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Principal's/Superintendent's Message

Welcome 2010!!

Happy New Year!

I absolutely love the energy, the resolve and the hope that comes with a new year.

UPSM students and staff returned this week with a "Yes, We Can" spirit and it is contagious. I hope you are feeling it as powerfully as I am.

We have an enormous amount of work to do, and we're going to need that energy and laser-like focus and determination to meet our goals over these next six months.

Many of you have shared with me your hopes for a better UPSM in 2010. Some of you have shared your concerns about the change in leadership and what it means for the direction of our school.

I assure you that the mission and the goals of UPSM remain the same.

We are going to be the BEST science and math middle school in the region, period! We are going to meet—better yet let's BEAT our 90/90 mandate. And we are going to demonstrate the highest levels of discipline, order and civility.

My top three priorities for the next several months are:

Culture—our hallways, restrooms, lunchroom and classrooms will be free from disruptive behavior. Look for increased teacher presence in the hallways in the mornings and afternoons, during passing time and at lunch. We are on a campaign to set the culture of excellence needed to meet our academic goals;

Content—our students absolutely MUST be exposed to more—and more rigorous—content the next two trimesters. MEAP is behind us, but a great many academic challenges are ahead of us. I will be working hard to ensure that UPSM advisors are focused on challenging your children to the highest levels;

Customers—your satisfaction is key to our success. You've told us you want more for your students—more rigor, more discipline, more opportunities, and more personalization. That is what we will be focusing on delivering. Please hold us to the highest standards.

We wish to give you a private school quality education, tuition free!!

I look forward to sharing much more with you at THIS Thursday's Parents as Partners meeting at 5:30 in the UPSM Gym.

Educationally Yours,

Margaret Trimer-Hartley

Parents as Partners meeting reminder

PLEASE attend this Thursday's Parents as Partners meeting at 5:30 p.m. in the UPSM Gym. In addition to many critical updates, I will be conducting a Forum to address any concerns you may have regarding the future of UPSM, the leadership changes, our quest for a new principal, open enrollment, etc.

As your school administrator, I believe it is important that you know I do not run Parents as Partners. I firmly believe in giving parents leadership roles and opportunities. I believe you are highly capable partners and I respect your knowledge, skills and instincts.

I support your organization wholeheartedly and am here to offer whatever input, resources, research or guidance that you ask of me.

I consider these meetings essential to our school communications structure and I urge you to attend and engage.

I will be at every one of these meetings, as will various members of the UPSM staff.

Please get in the loop by joining us.

Contact Carol Campbell, our Parent Volunteer Coordinator—a volunteer herself at ccampbell@uprepsm.com

Watch DOGS

Don't let anybody tell you that dads don't care about their children's education. UPSM dads rock, and they're showing it in many different ways.

One of the most visible efforts is the UPSM Chapter of the Watch DOGS. (Dads of Great Students) Learn more about his incredible support system at www.fathers.com. Check out the right navigation bar for the Watch DOGS page.

Please consider joining our Detroit "myth-busting" dads in their efforts to make UPSM the safest and most welcoming and successful school in the region.

Mr. Willie Tucker is the UPSM staff liaison to the group; he can be reached at wtucker@uprepsm.com. Mr. Roderick Owens in the communications point person for the Watch DOGS; he can be reached at owensroderick@yahoo.com.

Please consider getting involved. And Moms, they're not an exclusive club. They've begun accepting us into the mix, dubbing us MOMS (Moms of Magnificent Students).

FREE DRESS DAYS/DRESS CODE CHANGES

The first Friday of every month will NO LONGER be Free Dress Day! Please do NOT send your child to school out of uniform on those days.

We will still have Free Dress Days at UPSM, but they will be issued as rewards for compliance with school rules and expectations, and they will be used to raise money for specific school programs such as the Watch DOGS, the Academic Games, Travel Club, our athletics program, etc.

We will send home fliers announcing the days at least a week in advance.

UPSM students may wear colorful, patterned ties from now on. We hope this dose of "freedom" will enable them to express themselves at least a little bit, while they still conform to the code. Please monitor their choice of ties—no profanity or inappropriate images 😊

DRESS CODE REFRESHER: Light blue, white, pale yellow or navy shirts with collars, ties, Khaki or navy pants; black or brown belt and black or brown dress shoes.

NO patterned Coach or similar shoes; no athletic shoes; no boots during the school day.

THANK YOU for helping us enforce UPSM's dress code. It is a vital element in the development of our culture of excellence. If you doubt that, come feel the difference in behavior among our students on Free Dress Days 😊

Silence ISN'T golden

The more we communicate with one another the better informed and more cohesive we are as a learning community. To that end, I will be emailing our new school newsletter The Catalyst to every email address we have beginning next month.

Be on the lookout for the newsletter in your inbox the FIRST week of every month.

PLEASE send me an email at mtrimmer-hartley@uprepsm.com if you wish to keep getting The Catalyst in hardcopy. Please let us know if you need an email account.

We will make sure you receive a hard copy if you need one.

Your child's advisors will also be intensifying their communications with you, and their Web sites will be updated no less than every other week beginning this month.

Stay tuned for more from them—the frontline in the education of your child's education.

Office hours for MTH

In keeping with our push for more and more effective communication, please feel welcome to stop by my office any Tuesday from 3:30-5 p.m. to share your ideas, concerns and questions. It's a great time to get to know one another better and make sure we are all operating on the same page.

I have enjoyed the many, many conversations I've had with parents so far and look forward to many more. Strong, honest relationships make the difficult conversations we sometimes must have much smoother and more productive.

And they just make every day a lot more fun and rewarding!

Honors Assembly—look for fliers

UPSM will be hosting an Honors Assembly late this month to recognize the great work, academic, athletic and other accomplishments of our students in the first trimester.

Please stay tuned for the date and time. It will be during the school day, but we welcome and encourage parent participation.

LUNCH MONEY REMINDER

UPSM will not serve lunch to students who owe \$6 or more to the lunch program. We will send your child home with a stamp on his/her hand when they are down to their last meal so that you can pay before they're in jeopardy. Please keep current in your payments so that we can successfully manage this program and our budget. You will be receiving a letter next week telling you of your balance, or you may call Mrs. Moon to check or go into PowerSchool for an update. We will only accept cash or money order. Many checks have bounced and we are struggling to collect payment. **Thank you for your cooperation--and your understanding.**

Wednesday Enrichment

We got off to a bumpy start with our Wednesday enrichment programs. Scheduling our students and ensuring high quality experiences in every case was a challenge for us first trimester.

We've sewn up most of the frayed edges, but we still need help maximizing these opportunities.

First a reminder of what Wednesday afternoon enrichment is all about.

From 1:30-3:30 p.m. UPSM is providing our students with additional value-added elective courses including such things as:

- AAA Computer Certification training
- Poetry
- Band
- DSO Strings
- Karate
- Mentoring
- Dance
- GRAVY (Great Responsible Activists Vitalizing Youth—our student council)
- Yearbook
- Tutoring
- Literacy support
- And many others

Many of these courses are being taught by outside instructors so that we can give our staff much-needed time during their scheduled work week to analyze data, work on your child's personalized learning plan and spend time in their professional learning teams planning, troubleshooting and learning to do their jobs even better.

This trimester I have asked several staff to forfeit their student-free work time and join the effort to make sure every Wednesday afternoon offering is of the highest quality.

They have risen to the request and you should see more order and more content coming to your children during this time period. Staff will be working particularly hard with students who need remediation—especially in reading and math—as well as students who need acceleration and additional challenge.

Please note that your child's programming during this time frame may change over the next couple of weeks. We will communicate with you—and we ask that you communicate with us what your preferences are as well as your child's interests. We will try to accommodate interests, but we will also be **REQUIRING** participation in remediation if your child is below grade level.

Thanks for your understanding and your support.

After school pickup

THANK YOU for picking your children up on time after school this week. We have had virtually no student loitering problems the first two days of this week, and I'm hopeful that's a sign that we've solved that problem.

We are grateful for the efforts your making to help us with this important safety and security issue.