

August 6, 2007

Dear Chevy Chase Parents,

It is now time for your children to don their “thinking caps” and embark on another adventure in learning. The course of travel has been charted by guides; the path is rocky and smooth; and now it is up to your child, the seeker, to discover the many treasures of this journey.

The beginning of a new school year means the opening up of a wealth of opportunities for learning and character building. It is our hope that your children plan to develop their talents and abilities to the fullest in our school. It’s an exciting time for us as we envision the future of our school and embrace changes to promote our strong academic program. We look forward to integrating new technology as we prepare for our computer modification upgrades, continue our magnet programs for enrichment and acceleration, and plan schedules to accommodate differentiated instruction.

We are also working on improvements to our grounds. Great, big cheetah hugs to our PTA committees who are working on the plans for new and improved gardens around the school and upgrading our playground.

Our faculty members are well prepared to meet the challenges of new technology and inclusive instructional approaches. We will be welcoming new members to our faculty this year. Mr. Patrick Capuano is our 5th grade science and social studies teacher, Mrs. Janelle Palmisano is the 5<sup>th</sup> grade center math and science teacher, Mrs. Kirsten Smith is the new art teacher, Mrs. Bonnie Berger is our part-time special educator working with interventions, Ms. Denine Gudnitz is our part-time physical education teacher, Ms. Tracey Brooks is our special education Home School Model teacher, Mrs. Judy Cobian is a new para-educator/CITE intern, and Mr. Jonathan Praff is our new ESOL teacher. We are sure the new staff will prove to be an asset to our faculty and our students.

We want to take this opportunity to congratulate our own Eric Manzano. He has been promoted to Building Service Assistant Manager at CCES. Adrian Barber has been promoted to full time building service worker at CCES. The entire building service staff has been working extremely hard to prepare our building for a safe and successful opening.

It is our hope that many of you will be familiar faces as volunteers in our school and at extracurricular events. Your support and partnership with us makes the Chevy Chase school environment a successful educational experience for all children. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to teach your child as we seek to fulfill our mission as educators.

We appreciate the funding and support the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has received from the County Council in these tight budget times. However, the funding MCPS received was less than the Board of Education’s requested amount. As a result of this current fiscal situation, it may become necessary for staffing changes to occur in some schools if enrollment comes in below projection and doesn't justify the staffing allocated.

MCPS staffing allocations are based on projected enrollment. We certainly hope that at the beginning of the school year our actual enrollment matches the projected enrollment. If there is a need to make an adjustment in staffing based on actual enrollment, I will do my best to minimize the impact of these necessary adjustments. I will keep you informed and alert you of any changes that may occur at our school.

The Town of Chevy Chase, the community neighbors and CCES staff have worked collaboratively on a traffic safety plan around our school. Significant changes were proposed by the town and the revisions were voted on at the August 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. We have enclosed the changes. We will share the plan in a brochure that will be available at Open House and on our website, and we will share the specific changes on Back to School Night. We hope our entire school community will work with us through the changes for the safety of our students. Enclosed is a map of the Town of Chevy Chase Traffic Plan. Please note one major change, the **15 mile per hour** speed limit. Our arrival and dismissal pick up zone will be in **only one area**. Students arriving in cars will be dropped off and picked up going north (downhill) on Hillcrest next to the school. Cars will not be able to enter Hillcrest going south (uphill) towards the circle during arrival and dismissal times. The town is looking at expanding our drop off lane to safely accommodate more cars. Staff will be posted to assist students in and out of cars. Students are **not** to be dropped off on Rosemary Street, in front of the school or in the bus circle. As a new Green School, we encourage students to walk or ride their bikes. We have purchased more bike racks to accommodate the increase in bike riders. If students must travel to school in a car, we request that parents car pool as much as possible so as to limit traffic around the school.

The PTA will welcome *our new students and families* at a get together prior to the Sneak Peak Open House on Monday, August 25 beginning at 11:30 a.m. Our Sneak Peek Open House for the entire school will be from 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Afterwards, the PTA will be hosting a fiesta social event. School begins bright and early Tuesday, August 26 with doors opening at 8:40 a.m. Our instructional classes begin promptly at 8:50 a.m. each day. Our Back to School Night is Thursday, August 28, 2008 from 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. On September 18, 2008, our Diversity Committee will be hosting a Welcome Back to School picnic. The picnic will be held in front of Rosemary Hills Elementary School from 6:00 – 8:00pm. We look forward to seeing all of our families at each event.

Teachers and staff are excited about working with your children as we construct an ideal school environment for a variety of learners. Part of the success in any school is a healthy partnership between the classroom and the home. Open communication between the teacher and parent increases the amount of academic success a child will experience in school. At CCES, we value this relationship. Throughout the year, you will receive information about upcoming events and projects being completed by the children. Please review all information carefully and contact us if any questions arise. We look forward to your continued support and communication. Please feel free to contact the school at any time, for any reason, great or small. As we move through the year, I hope you will share suggestions, concerns, and successes. We enjoy hearing from parents and welcome any feedback; your input helps us to be a better school. Communication is vital to a successful relationship. We have been working on revamping our school website to improve daily communication from the school, the grade levels and the teachers. We hope to have it up and running by Friday, August 22.

Though it is my third year as a principal in MCPS, there is always something new and exciting. It keeps all of us young at heart. The Future Begins Here!

With Warm Regards,

Jody L. Smith, Principal

*“The colossal misunderstanding of our time is the assumption that insight will work with people who are unmotivated to change. Communication does not depend on syntax, or eloquence, or rhetoric, or articulation but on the emotional context in which the message is being heard. People can only hear you when they are moving toward you, and they are not likely to when your words are pursuing them. Even the choicest words lose their power when they are used to overpower. Attitudes are the real figures of speech.”* **EDWIN H. FRIEDMAN**