Parents:

Well, we are in the middle of winter and, hey, it's not so bad this year. Oops, I just jinxed us. Mild temperatures, very little snow and early thoughts of spring. Anyway, we just finished the 2nd academic quarter and we are midway through the school year. March to June are very busy months for students, staff and parents. Here are the upcoming events and important and interesting items for the coming months.

**Student Activities:** The drama club has begun its rehearsals. This year they are doing “Seusical.” Mrs. Molvaut and Mrs. Cavanaugh have the stage humming. Mr. Harris is running the stage crew which handles the set design and construction, lights and sound. If any student is interested to assist the stage crew, please see Mr. Harris in the auditorium after school any day. Boys’ Volleyball, wrestling and girls’ basketball are the winter II sports. Tryouts are over and the teams have been selected. Good luck to all of our student-athletes. There will be a winter dance for 7th and 8th graders on Friday, February 26. Tickets are $5.00 and will be sold during the lunch periods. Students will need a signed permission slip. Details of the event can be found on the permission slip. If your child attended the Halloween dance you do not need another permission slip.

**Spring Field Trips:** We have planned a field trip for each grade this spring. The 7th graders will go to the Queens Science Museum and the 8th graders to the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum in NYC. The permission slips have been sent home with the students and we need the payments now, as we have to reserve the buses. The permission slips are posted on the Finley page of the district website under “principal’s message.” If you have the means and would like to include a small donation to help a needy student attend the trip, please include an additional $1 to $5 with your payment. This would be so much appreciated. If you have any questions about the trips please call or email Joanne Gurrieri at 673-2173 or jgurrieri@hufsd.edu.

**Guest Speakers on Safe use of Social Media and Cell phones:** We are planning a night event for parents and students in April to give information and guidance on how to keep your children safe and out of trouble as they use social media, text messages, photos and other popular media. Misuse of devices among students from elementary grades to high school is an epidemic and many students have faced suspension from school or worse by making bad decisions related to their devices and social media. Details on a date and time are forthcoming. We encourage students and parents to attend.
**Student Assembly:** We have planned an assembly for students and staff on April 20 during the school day. Mike Marsteller, a renowned speaker, who visits schools and speaks to students about personal goals, building strong character, and being a compassionate person, will be at Finley on April 20 to speak to all students. We look forward to having Mr. Marsteller.

**Planning for next year:** We are planning for next school year already. Students in 8th grade are visiting with their guidance counselors to make course selections and the current 7th graders are being registered for the required 8th grade courses. Mrs. Caiazzo and Mrs. Burgos are hard at work to ensure that all students are registered for the correct courses. If you have any questions about your child’s course selection for next year, please call the guidance office at 673-2022.

**NYS Assessments:** All students will be expected to take the NYS assessments in English, Mathematics and Science grade 8. Students taking the Regents exams in Algebra and Earth Science do not have to take the Math 8 assessment or the Science 8 assessment. The NYS assessments are an integral piece in determining if your child is on track to graduate from high school. Results are used to monitor individual student progress. Students should become accustomed to such exam settings as they will be expected to take Regents exams for high school graduation. Results no longer contribute to a teacher or principal’s evaluation. The results will also be used to show how well a school does in general. A school could receive an unfavorable designation if student participation falls below 95% and/or students do not perform to standards on the assessments. Additionally, a school or district could lose Title I funding if it does not meet the 95% participation rate. All students are expected to take the assessments. The dates are listed on the district calendar. If parents have any questions, please call or email Mr. Amato at 673-2020 or jamato@hufsd.edu.

Please enjoy the rest of winter. Don’t put away your shovels yet! ☺

Mr. Amato