

From the Principal

Greeting from the middle school! This letter serves as just one of many reminders that summer is coming to an end and another school year will be starting soon. I hope our students and their families have enjoyed their extended time together and, perhaps, experienced a few fun and exciting summertime adventures! While the students have been away, our custodians have been busily cleaning and polishing the building to prepare it for the coming return of teachers and students.

This will be an exciting year in the middle school due, in part, to several new staff members who will be joining us. New teachers include: Megan Chatterton, 5th grade; TJ Anderson, 6th grade; Naomi Stelzer, 7th grade communications; Anna Harlan, 8th grade communications; and Tony Dehler, math specialist. Matt Hogg, 5th grade, and Amy Martinson, special education, will be filling in for teachers who have taken leaves of absence for this year. We are looking forward to having these people share their expertise and experience with both our faculty and students. When you have an opportunity to meet them, please welcome them to our community.

In June we were informed that our students had, once again, performed quite well on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA's) that we administered this past spring. Soon you will receive the report that the State Department of Education has supplied detailing your child's results on the tests. Please take time to review these results with your child and provide appropriate feedback and encouragement. The report also includes information about a website your child can access to get instruction and practice related specifically to the areas in the tests that indicate room for improvement. If you have questions about the test results, please contact me or Brian Franklin, our dean of students and assessment coordinator.

This last message is for the students: In the next two weeks play hard, read another book, do your chores, and thank your parents for an exciting summer!

I'll see you in September; it's going to be another great year!

Mr. Johnson

New Parent Portal Accounts

This year our school district is implementing a new software program, Infinite Campus, which will be used to maintain all our student and family information. An exciting component of this software is a new Parent Portal, which will allow parents better access to their children's grades, lunch account balances, standardized test scores, attendance records, contact information, and immunization records. **Since this software completely replaces the previous parent portal, it will be necessary for all parents to set up new accounts in the Campus Portal.** Your first (and best) opportunity to do this will occur during the open house events taking place at the middle school on September 1 and 2 (See Open House information below.) To register for a new account you will go to a designated computer lab, receive an identification code, and use a school computer to set up a user name and password. This process will take at least 10 minutes, so please plan your open house visit accordingly. **If you have more than one child in our schools, you will still only need to activate your Portal account one time.**

If you are unable to attend an open house, you can activate your Portal account by visiting or calling one of the school offices any time **after September 15.**

7th Grade Vaccinations

Every year we have a few 7th grade students who have not had their vaccinations updated by the start of the school year. This always creates an uncomfortable situation because state law requires either an updated immunization record or a signed request for exemption before a student is allowed to start 7th grade classes. Please send in or drop off updated records **prior** to the back-to-school open house. If you choose to bring the records to the open house, it will slow the process of receiving your child's class schedule. **Please be aware that if we do not have updated records, your child will not be able to attend classes until that process is completed.** If you have **any** questions regarding your child's vaccinations, please contact the health office at 286-4100 ext. #1804 prior to the start of school.

Open House

On the evening of September 1 there will be an orientation from 4:30 to 7:30 for **5th grade students only**. Students will be able to pick-up their schedule packets starting at 4:30. We will have a 45 minute presentation in the Performing Arts Center starting at 5:45. This presentation will include a brief orientation to the middle school and an introduction of the staff. Following the presentation, students and parents will leave with their communications teacher for a tour and an introduction to 5th Grade. Students and parents will have time to find their lockers and visit with staff.

On September 2 there will be an open house for **students in grades 6-8** from 6:00 to 8:00. Students and parents will be able to pick-up their schedule packets and visit with staff. There will be a presentation for all **6th grade** students and their parents at **7:30** in the PAC regarding the sixth grade educational field trip to the Long Lake Environmental Center. **This presentation is very important for all sixth grade families to attend.** **7th grade** students and their parents will meet with their 1st hour teacher for an orientation to seventh grade at **7:00**. **8th grade** students and their parents will meet with the 8th grade teachers and Mr. Johnson in the Performing Arts Center at **6:30**.

Students who are unable to attend open house may pick their schedules up before school on the morning of September 7. Fifth Grade students that cannot attend the Open House on September 1 are welcome to visit on September 2. **Please attend orientation with your children.** The Dassel-Cokato Middle School staff are looking forward to meeting you!

Address Changes

Please contact Cindy Swanson at 286-4100 ext. 1602 with any address changes (physical or email) that you may have experienced over the summer. If you have new neighbors with school age children, please remind them to contact the school office, so that their children are registered before school starts.

Choir and Band

Instrument night for prospective band students will take place on September 1 from 4:30 to 8:00 in the band room. Students from all middle school grades are invited to attend. Even if a student did not start band in 5th grade, it is never too late to start learning how to play an instrument and join band! Band participation is on a volunteer basis, and students choosing to join the band are expected to participate throughout the entire year. We strongly encourage students to take advantage of the musical opportunities offered at DCMS!

From the Kitchen

The "Charger Café Ladies" would like you to know the following:

- If your child can not drink milk and needs a juice alternative or needs to use a microwave to prepare food, please send a **NEW** note to school.
- When your child goes on a field trip the kitchen staff can prepare a cold lunch with one day's advance notice.
- There is always a need for substitute kitchen workers, so any parents or grandparents who might be interested should call Noni Smith at 286- 4100, ext 1013.
- A cold breakfast is available to all students every morning at 7:45. Students who qualify for free or reduced lunch are entitled to receive a free breakfast.
- Parents who think they might qualify for the free or reduced price lunch program should contact Noni Smith at the number listed above.