

Hello everyone,

I hope everyone enjoyed their Winter Break and it was filled with fun, memories, and relaxation. We had a busy December with numerous events going on and it appears January will be just as busy.

In December we held our RICAS and P/SAT assessment celebrations and information nights to celebrate both student proficiency and growth. It was a pleasure to recognize our students who helped our school earn some of its highest scores on both assessments, as well as their tremendous growth. We also celebrated our students who earned all As and Bs on their report cards with the Honor Roll breakfast. This year we had more students to earn an honor roll during the 1st Quarter than we did last year.

Both our boys and girls basketball teams have started their season. We welcome back Mr. Kyle Valenzula, our boys basketball coach and our new girls' basketball coach Mr. Nashua Carter, and our new Athletic Director Cesar Mejia. We are looking forward to an exciting season from both teams.

At December's SIT meeting we communicated information about RIDE's CSIP visit. We were placed on a Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) due to our four year graduation rate from the COVID year. Since then we have improved our graduation rate by 19% to above 85% of our students graduating within four years. However, RIDE will review and evaluate our Comprehensive School Improvement Plan and provide us feedback to help us achieve our goals to continue to improve.

We will be forming focus groups for students, staff, leadership and families. At the beginning of January I will communicate out more information about the visit and how to participate in a focus group. RIDE's intentions are to provide unbiased feedback, acknowledge our good work, and provide a plan of support in the areas we need to improve in.

RIDE will be visiting our school January 29th-30th. During their first day of the CSIP visit RIDE will hold focus groups for students, staff, leadership and families as well as conduct classroom walk throughs and review school documents and policies. On the second day RIDE will share their observations and feedback to school leadership, highlighting our areas of strength and growth. They will provide school leadership with an action plan and support for us to implement for us to help achieve our CSIP goals.

The first semester ends January 22nd marking the official half way mark through the year. It also means some students will be ending their electives and starting new electives on January 23rd. If a student passes the semester-long elective they will pass that course for the year.

While a student's grade at the halfway point of their core classes becomes an indicator of where they may possibly end for the year, there is still time left for students to improve their grades. Students who are not currently passing have 2 quarters to improve their grades and to earn

credit. Please continue to have discussions with your child about their grades, how they plan on sustaining their good grades, and ways they are going to improve their grades. Also please continue to access Skyward to review grades and check Google Classroom for news and assignments from your child's classes.

As always please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns. We are grateful and privileged to have you and your children here as part of the Highlander family

Best,  
Mr. Wil Pabst

#### **Highlights from classrooms**

- Mr. Ben leads his students in a great relaxation breathing technique before he starts his class.
- Ms. Small had her students cooperating against each other in a Pickleball tournament.
- Ms. Grover has her students highly engaged while working in different stations and activities and running a small group instruction.
- Ms. Weigand's students produced amazing and powerful artwork, and gave incredible and insightful presentations.
- Mr. Whisperwind and his students were holding fluent conversations in Spanish, and you can see their growth in a short period of time.
- Ms. Wilhelm has her CTE students engaged and working intensely in a college level class. Her students did an excellent job representing the program during their presentation at the CTE recruitment and information assembly.
- Mrs. Heath's students had strong group discussions to discuss the rhyme scheme and content of a poem.
- Guidance had our juniors eagerly signing up early for ACN and the P/SAT Boot Camp Test Prep in February.

#### **Save the Dates:**

Due to us having to go virtual for a few days we have to reschedule a few events. We will make sure to communicate the new information out to everyone when it has been finalized.

- ACCESS information and celebration 1/09 5:00pm-6:30pm
- 1st Qtr ends 1/22
- RIDE Visit 1/29-1/30
- Report Cards Distributed 1/31

#### **FYI**

Below are some reminders about Highlander policies as we continue the school year:

- Students are encouraged to bring reusable water bottles daily. Please ensure names are written on them.
- Healthy snacks are encouraged at lunch time. Please keep in mind we are a peanut-free school. Soda is not permitted. NO large or family size bags of chips, crackers, or other snacks or food.

- Students are assigned homework daily, and are expected to complete these assignments in a timely manner.
- Uniforms are required Monday through Thursday. Please visit the school website for our uniform policy and purchasing information. We are aware of delays with some orders. If this is the case or you have other concerns, please feel free to contact us.