September 11, 2013

Dear Parents and Guardians:

The opening of Finley after summer vacation went very well thanks to the team effort of instructional and non-instructional workers. The first several weeks are exciting and somewhat stressful as we adjust student schedules and solve little problems that must be solved. The following is important information for all parents and students. I am forming a parent e-mail group. If you would like to be in that group, please simply e-mail Joanne Gurrieri at jgurrieri@hufsd.edu. Please give your name, your child’s name and a simple request to be added to the group. I will send information via e-mail when appropriate, excluding emergency information or messages from the Superintendent’s office. Remember, open school night is Wednesday, September 25, 2013. We will start in the auditorium at 7:00 PM. You will then be directed to your child’s class schedule starting with Period1 A-day. Please ask your child for a copy of the schedule prior to coming.

**E-Boards:** Many of the teachers have posted E-Boards which can be accessed from the district website. These E-Boards contain information about the subject, assignments, tests and quizzes. Simply go to the drop down menu and click “e-boards” and find the teacher’s name. I have an E-Board on which this newsletter will be posted.

**Fall Sports:** Fall sports have begun. We offer Football, Field Hockey, Boys and Girls Soccer, Girls Tennis, Cross Country for Boys and Girls. We have a Bridge Club that meets on Tuesdays in the library supervised by Mr. Jack Sage. Bridge is a great game of critical thinking and problem solving. Other clubs include: Newspaper, Art Club, Mathletes, Math Counts, Community Club, Student Council, Yorkers (History), School Store, Drama, Stage Craft and Technology. Student clubs will begin shortly. Students should listen to the morning announcements for meeting dates and times.

**New York State Test Scores:** Recently, student scores on NYS assessments in ELA and math were released to school districts. Parent reports will be coming shortly from our regional BOCES office and then to you. As you already know, across the State, student performance dropped significantly due to changes in the rigor of the assessments and adjustments in what is taught in the classrooms. All schools are required to provide support for all students who did not meet proficiency. The State released some guidance on this after all student schedules went home, therefore, I was faced with making changes during the first week of school. This was unfortunate, but necessary. We have worked hard at aligning our English and Mathematics curricula to the new standards and rigor. We are confident that students will show growth in the next testing cycle- spring 2014. There will be more information for parents coming from the district office related to the issue of better understanding these tests and measures of performance. Parents can also go the [www.nysed.gov](http://www.nysed.gov) and [www.Engageny.org](http://www.Engageny.org) for excellent parent information.
**National Junior Honor Society:** All 7th grade students are eligible for induction into the NJHS, which is a stepping stone to the NHS in high school. The academic requirements are as follows: Students must earn an overall grade point average of 95 or higher for the first three quarters of 7th grade. They must not have any grade lower than 80 in any class and be of high moral character. Parents and students will be notified by letter after the third quarter grades are complete.

**Honor Roll and High Honor Roll:** Students will be recognized each quarter for their excellent academic work. High Honor Roll students will earn a grade point average of 95 or higher. Honor Roll students will earn a grade point average of 85 to 94. Good Luck!

**President’s Award for Academic Excellence:** This is a national program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, which recognizes students for their hard work and academic achievement. This program is for 8th graders only upon moving up to the high school in June. Students who have maintained a grade point average of 90 or higher in both grades 7 and 8 will earn the President’s Award for Academic Excellence. Good Luck!

**Passing of Ms. Brockschmidt:** This summer we lost a beloved member of the staff at Finley, Ms. Ermine Brockschmidt. Ermine had worked in the district for over 40 years and served in numerous capacities. At Finley, Ermine was our receptionist, but her duties went beyond that. She taught students how to knit; she helped coordinate student locker assignments and was ready to help wherever needed. We are having a tree dedication ceremony in the front of the building in memory of Ermine on Monday, September 30 at 3:45. All are welcome.

**Code of Conduct:** The student code of conduct is located in the student planner. Each student was given a planner on the first day of school. Mr. Parham, our assistant principal and I have visited all the Social Studies classes to review the code of conduct with all students. They were asked to initial certain items as acknowledging understanding. Parents are encouraged to read the code with their children.

Have a great year. I hope to see you on open school night, Wednesday, September 25, 2013 @7 PM.

Sincerely,

John Amato,
Principal