

October 2016

October Greetings to Our Middle School Parents and Guardians,

It is hard to believe that September is behind us and the fall season is in full swing. This season is special to me and definitely my favorite of the four. It provides many opportunities for family fun such as apple picking, pumpkin picking, fall decorating and, of course, preparations for Halloween. It is also nice to finally turn off the air-conditioning and open the windows for some fresh air. We are excited as a middle school family to share all of these joys with your children and help them as they get settled and progress academically, socially and emotionally throughout the 2016-2017 school year.

October is always the most action-packed month due to the number of assemblies and events that we have planned outside of the instructional classroom. October features our Week of Respect, Anti-Violence and Vandalism Week and Red Ribbon Week, which promotes anti-drugs and alcohol. During the month of October, we bring in numerous guest speakers and promote various assemblies to support all of these messages. At the middle school level, we believe that it is so important to also focus on our students' maturation and to have them think critically about some of the peer choices they will be facing over the next two years and in high school. All of the events taking place are listed on our events calendar, which is being sent as an attachment to the October e-mail. The Middle Years publication, also attached to the October e-mail provides great talking points and advice for parents and guardians of middle school children. Please take the time to discuss some of these themes with your child so that our messages and lessons get reinforced at home. The partnerships we share in raising your children are vital to their success and growth. I look forward to sharing ideas and strategies that ensure the success of your children in our middle school environment.

Looking back on September, we definitely were taken off guard by the number of last minute registrations that pushed the 7th grade class to almost 320 students. This is the largest class that I have had the pleasure of leading in my eight years as a middle school principal. This definitely created some concerns in the beginning of the school year that we worked hard to immediately resolve. These issues included making sure all students were issued Chromebooks, ensuring class sizes did not get too large and adjusting seating assignments to keep the lunch room from being overcrowded. I always preach that we work better as a team rather than individuals, and that concept came to light during the first few days of school. We were quickly settled and all of our students became set in their daily routines. Our 7th grade students were tremendous adapters of change and transitioned rather smoothly from the elementary to secondary levels of education. I am proud to lead our faculty, staff and students throughout this school year and know we will come together more strongly as a collective unit as the school year progresses.

The middle school's PTA is a tremendous organization that works to support your children with many of the events planned throughout the school year. The first of these events will be the Halloween Dance planned for Friday, October 28 at 7 p.m. in our school's gymnasium. This is a free event for our students, which includes food, beverages and a D.J. At the middle school level, we do not allow students to wear costumes to school due to the distractions they cause in the hallways and classrooms. However, students are permitted to wear costumes to the dance as long as they are appropriate and safe. During the month of September, the PTA worked hard to plan an extremely successful car wash that will provide much needed funds to support events such as the Halloween dance. Your membership to the PTA is vital to its success. Our first PTA meeting of the school year will take place on Thursday,

October 6 at 7 p.m. in our school's media center. This meeting will feature a presentation from two of our faculty members and administrative interns on Internet safety and cyber security for your children. I hope to see all of you there for this meeting.

Over the last three school years, Fort Lee High School has hosted an open house to present our parents and guardians with the numerous educational opportunities and advantages offered. This year, the open house will take place on Tuesday, October 18 at 7 p.m. in the high school auditorium. After the initial greeting, you will be afforded the opportunity to tour Fort Lee High School, speak to high school staff and administrators and visit advisors for the numerous clubs, activities and athletics offered. There will also be a separate presentation for the three academies offered at Fort Lee High School, which include the International Baccalaureate Academy, Academy of Finance and Theatre and Performing Arts Academy. This is a tremendous opportunity for our high school to showcase all of its tremendous offerings. I invite all of our middle school's 7th and 8th grade parents and guardians to attend this event and see for yourselves the advantages of having your child attend Fort Lee High School.

Our district will also be hosting a parent/guardian workshop evening on Wednesday, October 26 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Fort Lee High School. This event will begin with a presentation in the high school's auditorium from our district's SAC coordinator, Mr. David Cuzzo, on substance abuse prevention for your children. We will then move to the high school's cafeteria for a hands-on workshop on the technology applications your child is using daily in school. This will cover Google Classroom Parent Portal training, Google Doc information and a Genesis Parent Portal overview. Our hope is that this workshop will help you to better understand the technology so that you are more prepared to assist your child with schoolwork at home. A flyer will be sent with more information.

Along with this letter, you will receive the October events calendar, October Middle Pages publication, October PTA Agenda and parent/guardian workshop flyer. I ask that you print the October calendar and make yourselves aware of all the great things happening throughout the month. Thank you for your continued support of our schools and community and I look forward to October at LFCMS.

Sincerely,

Robert Daniello
Principal
Lewis F. Cole Middle School