

WOODLAND PARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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Dear Woodland Park Families,

I hope you had a relaxing summer and are ready to begin a new school year both energized and recharged. Please mark your calendars: staff returns on Sept. 3rd and the students return on Sept. 4th.

The buildings are in great shape thanks to the hard work and long hours put in by Mr. Grimes and his team. The office staffs have been compiling teacher packets, memos, student packets, etc. Due to the efforts of these individuals, our schools are prepared and ready for a smooth opening. I extend a sincere and heartfelt “Thank You” to all!

Please join me in welcoming the following staff members to our school district as they anticipate the upcoming school year.

Charles Olbon School

Kelly Gilhooley – Grade 2
Ileana Gutierrez – Grade 1
Michelle Morris – Grade 2
Michael Volpe – PE
Danielle Mete – MLR – Grade K
Haya Matari – Kindergarten Aide
Elisa DiLizia – Lunch Aide
Gail Macaluso – Lunch Aide

Memorial School

Lisa Barreto – Principal
Stephen Scholtz – Assistant Principal
Donna Farrell - Art
Jessica Jones – Special Education
Joseph Napoli – Special Education
Noel Segarra – ELA
Zainab Shafi – Special Education
Franny Montesino – 1:1 Aide

Beatrice Gilmore

Savannah Brink – Grade 3
Margarita Rios – Lunch Aide

Districtwide

Susan Confrancisco – Director of Special Education
Jaimie Partridge – Districtwide Behaviorist
David Grimes – Interim Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds

We continue to make great strides in the area of curriculum and program. At Memorial, we are excited to introduce new readers and writers workshop units which include class novel studies. These units combine whole-class novels and independent reading to help our students grow as readers. In addition, we are excited to introduce a new instructional block of time for all students to focus on the foundational skills of reading, vocabulary and word study.

This summer we continued our work in partnership with Rutgers University and New Jersey Department of Education on our New Jersey Tiered System of Supports (NJTSS) initiative. The NJTSS is an evidence-based framework for implementing academic and behavioral supports and interventions to improve achievement for ALL students. Our work has allowed us to implement a universal screening districtwide in both CO and BG Schools. We have developed diagnostic tools and plans for progress monitoring and revised our Basic Skills Entrance and Exit Criteria based on our analysis. This grant partnership spans across grades K-3, however we will be expanding it to fourth grade and plan to begin the universal screening process at Memorial School this fall.

Revisions to our K-8 mathematics curriculum as well as new programs and resources have been secured in order to support our continued focus on student achievement. New indicators have been embedded into the curriculum in order to demonstrate differentiated instruction through a more scaffolded approach. Teachers will continue to develop lessons and instructional strategies based on math centers/stations which will enhance instructional practice through modeling, analysis, and theoretical approaches to teaching math. This summer, time was also spent developing an advanced curriculum for the 7th grade Pre-Algebra class which provides students with an understanding of both 7th and 8th grade standards.

To support all of these approaches to teaching math, BG and CO Schools have revised the standards based report card to reflect the new units in the curriculum. A rubric has also been created and is available to parents in order to assist with interpretation of the information presented on the report cards.

We are excited to introduce ixl.com for grades 2-8 for the upcoming school year. Each child will have access to this online program at home. IXL is a great resource to help each child excel in math class. This program provides students with opportunities to practice the content being studied in the classroom. It also provides insight into each student's academic progress.

In September, CO and BG Schools will be working with another math program which supports differentiated and individualized learning. This program, *Happy Numbers*, builds an individual-paced math dialogue and responds to students by unpacking concepts step-by-step, scaffolding learning, and providing immediate feedback based on student input.

Please keep on the lookout for a math webpage on the district's website. Here you will find any and all information about our district's math programs, growth mindset analogies, curriculum pacing guides, and rubrics.

Memorial School will be implementing a 9 period schedule in September! This period will allow for enrichment opportunities for the students. This will include support in the areas of Language Arts and Math as well as opportunities to participate in clubs, Character Education activities, and have many other student self-elected educational experiences throughout the year.

The addition of Period 9 also allows teachers to have a professional learning period with their content area colleagues. This new configuration will allow for rich content discussions among colleagues facilitated by various members of our administrative team.

We will also be offering Band as an elective course this school year. We look forward to seeing the Music program grow. We have also added two new cycles to our schedule: STEM and Study Skills/Research.

As always, the technology department has been working diligently this summer to prepare all of our technological needs for September. All new district servers have been updated with improved speed and uptime of the network. All laptop carts at CO School have been upgraded. New Chromebooks have been purchased for BG School as part of our transition to Google during the upcoming school year. We are happy to announce that we have begun the installation process of video camera upgrades at CO School in order to increase the level of security both inside and outside of the building. In addition, reimaging and regular maintenance to the computers in our district has been ongoing and continuous throughout the summer months. Please join me in thanking our technology team for working on this during the summer months for a successful implementation in September.

Mr. Grimes and our custodial team have been working tirelessly this summer in order to get the buildings and grounds ready for the opening of school. For student safety, the gym floors in each school have been sanded and polyurethaned. Beatrice Gilmore School is looking better than ever! All hallways have been painted with a lighter, brighter color, the Main Office had a complete makeover and the windows in the gym have been replaced.

Memorial School is also looking better than ever! The library has been painted and reconfigured and the main office also had a makeover! We are also happy to announce that the main office will now house both secretaries. This will make for a smoother and more efficient operation of a very busy main office.

This summer, five classrooms, two bathrooms and one office space at Charles Olbon School were reconstructed. The newly constructed classrooms were created with collaborative learning spaces in mind which will promote deeper understandings and learning of critical academic and life skills. The new learning spaces will also support a student-centered learning environment which will empower the children to be active participants in the learning process through hands on experiences, critical thinking and problem solving. This includes new Smart Flat Panels TVs for the renovated classrooms. Students will have the opportunity to practice important social skills such as communicating effectively with one another and self-regulation, while learning in an environment that reflects real-life experiences. We are excited to be providing educational experiences in learning spaces that meet the needs of our students in our ever-changing society.

These are only some of the many things that have been happening here in the schools this summer. As you can see, we have been quite busy! As we begin our sixth year together, I continue to remain energized and enthusiastic about our direction. We are moving our school district forward and it is truly amazing to be a part of the process with all of you.

Mission:

“To promote educational experiences which will prepare our students to develop high levels of academic achievement, engage in a lifelong desire to learn and develop a deep respect for life and its diversity in our global society”

*If we truly believe this in our hearts, then we will achieve!
Remember: We are all in this together.*

Your Partner in Education,

Michele R. Pillari, Ed.D.

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Superintendent of Schools