Mary K. Ferreri, Principal 201-670-2730 mkferreri@ridgewood.k12.nj.us



September Update

Good Afternoon Orchard School Families!

It is hard to believe that today marks the last day of September. Where did this month go? We are already one full month into school, and boy does it show. Our students have done a terrific job acclimating to the school routines. They have also continued to amaze me with their warm and friendly Orchard way. At our CBA on September 22, I congratulated our new students for being so brave as they adjusted to a new school. Some of our new friends are just learning English, which is truly amazing. When I ask our new students how they are doing, they often remark that they love Orchard School, and are so happy. Because of this, on 9/22, I also took the opportunity to thank all of our students for being wonderful ambassadors to our school and for making our new friends feel so welcome. I am truly so proud of our children!

The start of school often brings some anxiety for us and for our students. One topic that I have already heard a lot about - HOMEWORK! To begin, I'd like to share with you that our teachers worked together last year to begin discussing homework at each grade level. They gathered information and in many cases, have actually tweaked their homework this year based on their thoughts as a grade level, and input from one another. However, we recognize that this doesn't always translate into smooth sailing for you at home! Here are 5 tips on how to help your child with homework - everything from interesting websites to Skylert reminders:

- 1. Make sure you follow the steps for online logins for your students. Check your email on Wednesday evening (9/28) an email went out entitled "Online Curriculum 2016-17". Everything you need to know about your child's login information is there. Accessing the math online has proven to be very helpful for our families.
- 2. <u>Read this article</u> especially #3! No teacher at Orchard School wants you to spend hours agonizing over homework or trying to solve an impossible problem. We would much rather you send it in with a note or an email explaining it was difficult.
- 3. Routine, routine. Kids love routines. Keep homework done at the same time every night, in the same place. Limit screen time and other distractions around the homework area.

- Stay consistent and don't let it drag on. Watch your time and let your teacher know when it is taking too long.
- 4. Remain calm do not engage in the meltdown. I repeat: DO NOT ENGAGE. Take a breath, count to 10, walk away from the room for a minute. Check out "keep calm and carry on" in this article from Parents.
- 5. Check out this <u>free download</u>, a pdf book entitled "Helping Your Child with Homework" from the U.S. Department of Education. It is also available en Español!
- 6. I said 5...but I am adding in one extra...because we think of it as something that should happen every night, not as a homework assignment, but as a regular routine for all individuals. *Read. Every. Day.* We assign it as teachers because we want it to be done but we don't want it to feel like work. We want our children to enjoy reading and to use it as an activity to relax and unwind. The American Academy of Pediatrics has a policy statement on reading aloud every day to young children, and here are facts, facts and more facts from the National Education Association on why reading every day is a benefit for our students. Consider ways that you can take reading out of the homework equation and make it a regular daily routine in your home, if it isn't already, for you and for your children! With a rainy weekend ahead, what a perfect time to cozy up with a book. I know I'm hoping to find time to do just that!

As we head into October, I have a few topics to remind you about. Many of these are important upcoming dates, and I hope that you will join me at these events!

<u>Parent Coffees:</u> I am looking forward to the upcoming parent coffees. This is a great opportunity for us to meet informally about topics that are of interest to you. I hope that many of you are able to attend! In order to make the most of our night, please consider taking a *brief* survey to help shape our night ahead of time. The survey can be accessed via this link: http://goo.gl/forms/iVi7GhV2Zd. I promise - it is brief!

Full Day Kindergarten Presentations: This month, Dr. Fishbein will be presenting on the upcoming vote for Full Day Kindergarten. There are so many opportunities to hear him speak - you really can't miss him! Join us specifically at Orchard School on Friday, October 14, for our HSA meeting. It is important that our school community remains informed - accurately - on this issue. Additional dates include an evening HSA meeting at Travell, and an evening with the Newcomers Club on 10/13. You may also wish to attend one of the following dates which are being publicized for the entire Ridgewood community:

Wednesday, 10/5 @ BFMS - 7 PM Thursday, 10/27 @ GWMS - 7 PM Community Outreach Program: This month, the Ridgewood Public Schools will host our first Community Outreach Program. Dr. Robert Brooks, author, psychologist, and Harvard faculty member, will join us from 7-9 PM @ GWMS. His program, "Fostering Family Closeness and Respect", will highlight the importance of (a) empathy, (b) changing "negative scripts," (c) establishing realistic expectations and goals, (d) becoming a charitable family, and (e) disciplining in ways that promote self discipline and responsibility rather than resentment. My husband and I both plan to attend this particular event, and I hope to see you there! For more information, please visit the RPS website to view the folder for the 2016-17 Well-Being series.

As with every monthly update, we need reminders about our procedures and policies here at Orchard. Please read below on two items of note:

- Dogs/Animals: Please be aware that <u>no pets</u> are allowed on school property. While it may be tempting to bring along Fido to pick up the kids, it is in violation of our ordinance here at Orchard. Please respect this rule and follow through. Thank you!
- Link and follow our Google Calendar for HSA events! Go to this link and click on the +Google Calendar in the right bottom corner.
- Lunch Ordering: Just some reminders for ordering lunch through <u>Village Fresh</u>. All orders are placed online. Orders must be in by 8:00 AM, otherwise, they will not be delivered on that day. October lunches begin Tuesday! Thank you!

Please review the list of dates below for upcoming events at our school. I look forward to seeing many of you at the upcoming coffees. Happy October!

Warmly,

Mrs Ferreri

Upcoming events:

10/3: No School - Rosh Hashanah

10/4: Week of Respect

10/6: Spirit Day; Parent Coffee - Grade 5 - 7 PM 10/7: Fifth Grade Movie Fundraiser - 3:30 PM

10/10: Bake Sale

10/12: No School - Yom Kippur

10/13: Parent Coffee - Grades 2,3,4 - 7 PM

10/14: HSA Meeting - 8:45 AM - Dr. Fishbein to speak on Full Day Kindergarten, Mrs. Coates (Nurse)

10/18: Community Outreach Program - Dr. Robert Brooks - 7 PM @ GWMS

10/20: Cultural Enrichment Assembly (David Harrell), K-2 @ 9 AM; 3-5 @ 10 AM; Parent Coffee -

Grades K,1 - 7 PM

10/21: Bag a Lunch Fundraiser

10/22: Fun Day!

10/25: Jingle Bell Jog

10/27: Full Day Kindergarten Presentation @ GWMS - 7 PM

10/31: Halloween!