

September 30, 2010

Dear Parents:

The Lewis F. Cole Middle School enjoys an outstanding reputation for the quality of our instructional program, the professionalism and dedication of our faculty, the academic achievement of our students, and the involvement of our parents. Here are just a few examples of what makes Lewis F. Cole a school of excellence -

- Lewis F. Cole Middle School was a "Top School" for the state of New Jersey in the 2009 Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth Talent Search.
- Received a Gold medal from Columbia University for Intermedia, our student magazine. Written, designed, and illustrated by students.
- In the music department, six students made "All County."
- The math team took First in Bergen County. Two of our students were 1st, 2nd and 3rd in the State and individual took 2nd in the State and went to Orlando for National Championship. Our students took 37th in the entire nation and our team took 13th in NJ.
- In 2009-2010 17 students were recognized as Presidential Awardees for educational excellence and another 20 were recognized as Presidential Awardees for physical excellence.
- Three eighth graders were selected for regional chorus and 1 was selected for regional orchestra and two were selected for Bergen County Chorus. One 8th grader was selected for All State Orchestra. Band, Chorus, and Orchestra all received superior rating at the Dorney Park High Note Festival.
- 27 Students received recognition awards in various disciplines by the staff. One 8th grader was honored by the Johns Hopkins University talent search by scoring on the SAT at or above the levels of the average college bound senior.

To memorialize our high level of student achievement and to fulfill requirements under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), this letter is being sent to all parents of Lewis F. Cole Middle School students. We also wish to inform you of efforts and initiatives under way to bring all our students to even higher levels of achievement.

No Child Left Behind requires that students in every school demonstrate "Annual Yearly Progress" in mathematics and language arts as a total student body and within various sub-groups of students. Annual Yearly Progress is based primarily on the results of the New Jersey state assessment given to students in grade seven and eight. Students must meet the state's academic proficiency benchmarks, as well as other indicators such as test participation and attendance/dropout rate, for the school to be considered to have attained Annual Yearly Progress. These benchmarks are raised every three years.

Lewis F. Cole Middle School students met or exceeded benchmarks in thirty-eight out of forty indicators, a success rate of 95%. Because not all forty benchmarks were met in some grades, the school is “in need of improvement.” We are absolutely committed to improvement, and we are working with our students who need extra assistance to boost their achievement. Improvement initiatives underway for all students include –

- Lewis F. Cole Middle School began the Trans-Math Program for all Special Education and Essentials students.
- After School Tutoring Program will begin to address the needs of particular students and whose grades and scores on the NJ ASK need improvement.
- New Interactive Boards were installed to help engage students and student learning.
- The faculty has begun to work as a Professional Learning Community, emphasizing our purpose of learning together and growing as professionals.
- A curriculum program called “Lit Life” will provide direction and curriculum growth through literacy in all content areas.
- An activity period is being infused in the course of the regular school day on a weekly basis.

We are committed to these improvement initiatives despite the severe reduction in state aid that Fort Lee experienced this year. The State of New Jersey has cut almost all financial support for the Fort Lee Schools and for nearly all high-achieving school districts throughout the state. Last year, our school district received \$3.2 million in state aid. This year, we are receiving less than \$400,000.

Your support and input is welcome as we work to help all students successfully achieve challenging performance goals. If you haven’t already done so, please join our PTA and become an active participant in school life. Research shows that students whose parents are actively involved in their education achieve at higher levels than those whose parents choose not to participate. As a parent, you are encouraged to contact your child’s counselor, teachers, or school principal to provide input and see how you can become involved. Maintaining a high-quality school is a job for the entire community.

We will continue to communicate with you throughout the year regarding the school improvement efforts underway and we hope you will join us in supporting our students and teachers as we work toward reaching our goals for the year.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Giacomelli
Principal

