



*Passion. Pride. Ownership.
Balance. Perseverance.*



September 2013

“Be The Best *You* You Can Be!”



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Welcome Putnam Ave. Families

Wow! That is truly the word that came to mind as the Putnam Avenue staff reflected on last Thursday night's back-to-school night/ cookout event. The air was abuzz with laughter and conversation as over 400 people joined us in learning about classes, trying out new dance moves, and cheering for our school community, and THAT deserves a cheer in and of itself! We saw this event as a way of setting the tone for the kind of year we want to have: one in which we work together-staff, students, families and community members-so that each of us, and our school community, can be *the best us that we can be*. Thank you for coming out, for sharing your ideas with us, and for celebrating the excitement and promise of the 2013-2014 school year!

Project Adventure Comes to Putnam Avenue

On October 4th, Putnam Avenue students will have the opportunity to participate in Project Adventure, an innovative program that uses adventure based activities to build confidence, collaboration, and community. David Richardson, our own physical education teacher, is a certified Project Adventure Leader and will work with students and staff throughout the day. Each grade level will participate in the program for 90 minutes and continue to build on this year's theme to “be the best *you* you can be”.



Grade 6

By:
Ms. Yesselman

A Wonderful Beginning!

Hello Putnam Avenue Sixth Grade Community, and welcome to the 2013-2014 school year! The beginning of the school year has been full of community building, getting acquainted with new teachers and new peers, and preparing ourselves for an awesome and challenging school year. In less than one month's time, we have: started to build positive and supportive advisory communities, cheered for our school and ourselves, learned new routines and expectations, and explored what it means to be a sixth grader at the Putnam Avenue Upper School. Our advisory theme for this year is, "identity." This theme, coupled with our school wide theme, "be the best *you* you can be," are framing ideas for all that we will do this year. The sixth grade team knows that in order for rigorous learning to occur, all members of the sixth grade community must feel known and celebrated for who they are, and must feel safe to take risks, make mistakes, and learn from these mistakes.

A strong focus on "identity," means that we are challenging students to get to know and share about themselves as students, and as young people who have much going on in their lives. This work is enhanced by the idea of our school wide theme, "be the best *you* you can be," as we are committed to being educators who push all sixth graders to work hard to achieve their full potential. At our first all-school townhall meeting, the sixth graders demonstrated both of these themes with gusto! They cheered wildly for their teachers and other students, they were attentive and engaged, and they took risks by sharing

ideas in front of our entire school community.

In classes, we are hard at work learning about sixth grade expectations, routines, and of course, science, math, ELA and social studies! We know that learning occurs in classes that feel safe and structured, so we have focused a lot on setting up environments in which students understand what is expected of them, and know where to go with any questions they may have. As was indicated in the note that was sent home regarding the fifth to sixth grade transition, we believe that clear and consistent systems of organization are fundamental to the success of all sixth graders.

Please take the time to check in with your student about his/her agenda book (where they should be recording all homework assignments each and everyday), and about what they are learning in school. In addition to regularly checking agenda books, we suggest also asking your student about what he/she is reading. Sixth graders should be reading each and every night, and a quick five minute reading check-in will help to build accountability for this expectation! All sixth grade advisors serve as the point person for communication between families and our school-should you have any questions or ideas regarding your sixth grader, we encourage you to reach out to his/her advisor through email!



Grade 7

By:
Mr. Santos & Ms. Rose

Organizational Support Strategies for 7th Graders

As we are all aware organizational skills for many young people as well as adults alike are a difficult skill to master. Here at Putnam Ave we take care and pride in helping our students get themselves organized. It is common teaching practice that the last 10 minutes or so of class be dedicated to organization, explaining homework directions, and even begin homework. The following is a rough guide that students and families can follow in order to see to it that students are well organized and successful each and every day.

The traits and characteristics of a successful student almost always begin with proper organization. A binder is a major factor in developing organization. By dividing subjects and giving space to documents that must be kept handy students can quickly and easily access any task. Keeping a class schedule not only in their lockers but also in a binder will help students navigate each day in advance. Another useful strategy is the use of a “study buddy”. Someone the students trust to help keep them organized, focused, and motivated. Study buddies can assist with forgotten homework, books, page assignments, and handouts.

Well organized students are often students that problem solve small small issues themselves, and who follow up on matters that affect their grades. By participating in class, being respectful to teachers, and taking responsibility students can quickly begin to take pride in their success and growth. Good organization means good

notes, and good notes means good listening.

Lastly, a student's homework space should be as important as Superman's “Fortress of Solitude”. It should be as permanent as possible, have no distractions, and be abundant in supplies. Computers of course are a major component to any organized students arsenal. The trick is to use it for more than instant messaging. They can be an excellent communication tool for study buddies, group project members, and teachers etc... They are helpful in word processing attractive reports and essays. And lastly they are vital for online resources like homework help, the schools website, and teacher webpages.

Setting goals is a big objective at Putnam Ave. and families can help by helping create them, motivating students to achieve them, and rewarding those successes.

7th Grade Town Hall

Every student at Putnam Ave. is part of an advisory group. For our first Town Hall, Advisories worked in groups to come up with a skit pertaining to the seventh grade theme of Decision-Making. Each group was assigned a scenario and was instructed to show both right and wrong decisions to make in dealing with the situation. From “constructive criticism” to “bullying” to “gossip”, students were given 45 minutes to work together and come up with a skit to share with the rest of the seventh grade. It was a good start to the year, and everyone got to see some great teamwork and leadership emerge from the groups.



Grade 8

By:
Ms. Calioro

Developing Leaders

We are so excited about the Putnam Ave. class of 2014! It has been amazing to get to know each 8th grader and the unique qualities they bring to our community. Teachers have spent time reviewing routines, policies and required supplies. All students were given an agenda book and our expectation is that homework is written down everyday. As part of getting our students ready for high school we are stressing the importance of being organized and making school a priority. We all need to persevere and take ownership to ensure a fantastic year and readiness for 9th grade.

We recognize that 8th grade is a busy year and can be overwhelming for some. The 8th grade team is available to support students both before and after school. Please contact one of the grade staff to talk more about how we can support students and families.

The 8th grade students have been introduced to our theme for the year of self and society. Throughout this year we will help students develop an understanding of themselves and the world around them. By doing so we will build a community of leaders. We ask that students “be the best you, you can be” everyday and to seek help and support when needed.

Each advisory performed at our whole-school pep rally about what it means to be a leader. Students took pride in being the leaders of the school. Also in advisory, 8th graders have set goals for themselves and are developing plans for meeting those goals. We will use advisory as a time to regulate and check-in on goals and progress. This time will also be used to build community and work on 8th grade projects.

The Putnam Ave. after-school programs will begin on October 1st. There will be a late bus at 4:30pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. In order to maintain balance, we strongly encourage 8th graders to be involved and to take advantage of the variety of opportunities available. These programs can fulfill the extra-curricular requirement of the portfolio as well as, potentially, some community service hours.

Each student was given an envelope with class syllabi, 8th grade expectations and portfolio requirements. It is imperative that the acknowledgement form is signed by both students and parents and returned to advisors.

Portfolio work will begin this month in advisory. While we will set aside time in school to work on aspects of the portfolio, students must also work outside of school. Putnam Ave. staff is available to support students with this process, as is the staff of our after-school programs.

We Are Putnam Ave.

C T J B X F O N O A S Z E P B
 L V Q K X N A W O I A C K E R
 P S R E H T N A P I N Y V R K
 N L E A D E R S L A S T R S X
 P X Z A R O P E L H O I W E V
 O J H S U G G A V N C T C V N
 Y G H U E A B T S D I N M E C
 E I M M C E D I R P E E K R D
 P Q Y Y N D E M P W T D H A S
 W A F V N V G Q M E Y I S N C
 X Q S L G P A Q R M F Z E C Q
 Y K L S E R V A V X D G Z E A
 G V P N I S V B J Z P Q G Y B
 E A R Z M O C P G X J J D T S
 E P E H Z W N K K J P W O M P

BALANCE
 LEADERS
 PANTHERS
 PRIDE

DECISION
 LEGACY
 PASSION
 SELF

IDENTITY
 OWNERSHIP
 PERSEVERANCE
 SOCIETY



Question of the Month

How do you feel about the first month of school?

Grade 6

"The best part of the beginning of the school year has been meeting new people and making new friends!"

"I feel used to this school now and it's exciting to change classes!"

"I was excited to move from class to class-math, social studies, science and ELA!"

"The best part of the beginning of the school year has been Mr. Guthrie playing basketball with us at recess!"

"It was hard to figure out how to open my locker at first-but it's easy now!"

"I've been working hard to do all of my homework and turn it in on time, and I've met my goal of doing this!"

Grade 7

"I enjoy advisory and gym class."

"I love social studies especially the movie we are watching based on religion."

"I enjoyed advisory and math. I like all my teachers."

"I enjoy the independence in the hallway as well as with my work."

Grade 8

"My school year is going well. My teachers are reasonable and they understand us. They show us respect and we do it for them."

"This year has been amazing so far! I'm going to make sure it stays that way."

"8th grade has been great so far!"

"I am learning a lot in all of my classes."

Advisory for All

At Putnam Avenue Upper School, advisory is not just a class for 20 minutes a day...it's an all encompassing program that help students feel significant, like they belong, build autonomy, and have fun. It allows staff to build relationships with their students, and provides opportunities for students to build smaller communities within the Putnam Avenue family. This year, the school's theme is, Be the Best You You Can Be.

Within that, each grade level has its own focus based on developmental needs. The 6th Grade theme is Identity, the 7th grade theme is Decision Making, and the 8th grade focus is Self in Society. As the year goes on and each grade level has its focus, advisory will concentrate on different concepts. The month of September is dedicated to Community Building. The first week of school provided ample opportunities for our advisories to build community through identifying our hopes and dreams, goal setting, consensus building, and a whole lot of fun. The culmination of that first week was an all school assembly where our 8th graders, the leaders of Putnam Avenue, performed skits titled "Who am I?" and staff reintroduced our core values in the form of raps, videos, poems, and skits.

Even our first fire drill of the year couldn't put a damper on the celebration of our community. As advisory continues throughout the year, our staff will use the Developmental Designs approach to the program. This means that goal setting, reflection, greetings, shares, and activities that are relevant, timely, and fun will be a regular part of our routine. We are fortunate and thankful to have such time built into our schedule, as research has shown that advisory programs not only help students build the social and emotional skills needed to be successful, but also build a school climate that increases academic performance. For more information on this approach, feel free to visit the Developmental Designs website at www.originsonline.org

By:
Ms. Wheeler



Social Contract

- Be positive and collaborate with encouragement
- Be a role model by trying your best...never less
- Give respect to get respect
- Balance work and play

1 Grade 7 Theme:

Decision
Making

2 Grade 8 Theme:

Self & Society

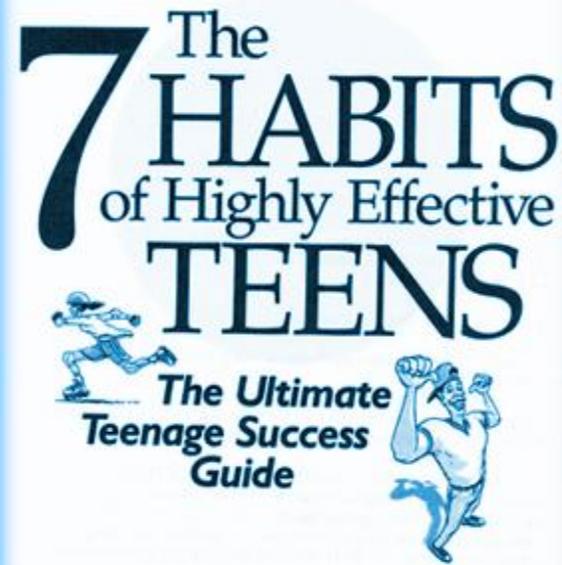
3 Grade 6 Theme:

Identity

Grade 6 Learns 7 Habits

As part of the Putnam Avenue transition program, all 6th graders are participating in a course based on Sean Covey's, 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens. The 7 habits taught in this course are; be proactive; begin with the end in mind, put first things first, think win-win, seek first to understand, then to be understood; synergize, and sharpen the saw. The kick-off to this program began with discussions, videos, and engaging activities that provided a foundation for all students around the understanding of habits, paradigms, and principles. Each month, this newsletter will highlight what your students have learned in the program so as to encourage home and school connections and conversation starters! Better yet, feel free to get a copy of the book for yourself and read along with your student. It's widely available in libraries across the city and the 7 Habits are not just useful for teens to learn.

By:
Ms. Wheeler



Putnam Avenue Upper School

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Family Newsletter

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