Notes from the Principal  
September ~ October 2019

Dear Kensico School Families:

Welcome to the 2019-2020 School Year! This is always one of my favorite times of the year. I love the excitement of beginning each new school year, and eagerly welcoming our students and hearing their great summer stories. I heard tales from Disney, Hungary, Canada, California, and even Long Island! Listening to their adventures made me jealous, because I only went to Baltimore this summer to watch the Yankees!

The weather cooperated this year, and students were able to go out at recess and enjoy themselves. Unfortunately, the New York State Education Department was unable to review our plans for a new Kensico playground, so we have to wait and, hopefully, will break ground next summer for a brand new playground. All I saw throughout the first day were smiling faces, and Kensico was once again bustling with the sounds of students, teachers and staff in the wings and hallways.

My favorite part of the first day is our opening assembly at the end of the day. Students, teachers and staff gather in the gymnasium, and I engage in a read-aloud with everyone. The book has a theme that I carry on throughout the school year with the students. This year I read Kindness is Cooler, Mrs. Ruler, and I even assigned homework on the first day of school, much to the chagrin of our students. But they didn’t mind and, hopefully, your child(ren) are doing kind things for you at home and filling out their hearts to bring back to school. Our entryway bulletin board is now filled with hearts that have kind acts written on them.

As I begin my 10th year as principal of Kensico School, I am proud of our talented teachers and staff as they bring a diverse set of approaches to instruction to address our students’ learning styles. We have developed a strong educational program that addresses each child’s social, emotional and academic needs. We promote an educational environment that engages the students in meaningful work, so that they develop the critical skills necessary to become independent, responsible, and productive students.

I look forward to a new year of opportunities and learning with our students. We all work very hard to ensure that Kensico is a safe and happy place, and most importantly, "A Fun Place to Learn!"

Sincerely,

Matthew C. Curran

September 12 ~ Picture Day!  
Smile! Picture forms were sent home on the 1st day of school.

September 14 ~ Joint KS/VRS Picnic ~ 12:00-3:00 at KS  
Join us for an afternoon of music, arts and crafts, barbecue and desserts. This is a wonderful time to say “welcome” as we begin another school year. Thanks to the many active and involved parents at both schools who always make this first joint venture a success.

September 17 ~ Dads Bring Your Child to School Day ~ 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.  
We are inviting fathers to bring their children to school. We will have light refreshments available and books to read with your child. If you are attending this event, please sign up at https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090E4DABAF2BA3F94-bring3

September 25 ~ Open House  
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.  
Staff will be introduced, an overview of the curriculum will be presented, and expectations for students will be highlighted. This is not an evening to discuss your child as an individual. This event is for parents and guardians. Students are discouraged from attending.
Staff Changes

Please join us in welcoming new staff members to Kensico.

- Ms. Dana Bilt is our new 3rd Grade Special Education Teacher. Ms. Bilt replaces Mrs. Walker, who retired in June.
- Mrs. Deb Kaplan joins us in the office. She will work at VRES in the morning and Kensico in the afternoon. Mrs. Kaplan replaces Mrs. Soricelli who will be working full-time at the HS.
- Mrs. Diane Longo moved from VRES to Kensico as a Teacher Aide in 3rd grade.
- Mrs. Erin Carbone is a Teacher Aide in our Special Education Class. Mrs. Carbone filled in on a temporary basis last year, and we are happy to welcome her as a full-time staff member.
- Mr. Joel Viveros joins us as a Teacher Aide in 4th grade.
- Mr. Bill DeSanctis is our greeter at the Welcome Desk in our lobby.

Student Teachers

Kensico has a history of mentoring student teachers. Joining us from Pace University for 2019/2020 are Airy Ferretas, Samantha Mayrose, Deanna Michelson and Katherine Santana. We also welcome Andrew Speigal, a psychology intern from Iona.

Safety Drills

Safety is always a priority at Kensico School. On the first two days, we held fire drills and on the third day, we held an emergency evacuation drill to the Viking Stadium bleachers. Students were instructed on safety procedures, the Mount Pleasant Police were on hand and the drills were very successful. Additional safety drills will continue to be held throughout the year to ensure students know what to do in the event of a real emergency.

School Bus Safety, Referrals & Drills

Bus Safety is an important issue. The safety of getting to and from school is just as important as the safety of our students in school during the day. Cameras are on the bus to ensure that all students have a positive bus experience. In addition, Kensico School implements School Bus Referrals.

- Simple infractions (standing in the aisle, etc.) will be followed by verbal reprimands. Frequent verbal reprimands for simple infractions will result in a Referral Form.
- Unacceptable behavior will result in an immediate Referral Form (i.e., throwing paper, inappropriate language, etc.)
- Dangerous behavior, such as fighting, will be followed by a Referral Form and immediate suspension from the bus.

A copy of the Referral Form will be given to the parent/guardian, a copy will be kept on file at school, and a copy will be sent to the bus company.

Scott Dooley, P.E. teacher, conducted Bus Safety Drills on September 11. Please ask your child about the drill and reinforce the safety tips reviewed that day.
Upcoming Field Trips & Assemblies

Fifth Grade Trip ~ SoundWaters Sail, Stamford, CT ~
Monday & Tuesday, October 7 & 8
Kensico School 5th graders have enjoyed a long tradition of sailing in the Long Island Sound for a Science adventure aboard the Sound Waters schooner. Students will hoist sails to the rhythm of old time sea chanteys and trawl for creatures like lobsters, flounders, horseshoe crabs, sea stars, and jelly fish. What they catch from this estuary, they will study under the guidance of a well-trained crew.

Third Grade Trip to PepsiCo Sculpture Gardens ~ TBD
Under the direction of art teacher, Kristina Mathisen, and with the assistance of their classroom teachers, 3rd graders will visit the PepsiCo Sculpture Gardens. This magnificent site is host to some of the finest sculpture in the world. Rodan, Henry Moore, Alexander Calder and Jean Dubuffet are just a few of the artists represented.

Fourth Grade Field Trip to Liberty Science Center ~ TBD
Our 4th graders are off to explore the Liberty Science Center and learn more about the interactive, hands-on exhibitions, such as The Touch Tunnel, Infinity Climber, eat and be eaten, Microbes Rule!, Block Party, SURE House and more. Liberty Science Center is located in Liberty State Park on the Jersey City bank of the Hudson River near the Statue of Liberty. It is dedicated to bringing the power, promise, and pure fun of science and technology to people of all ages.

Fire Prevention Week ~ October 6 to 12
Assembly ~ TBD
Fire Prevention Week was established to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire that occurred in 1871. As part of this recognition, Kensico staff and students are presented with an informative program on fire safety by the Valhalla Volunteer Fire Department during Fire Prevention Week.

This year’s campaign, “Not Every Hero Wears a Cape. Plan and Practice Your Escape!” works to educate everyone about the small but important actions they can take to keep themselves and those around them safe. Did you know that in a typical home fire, you may have as little as one to two minutes to escape safely from the time the smoke alarm sounds. Escape planning and practice can help you make the most of the time you have, giving everyone enough time to get out.

Kensico CARES
Kensico CARES represents the values our students, teachers and staff pledge to live by every day. Please review the packet sent home and return the signed commitment statement.

✔ Cooperate with one another
✔ Be Assertive when necessary
✔ Show Responsibility and Empathy towards one another
✔ Demonstrate Self-Control

Student Agenda Handbook
Please check your child’s agenda daily! In addition to your child’s homework assignments, it contains a list of faculty and staff, your child’s daily class schedule, and school policies and procedures. It is also a wonderful tool to communicate with your child’s teacher. The first Agenda handbook is free; replacements will cost $7.00.

Birthday Celebrations
Students’ birthdays will be recognized during morning announcements and each child will receive a birthday card and a small gift from the principal.

School Lunch
Aramark will continue to operate our cafeteria. Lunch costs $2.40 for elementary school children. Milk is 55¢. Ice cream and other snacks will be sold, time permitting. The monthly cafeteria menu can be found on our website under Bulletin Board.
Halloween Safety Assembly ~ TBD
Youth Officers from the Mount Pleasant Police Department will speak with students regarding safety tips when “Trick-or-Treating”. Bringing community workers into the school to establish positive relationships with students is encouraged at Kensico. If you have suggestions for additional programs, please contact me.

Halloween Parade ~ Thursday, October 31 ~ 1:45 p.m.
Please come and see our costume parade! Kensico students and staff will promenade around the flagpole to show their innovative and creative costumes, with class parties to follow.
Appropriate Halloween costumes for school is always a sensitive issue. Please make sure your child's costume is politically correct and not offensive to any members of our community.

Student Drop-Off ~ No Standing
Signs line the curb sidewalk area adjacent to the parking lot – “Student Drop-Off – No Standing.” If you are dropping your child off in the morning, please use this area to do so. Once your child has exited the car, please move from this area as soon as possible. If cars remain for too long a period of time, an unsafe situation is created. Children’s safety is our Number One concern. Please follow these rules at the end of the school day also if you are picking up your child. This will ensure a safe and smooth traffic flow.

In the morning, some parents arrive early and wait in their cars with their children until 8:25 a.m. The parking lot adjacent to the playground is open for parents to wait with their children. As always, I ask that parents use caution when driving out of the parking lot and please observe the traffic safety cones placed in the parking lot.

Parking in the Circle
Please refrain from parking in the circle in front of Kensico School. If you are visiting the school, please park in the lot located to the left of the building. This rule will be enforced throughout the year to ensure the safety of our students and staff. The pathway around the circle is clearly marked as a “no parking zone” and must remain clear at all times. This includes after school events and athletic events. The Mount Pleasant Police Department will be monitoring the circle to help us enforce the NYS parking laws and guidelines. While we understand that it is easy to park directly in front of the school, we ask that you help us keep our campus safe and ensure easy access for fire and police services.

Parent Portal
All parents/guardians have a parent portal. Report Cards can be accessed on the portal approximately one week after the end of each marking period. We will inform you when they are posted.

Our PTA
The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is a wonderful way for you to share ideas and support the mission of Kensico School. We are fortunate to have devoted and dedicated parents who support all our school programs and special activities. I look forward to working with our PTA president, Kristin Dragone. I encourage you to become active in PTA.

Please visit our website often: http://kes.valhallaschools.org

Don't forget to download the Valhalla UFSD app for access to your school's news, calendars, push notifications, and more!
School Closings & Delayed Openings

Connect-Ed is the method of communication used by Valhalla UFSD. It is effective and efficient. Please remember to notify the office of any changes in home, work or cell phone numbers, as well as e-mail address, so you are appropriately informed of emergency situations as they arise. If a decision is made in the evening, only home numbers will be contacted. If an emergency plan is implemented while children are in school, cell, work, home and e-mail will receive emergency information.

Monthly Writing Contest

Our monthly writing celebrations are back!!!! September's celebration is inspired by Patrice Barton’s book, The Invisible Boy. This sweet tale centers around a little boy, Brian, who feels invisible during the school day – when the teacher calls on students, when looking for a seat at lunch, even playing on the playground. The students don’t ever seem to notice Brian until a new student to the class “sees” him and makes him feel visible for the very first time. This is a classic tale of belonging, friendship, and the power of being kind.

For our writing celebration, we want you to read the book and think about what you can learn from it. In your writing, start by discussing how it must feel to be “invisible” in school, at home, or at another event. Then think about what you can do this year to help someone who may feel “invisible.” What can you do for a student who may feel left out at lunch, recess, or in a group activity? Then talk about why it is important to make everyone feel visible.

All submissions are due Wednesday, October 2.

September Birthdays

Erion Berisha
Max Braverman
Dylan Burrowes
Robert Caluori
Brianna Chavez
Liam Deinzer
Brady Engelman
Rosemary Feliciano Pani
Sophia Gac
Davin Geller
Jackson Higgitt
Addilynn Kopicki
Jacob Lee
Kripa Leo
Isabella Liberati
Nicholas Mounayar
Daniel Nduka
Andrew Pesce
Michael Petraglia
Michael Roberto
Lia Santarsiero
Noelle Lía Santiago
Joshua Sepi
Alexa Soto-Raines
Jack Trainor
Michael Zachariah

First Day Smiles!
Food Allergies

There are children in our school who have serious peanut and tree nut allergies – the food allergy that claims more lives each year than any other. A child with a serious peanut or tree nut allergy can suffer a reaction merely by touching a food containing peanuts or tree nuts.

The following is Valhalla UFSD’s policy on food brought into school:

In order to prevent the risk of injury to students with life-threatening food allergies, The Wellness Committee, in collaboration with the school nurse, school administration and the School Chief Medical Officer, has made the following recommendations as prevention strategies to be initiated:

- All Classrooms at the VRES and Kensico School shall be designated as nut free. This would include any food consumed in the classroom, including, but not limited to, snacks, celebrations, parties, etc.
- In the lunch rooms at VRES and Kensico School, a table or tables will be specified as nut free. Upon request by a parent/guardian a child may be designated to sit at these tables. Teachers will coordinate groups of children to sit with a child diagnosed with a nut allergy. No child will sit alone.
- In the lunch room at VMHS a nut free table will be made available upon request.

District Wide – All Buildings

- Any food that comes into the building including, but not limited to, celebrations, parties, bake sales, etc., must have a visible label of ingredients or, if homemade, a listing of the ingredients contained in the food.
- If there is no indication of what is in the food, it will remain in the front office or will be sent home.
- The classroom teacher or club advisor is responsible for foods coming into the building. If they have any questions they are to see the school nurse. The nurse is not responsible for examining the food.

If you have any questions or concerns about food allergy related issues, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Theresa Branciforti, our school nurse.

Health Office

Please check Mrs. Branciforti’s webpage for updates and happenings in the Health Office at Kensico School Mrs. Branciforti’s Page (Kensico Website–About Us–Staff Directory). Forms and other information can be found on the website under the Parent Tab (Health Office/Wellness).

October Birthdays

Aksel Aaman
Anton Aaman
Joshua Abraham
Noah Arteta
Chloe Assue
Francesco Bastone
James Blenkle
Charles Eggleston
Daniel Gjokaj
Anika Gursahani
Michael Hart
Ethan Herrera
Jordan Johnson
Farrah Kulage-Hussain
Jake Mack
Jet Martin
Aiden Munnilal
Sophia Munnilal
Megan Munnilal
Gabriella Oliveira
Kendra Paulercio
David Perri
Giada Rubino
Annalisa Rubino
Marcus Sama
Andrew Vamossy
James Vamossy
Carlos Vila
Maia Yammine