

# Guidance Newsletter

**Stissing  
Mountain  
Middle School**

November 15, 2009

## Tuesday, November 10th

Last week our school and community experienced an unprecedented series of events. These events and circumstances were, thankfully, resolved in a peaceful manner and without any physical injuries. I am certain that I speak for all members of the Stissing Mountain faculty and staff when I thank all of the law enforcement professionals that responded to our calls for help. We would also like to thank the parents and families of our students for their patience and support. Also, many thanks to the outside agencies, including the American Red Cross, Astor Services and Dutchess County Mental Health Services for their immediate and continued support of our students and staff.

As we move forward and get back to the business of

educating and caring for our children it important to recognize that the effects of an experience like this on students and adults can be very long term in nature. People of all ages cope with stress in different ways. It is important that we all stay vigilant in responding to the needs of our students. Along with this newsletter you should be receiving information and strategies for talking to children about Tuesday's events.

If your children, or anyone in your household is having any difficulties with stress or anxiety related to last week's events please do not hesitate to contact the Middle School or Guidance Offices. We have contact information that can be useful for you and your family.

## Guest Speakers Wanted

Do you or anyone you know have an artistic talent you could share with us? Can you spin wool or weave? Do you know how to make handmade paper? Are you a calligrapher,

candle maker, or make your own fishing lures?

Guest speakers who have some artistic talent or any cultural traditions to share are wanted in our Art classes. Please contact Gina Martin, our

### Reason for Thanks

With Thanksgiving only one week away, let me express my thanks now to so many of you for your kind thoughts and prayers over the last week. I am so proud to be part of this school district and to work for you and your children. We live in a world filled with many acts of violence and although we can do things to improve our safety, we must recognize that terrible things will happen in life. I want you to know that our teachers and staff did what they were taught to do in an emergency situation such as this one. Because of their actions and those of our State and County Police, I am able to give you thanks at this time. As Mr. Mahon has pointed out above, please watch and listen closely to your child as we move through the year. If you sense that your child is not acting like a "true middle age child", please get in touch so that we can try to help.

Sincerely,

Bob Hess

middle school Art Teacher if you are interested in sharing your talent or experience. She can be reached at extension 138.

### **Contact Information**

The Middle School Guidance Counselor, Tim Mahon, can be reached at 398-7181 Extension 330

## Attendance

This newsletter marks the end of the first quarter of the school year. Along with class grades on student report cards, it is important to take notice of the attendance record included on the report card.

It is easy to see a clear relationship between a student's attendance and that student's grade in a class. While some students seem able to complete work that they have missed due to absences, they still miss instruction and examples that the teacher will provide during class time.

Lateness also contributes to missed instruction. Students who are chronically late miss important time in

class. Please make sure that your children are getting to school on time.

Health concerns are often cited as a reason that students are absent or late. Understandably, some school absences are necessary but some preventative measures can be taken to maximize attendance.

First, make sure that your child is in the habit of eating something for breakfast in the morning. Ideally a student is able to eat a complete breakfast, but a simple piece of fruit may be enough to provide a child energy.

Also, make sure that your child is

getting enough sleep. From homework, to after school activities, to other obligations, and of course video games and television, children have a lot to do after school. Make sure your child has a regular sleeping routine in which he or she gets 8 hours of sleep a night.

Lastly, encourage your child to exercise everyday. Regular exercise can help enhance focus and increase memory. It is also a great way for students to relieve some of the stress in their lives.

## Homework as Part of a Grade

Students often have a hard time adjusting back into the routine of the school year or getting used to a new school. New grading procedures are often one area that students seem to struggle with. Starting in sixth grade homework completion is counted as a significant part of a student's grade. This is necessary because of the pace at which middle school classes move. Homework is given to enhance lessons and topics taught during the day. Homework is important because it builds a bridge between each day's lesson, increasing understanding and helping students move logically on to the next step in a sequence.

Very rarely will a middle school student have no homework on a school night. With up to 8 classes a day, chances are there will be a homework assignment or two to do at night. Ask your child to see their agenda/assignment book at night. They should have written down their assignments. Homework assignments are also available on the school website ([www.ppcsd.org](http://www.ppcsd.org)) and on the Homework Hotline (see below for phone extensions).

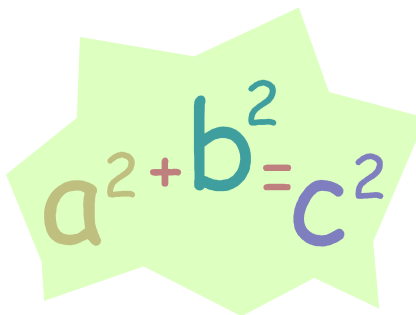
As each quarter of the school year draws to a close, students and parents often ask teachers about the possibility of com-

pleting extra credit in hopes of raising a grade. Students and parents should first make sure that all of the regularly assigned work has been completed. Most teachers, understandably, will not consider extra credit until all regular assignments have been completed. Missed assignments should be made up as soon as possible. Understandably, after a reasonable amount of time credit can not always be given for assignments that are significantly late. Credit is given at the teacher's discretion.

## Math Extra Help

After school math help is available for our middle school students, thanks to the high school's Math Honor Society.

Wednesday and Thursday from 2:20 to 3:00 in the Library students can get help on homework or further explanation of class topics. The elementary school buses are available for students who stay after.



## Homework Hotline

Don't forget, you can check your child's assignments on the Homework Hotline. Just call the Middle School at 398-7181

For 6th grade dial extension 370

For 7th grade dial extension 371

For 8th grade dial extension 372

Or log on to the Internet at [www.ppcsd.org](http://www.ppcsd.org)