



*Blind Brook Middle School*  
*Principal's Corner*

November 23, 2011

Dear Parents of Blind Brook Middle School Students,

The days and weeks continue to fly by at an alarming pace. It is already Thanksgiving and before we know it the winter holidays will be upon us. It is a busy time at the Blind Brook Middle School as students prepare for the winter concerts, compete for places on the winter teams, begin rehearsals and preparations for our first musical production, write for the newspaper, design the yearbook, enhance communication with digital media.... all while meeting the rigorous demands of our academic program. You have to be impressed with young people today!

Report Cards were mailed this week and you may have noticed some changes. For the first time we utilized the attendance report and it has revealed some discrepancies and inaccuracies. This has resulted in a critical review of the attendance reporting procedures and we are committed to ensuring an accurate representation of student attendance. Changes/corrections will be made and reported on the next quarterly report. Additionally we are in the process of revamping how we report performance in Exploratory Courses for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. These courses run on a parallel schedule and cannot be reported as part of the regular report card. Grades for the first two cycles will be mailed with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marking Period Interim Reports on December 19<sup>th</sup>.

As busy as we seem – there is always more to be done. We are currently looking for parent volunteers to serve on the Shared Decision Making Committee. We have a lone parent survivor representing the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and are in need of a 6<sup>th</sup> grade parent and 8<sup>th</sup> grade parent to provide valuable insight as we guide middle school practice. The immediate concern is the homework policy which will be the topic of the first meeting. We can be flexible with our meeting times so please consider this opportunity to serve. Interested parents should email me at [plambert@blindbrook.org](mailto:plambert@blindbrook.org) and include days and times that you are available to meet. Thank you in advance for consideration.

Ten middle school teachers and administrators are involved in the important work of researching best practices in middle level scheduling. We have committed to trying to find a way to reduce or eliminate our reliance on shared staff and are hoping to develop a schedule that employs the elements deemed necessary for true middle level education – pure teams (defined as the same group of teachers teaching the same group of students), fewer and longer periods, and increased student choice evolving from mandatory exploratory classes at the 6<sup>th</sup> grade to greater elective choice as students become more independent learners. Our work is centered on the research reported by the The New York State Board of Regents' Policy Statement on Middle-Level Education, NYS Education Department's Essential Elements of Standards-Focused Middle-Level Schools and Programs, NASSP, The Education Alliance of Brown University, The National Middle School Association, and The National Forum for the Advancement of Middle Level Education. The task also includes careful review of state mandates, local requirements, and traditions. We are in need of a few parent volunteers who are interested in joining the research team. If you are willing to roll up your sleeves to delve into the intricacies of schedule design – please contact me at [plambert@blindbrook.org](mailto:plambert@blindbrook.org). Our next meeting is scheduled for 2:45 on Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup>.

I was hoping that the cold weather would negate the need to bring up the dress code but I'm afraid that our students are heartier than anticipated. We are struggling with female attire that includes the stylish, off the shoulder shirts. Some are worn with tank tops – others with lovely undergarments that are fully exposed with the slightest movement. The PE teachers have talked with the students but the problem continues. Recently the style has included transparent materials that reveal more than enough to be inappropriate. Proper school attire should ensure that no part of an undergarment is exposed including straps, backs, etc. Please speak with your child(ren) about this matter.

The next middle school Parent Conversation will take place on Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM. A possible agenda item will be a discussion of the state testing results. If there are items you would like to see on the agenda – please do not hesitate to send them along. I will post the agenda by December 12<sup>th</sup>.

Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday. It is the one holiday that unites us all and promotes reflection as we stop to enjoy the love of family and friends and hopefully appreciate all of our blessings. I hope you have much in you life for which to be thankful.

Pat Lambert