Dear Parents:

November 8th is the end of our first academic quarter. After the opening of school in September, the pace really quickens and classroom instruction moves into full swing. Students find their extra activities and all is right with the world. Quarter two begins on November 12 and seems to fly by as we move into the holiday season. Since I will not have another newsletter until Quarter 3, I want to wish all families a safe, healthy and happy season. This quarter’s newsletter has many interesting and important pieces of information.

The Halloween dance on October 25 was a huge success, as usual. Over two-hundred students participated in full costumes. We had Ninja Turtles, clowns, various Disney characters and zombies. Prizes were awarded for the top costumes. A big thanks to the PTA and parents who supplied and served the snacks and drinks.

Our Fabulous librarian, Mrs. Rooney, has again organized a book fair on December 16, 17, and 18. Students will visit the fair in the library with their English teachers. Reading never goes out of style. There is a book for everyone. So, come on, curl up with a good book this holiday season.

When your child is sick, please call the attendance office directly, at 673-2025 and speak to Mrs. Bialkowski or leave a message at 425-4747.

Eighth grade students will be visited by Mrs. Cain this month to make their elective course selections for 9th grade. Mrs. Cain will fully explain how the selection is made and which course students may choose. When the course selections have been made, Mrs. Cain will begin to meet with parents and students for discussions about other courses.

Common Core learning Standards: Teachers at Finley and across the district have been and are being trained in implementation of the new CCLS and activities. The essential elements of CCLS and activities are that students will be asked to read for text details, make assertions using those details in all subjects, think more deeply on topics and explain their reasoning so that teachers know they understand. Consider these two questions; “What is a variable in scientific evidence?” and “How strong is the scientific evidence?” The second question requires a student to evaluate and justify his answer while the first simply defines a term. This is just one example of questions that require students to truly understand a concept or topic.
The “Cyber” World:  In early October, students participated in a presentation during their lunch periods given by the counselors at the Huntington Youth Bureau. They spoke about cyberbullying and how to avoid it. The topic is still one that parents and school personnel would describe as having an impact on all teenagers at some point in their lives. Additionally, The PTA sponsored another event on October 24 which was hosted by Sal Lifireri, renowned expert on the topic. Many students, staff and parents attended. Thank you to the PTA and Mr. Lifrieri. His advice and presentations can be found on the internet by googling his name.

Parent Portal:  Parents can still register for access to your children’s daily attendance, report cards and progress reports through the parent portal on the district’s web-based student management system. Log onto https://www.eschooldata.com/eschoolportal/huntington and click on the parent portal button. When registering, you will need your child’s name, student ID number (found on report cards and progress reports), grade level and school name. ID numbers must be 9 digits.

Parents should take a look at www.engageny.org for parent-friendly information about student assessment, new Common Core Learning Standards and tips on how to help your child at home. Also, parents can view “school report cards” at www.nysed.gov and click on the “parent” tab. School and district reports cards show student performance data, school profile information and student demographic information related to ethnicity. Of course, student names are never used in these reports.

Library experience: Library time in middle school is mandated by the NYSED. Students must have the equivalent of one period per week of library time with a certified library-media specialist. For 7th graders we offer a 10 week course entitled, “Library and Study Skills.” In 8th grade, teachers design specific assignments and projects which require students to use the library throughout the year.

New Drama Directors: We are happy to have this year, Mr. and Mrs. Prep directing our March production. The Preps are very experienced in theater and music. They are Huntington residents whose daughter, Molly graduated last year and is building a remarkable career in the arts. I know what the show is, but I am sworn to secrecy.

Parent Conferences: December 4th is our second round of parent conferences. These will be evening conferences beginning at 4:00 PM and ending at 8:00 PM. Parents may call the guidance office for appointments at 673-2022.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!