



SUNSET RIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT 29

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Cultivating a learning community that engages the hearts and minds of students, one child at a time

Summer 2011

Dear Middlefork and Sunset Ridge Parents,

I hope you and your children are having a great summer, packed with fun family events, trips to the beach, and a visit or two to the ice cream shop! I hope your excursions also include a stop at the public library, and your children find a little time to read and practice math facts. It's important that they maintain their academic skills during summer months.

The weather has been rather challenging this summer! We've had rain, wind, floods, and as I write this letter it is hot, hot, hot outside! However our students will be cool and comfortable when they return to school, even if the temperature soars back into the upper 90's. Workers are currently installing air conditioning in the classrooms and cafeterias at both schools, and assuming construction proceeds as planned, the temperature and air quality will be significantly improved this fall. We are very grateful to the PTO for the acoustical panels which are also being installed this summer in the Middlefork cafeteria. The new panels should minimize the echo and reduce noise. Funds were raised for this project last February during the PTO's Prom 2010-2011 benefit. Thank you!

Although the first day of school is still several weeks away, we always send out this summer letter to provide you with some back-to-school information regarding school supplies, emergency forms, the student directory, registering for our website, and of course, directions for accessing class lists. You will also find letters from Dr. Greene (Middlefork parents only) and Dr. Carey (Sunset Ridge parents only). In addition, an optional insurance form is enclosed for those who are interested.

This is the last parent letter we will send through the U. S. postal system. All future parent letters will be sent via email. For that reason, it is very important that families who are new to the District provide us with their email address and returning families notify us of any changes. Please contact Jamie O'Connor with any new phone numbers or email addresses at occonnorj@sunsetridge29.org.

Availability of Information on our Website

Mark your calendar for **Monday, August 15**, the day when we plan to post all 2011-2012 back-to-school information, including class lists. This is one week later than last year. The delay is due to a few factors, including the installation of air conditioning in the schools which requires that the power be turned off for periods of time. We are also making infrastructure changes in our webpage, and are working on enhancements to make our "back to school" section easier for everyone to navigate and access necessary forms and documents. We know how eager everyone is to receive this information, and it is always our intent to get it to you as early in August as possible. Many documents and forms have already been posted, and we are posting others as soon as they are updated and ready. The complete set of back-to-school information, including class lists, will be available on August 15 by 8:00 a.m.

Register for Website Access

All parents should be registered to gain access to the restricted areas of our District website. Registration is required in order to have full viewing rights to class lists and information not available to the general public, such as certain classroom documents, student work, class videos, etc.

It is not necessary for those who have registered in the past and do not have changes to register again. Parents who are new to the district will be able to register for website access through August 6. You will be asked to provide a username and password.

If you are unable to register before the August 6 deadline, contact Anne Murphy at Middlefork School (847/881-9501, murphya@sunsetridge29.org) or Mimi Wittert at Sunset Ridge (847/881-9454, wittertm@sunsetridge29.org) and they will assist you in creating a user account.

Families that are currently registered but who need to update their information (e.g., new email addresses for proper routing of e-Alerts) should do the following:

- Click the **Sign In** button on the Sunset Ridge District 29 home page.
- Click on the **Access Info** button.
- Update any profile information that has changed.
- Click **Save**.

Class Lists and Back-to-School Forms

If you have already registered at our website you can easily access class lists and all necessary forms and back to school information beginning on **Monday, August 15 at 8:00 a.m.** Go to the website and click on *Parents* and select *Back to School Information*. Only those who have registered can access the class lists. If you registered last year, you do not need to re-register again. Please contact the Middlefork or Sunset Ridge School offices if you would prefer to receive a hard copy of any document.

This year we re-organized our Back to School Information section in an effort to make it easier to access information. Information is organized in grade level folders. When you click on your child's grade level you will find ALL of the forms and documents specifically required for students in that grade. If you have more than one child you will need to obtain the information and forms contained in their grade level folders as well.

District information and documents are located on the Back to School page below the grade level folders. Important information, such as Board meeting dates, lawn spraying schedule, food allergy guidelines, etc. are contained in this section.

First Day of School

The first day of school will be held on **Monday, August 29, 2011**. We look forward to seeing you and your children at that time!

School Supplies

One of my favorite childhood memories was gathering my new school supplies for the coming school year. I always loved a fresh box of crayons! **New this year!! Pre-ordered supply kits will be delivered directly to Middlefork and Sunset Ridge. Students whose parents ordered their "Schoolkidz" school supplies through the PTO's on-line ordering program last spring will**

find their boxes in their classroom on the first day of school. If you have any questions regarding your order, please contact Lynn Hawley at hawleylm@comcast.net.

As always, certain supplies or items are not available through this service and must be acquired separately. Gym uniforms for Sunset Ridge School students can be purchased at *North Shore Soccer & More* in Northfield. In addition, all Sunset Ridge School students should have a Winnetka/Northfield library card.

If you did not pre-order supplies last spring or are new to the District, you should go to the District website to obtain a copy of the supply list. A special link to the lists has been set up on the home page.

Emergency Contact Form

The Student Emergency Contact Form is required to be completed for each student every school year. The form is available on our website in an "auto-fill" format. This will allow you to type in all pertinent information, print out the completed form(s), sign, and turn them into the appropriate school office(s). It is important that all forms are returned by the first day of school.

Our First PTO Meeting

A message from Erin Charchut, PTO President:

Mark your calendar for the first PTO meeting of the school year! The meeting will take place on Tuesday, September 13th, at 12:30 p.m., in the Northfield Park District Community Center. Come hear all the latest and greatest news from the administration, school board, and PTO chairs. Any questions, please contact Erin Charchut at erincharchut@hotmail.com.

School Directory (Phone Book) Information Update Form

Anyone with new or revised directory information should complete a School Directory Information Update Form. You do not need to submit this form if last year's contact information is still accurate. The directory form is enclosed with this letter, and can also be found on our website under *PTO* and *PTO Forms*. This form must be returned no later than August 31 if you wish to have your child listed in our school directory. The PTO would be happy to receive your form earlier so they can begin making any changes during the summer. You may drop the form off in the PTO mailbox at school, mail it to either school, or email changes to Betsy Kochvar at bkochvar@comcast.net.

Be a Room Parent!

The PTO is looking for moms or dads who are interested in being a room parent. Sydney Clark, our PTO Vice President, asked me to pass the following message along to you:

It's time to sign up for ROOM PARENT! Be an important part of your child's classroom experience. Volunteer to be a room parent. It's a fun way to get to know your child's teacher and the kids in the classroom. If you are interested, please email Sydney Clark at sclark4994@yahoo.com or call 847/441-1397. Thanks so much for volunteering your time!

Home and School Communication

During recent years we have improved our communication vehicles, and we hope to continue enhancing our ability to communicate clearly, efficiently, and effectively. In addition to our automated phone notification system *Blackboard Connect*, we will continue our use of parent group

emails. New this year-- you will receive short weekly email updates and larger monthly newsletters, containing news from the schools, District, and PTO.

We will also use our website as a regular means of communication. Teacher web pages will provide you with information about your child's class. Furthermore, you can register to receive e-Alerts through the website. This subscription will enable you to receive email messages from the editors of various sections if they decide to announce a significant update on their pages. You will definitely want to sign up to receive e-alerts for Middlefork News from Dr. Greene and Sunset Ridge News from Dr. Carey!

Please help us stay in touch with you! The district office needs to be notified separately of any changes in contact information to ensure that our email and phone notification systems have the most current information. Please notify Jamie O'Connor of any new phone numbers or email addresses at occonnorj@sunsetridge29.org. Furthermore, we will do a test *Blackboard Connect* call and email message on August 26 to ensure our system has correct phone numbers and email addresses for all families. Let us know if you don't receive a call!

School Improvement Days

Our District calendar once again includes four early dismissal days, which the state refers to as "School Improvement Days." During these times all staff members will gather for building meetings, grade level or department articulation sessions, staff development, or curriculum planning. The staff found these days to be extremely valuable and productive last year, and we are looking forward to again having large blocks of time to address important topics. School Improvement Days will be held on the following days:

Thursday, October 6	Wednesday, February 1
Friday, December 16	Wednesday, April 25

Students will begin school at their regular time on School Improvement Days. Lunch will not be available at school on these days. The early dismissal times are as follows:

Grades K-2	11:45 a.m.	Grades 4-8	12:00 p.m.
Grade 3	11:55 a.m.		

Head Lice Checks

Head lice is not a serious medical condition. However, we recognize that eliminating lice from your child's hair and home can be a very frustrating and time-consuming process. It is frustrating for those who must deal with it here at school as well. We don't want to have our students miss class for repeated checks, but we accept that as part of our defense against the spread of head lice. District 29 nursing staff and administrators are determined to prevent the spread of lice, but we need your help. We are aware that many students have traveled or attended camp during the summer months, and it is possible they may have been exposed to head lice. We urge all parents, not just those whose children attended camp, to check their children's hair for lice before school starts and from time to time during the year as well. We would like to once again prevent lice from being brought into the school this August, and the only way that can be done is by establishing a partnership with parents. In addition, we will conduct lice checks for all students at both schools in early September. We hope that your vigilance at home, combined with an all-school check early in the school year, will help us avoid any problems with head lice!

Community Survey and Strategic Plan

The 2011-2012 school year ushers in the 4th and final year of our current Strategic Plan. A new multi-year plan will be developed this winter and spring after gathering data from a comprehensive community survey. The survey, which we plan to distribute to parents, community members, staff and students in early November, will be similar in format to our last survey in 2007-2008. The new survey will address many of the same areas as the previous survey in an effort to monitor growth and progress. In addition, it will focus on initiatives implemented and changes made during the past three years of our Strategic Plan. The survey will also give us an opportunity to obtain your input pertaining to our District's future as we consider the significant influence of global learning, the Common Core Standards, and 21st Century Skills on our programs.

The new Strategic Plan will be our bridge to the future. We anticipate that the new plan will carry us far beyond the goals of our past plan, introducing new ways to engage students and providing global perspectives. Watch for more information about the survey and Strategic Planning process over the upcoming weeks and months. We look forward to hearing your voice, and we hope you might consider joining the planning team as we chart a new course for our students' future!

When we developed our first strategic plan in the spring of 2008 we wrote a mission statement. As we plan and prepare for the 2011-2012 school year, that mission statement stands as a constant reminder of our purpose and charge:

*Cultivating a learning community that engages the hearts and minds of students,
one child at a time*

Our mission statement is more than a catchy phrase; it continues to guide our work and direct our efforts toward what really matters.

Welcome back to school!

Sincerely,



Linda J. Vieth, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools