

August, 2011

Dear Hawthorne Families:

Welcome to the 2011-2012 School Year! As that summer days are winding down, it is my hope that you had the opportunity to relax, enjoy your families and friends and reconnect with each other.

Each school year brings a fresh promise of what we can look forward to and how much more we can grow. This year, our school theme is, "POSSIBILITIES." We embrace all things which make it possible for us to achieve, to change, and to improve. The Hawthorne Staff is committed to ongoing professional growth and development focused on providing meaningful learning experiences for our students. As our society continues to embark on the importance of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning, we also understand the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning goes beyond technology. It means exploring all the "possibilities," so that our students can apply their learning into inquiry, leading to problem solving, collaboration, and decision making.

I am very excited and eager to welcome our kindergarten students and their families. The Class of 2020 will once again remind us of how exciting life and learning can be. The bright, smiling faces of our five year olds validate the road that our families have traveled in the past. It is a road paved with good intentions and dedication to the ongoing support for the academic excellence that Hawthorne seeks to provide.

I am extremely grateful to all of you, members of the PTA, for your commitment to keeping our community whole. The loss of Minimum Funding has compromised the educational support that our students receive in the classroom. Thank you for making maintenance of a fully funded staff a priority. The vision shared by our new CEO, Jean-Claude Brizard, "Every child has access to world class learning and will graduate college and career ready," speaks to our own core values. An integral component of world class learning will be the on-going development of Social and Emotional Learning. This school year, we will launch the OLWEUS Bullying Prevention Program. OBPP is the most researched and best-known bullying prevention program available today. It is recognized by the Center for Study and Prevention of Violence as one of only eleven Blueprint Model Programs. As we know, there has been a nationwide focus on anti-bullying. At Hawthorne, as in any environment, it is recognized that it will take everyone's support in order to model behavior that promotes respect, trust, and tolerance. There is no quick fix to any initiative. The implementation of OBPP needs to be seen as a long-term effort- not something that is "completed" in a year. Our faculty will receive training throughout the year. We will continue to work closely with the DePaul Counseling Department as a part of the initiative. It will take a concerted and coordinated effort to implement this program and see results over time. Our parents will also have the opportunity to engage in this process through the SEL Parent Committee.

I would like to extend a personal invitation to all of our parents to come to the Curriculum Night on Tuesday, Sept. 13 at 6:30 PM for K-3 and Wednesday, Sept. 14 at

6:30 PM for parents of students in Grades 4-8. It is an evening to receive information regarding what is taught in the classroom, to hear of changes and updates with regard to our school programs and teaching staff, and to sign up at the PTA Volunteer Fair and for tuition based before or after school classes. I look forward to seeing a big crowd.

A special welcome to Kristin Pillsbury, our new PTA President. Kristin is committed to working hard in order to ensure that our parent community remains enthusiastic in its partnership and support of the school. Her team of PTA Officers are dedicated to providing our students the educational resources they need in order to be successful. A very special thank you to Laura Durudogan, our previous PTA Chairperson, for the outstanding leadership she has demonstrated in the past two years. Laura and her team brought tremendous energy and collaboration amongst our parents. We are grateful for these individuals who volunteer their time to support and help nurture our learning environment.

When you get a chance to look at our school calendar, please take note of the Local School Council Meetings. Roger Wilen will continue to serve as our Chairperson. We are grateful for his leadership and for the leadership of the School Board Members and thank them for their service to our school community.

Please be reminded of the following things:

- Bussing will be provided for students who live within 1.5 miles-6miles from school. Bus assignments will be mailed to families from the CPS Dept. of Transportation informing students of pick-up and drop off times and locations.
- Once again, parents of students in K-4 are asked to provide the school with a bus note if their child/children are not riding the school bus after school.
- Breakfast in the Classroom will continue unless principal discretion is granted by the new administration. Please let your children know that BIC is not mandatory. The school nurse and counselor will update the medical files regarding students with food allergies and inform the teachers.
- We will continue to maintain a modified closed campus schedule. The first morning bell will ring at 8:15 AM, which will provide students with staff supervision on the playground. The kindergarten students will be supervised separately in the north basement. The official school start time is at 8:45 AM and ends at 2:30 PM.
- Flyers informing you of program offerings for tuition-based programs will be sent home at a later time. Registration for these programs will be available during Curriculum Night.

On behalf of Linda Feaman, our wonderful assistant principal, and the Hawthorne Staff, I wish your children a school year filled with new "Possibilities" of how much more each one of them can grow as learners. May their understanding and depth of knowledge grow, may they reshape themselves and continue to evolve into dynamic individuals. At the same time, may their imagination, spontaneity and revelations enable them to see the world differently and change it.

As always, I am humbled by my work as principal. Your support inspires me to continue to ensure that Hawthorne remains a school of choice for many families in Chicago.

Thank you. Enjoy the rest of your summer. I look forward to seeing your children on Tuesday, Sept. 6.

Sincerely,

Anna Alvarado