and water. While hand sanitizer is a good alternative, it does not replace a thorough cleaning with soap and water.**
- **Teach your children to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissue or by coughing into the inside of their elbow if necessary.**
- **Be prepared to have child care options available for at least 5 days if your child gets sick or if school is dismissed.**
- **As soon as possible, get your family vaccinated for the seasonal flu and the 2009 H1N1 flu when vaccines are available.**

We have added information on our website about the flu that you will find very useful. You can also refer to the Center for Disease Control website for more details at www.CDC.gov.

Lastly, President Obama is expected to present a live message to students on September 8, 2009 about the importance of student responsibility in the learning process. While we are not mandating that our teachers show this message, they may choose to if they find it offers educational value. Please contact your school directly if you would like to know more about this effort.

In closing, our partnership is imperative in order for us to become the preeminent educational system that we are on our way to becoming. I hope you will extend, renew or rededicate your commitment to be our partners. We can do it together! Welcome back!

Yours for the sake of all Children,

Dr. Kenneth R. Hamilton
Superintendent of Schools