

# Principal's Paige

## November 14, 2008



### Meet the Teacher

Next Wednesday, we begin our minimum day schedule for parent-teacher conferences. I hope by now all of you have arranged a time with your child's classroom teacher. If not, please do so immediately. All parents are expected to attend a conference for each of their children at the Charter School. This is your opportunity to have a one-on-one discussion with your child's teacher(s).

Some of the teachers are having the students involved in all or part of the conference. If your child's teacher is involving students and you would like some time to speak with the teacher in private, please be sure to communicate your wishes to your child's teacher. The following is an excerpt from an article that was in the Mercury News. I have shared it with you in the past but feel that it contains many important reminders.

### **Prepare**

With an average of only 20-30 minutes with the teacher, there's little time to waste. Start by reviewing your child's work. Note what seems to be giving your student



trouble as well as where he or she seems to excel. Talk with your child, not only about assignments but also about what's happening in school, including the classroom, the playground, the lunchroom. Ask your child what three things he/she thinks that you and his/her

teacher should talk about. Your child's responses will give you ideas for what to discuss with the teacher.

Next, think of questions you want answered by the teacher and write them down. Some questions to consider are:

- ✓ How long should homework assignments take?
- ✓ What can I do to extend my child's learning at home?  
Is my child working up to his or her ability? If not, what can we do to change that?
- ✓ How well does my child get along with classmates?

Turn off your cell phone and try to leave younger children at home.

### **Set the Stage**

Try to establish an amiable rapport with the teacher at the outset. Parents don't realize that teachers are nervous and teachers don't realize parents are nervous. Start things out on a positive note.

Parents and teachers are partners in the child's education and are on the same side. We all want the child to succeed both academically and socially and need to work together to make that happen.

Along with getting your questions answered, listen to what the teacher has to say about your child's progress.

Ask for clarification of educational jargon. Make sure you understand classroom expectations and procedures.

### **Work Together**

Be careful not to be too aggressive. Try not to tell the teachers what they should be doing in terms of instruction. Instead, share insights about your child that may help the teacher. Tell the teacher about your child's talents, hobbies, abilities and attitudes toward school. Discuss what your child says about school. Clue in the teacher in a helpful manner.

When expressing concerns be tactful, making sure you communicate the problem clearly. Listen to what the teacher has to say in response to the problem. Then work together as a team to find a solution.

### **Follow up**

Develop an action plan with the teacher. This will continue to build the foundation of future communications. Does a follow-up conference need be scheduled? What should you be doing at home to help? How can you keep in touch with the teacher?

Write down important information. After the conference, be sure to communicate with your child all the positive information you learned. Talk about goals you and the teacher have set and how you are all going to support him/her in reaching those goals.

By preparing ahead and working with the teacher, you'll be helping your child. If your child sees you value the teacher and education, it will make a big difference!

### Report Cards

CSMH uses standard-based report cards. Because the standards are different at each grade level, the report cards will look different as well. Indications of standards mastered or introduced are noted on the report card to inform parents of the strengths and needs of their child. As the school year progresses, more standards will be introduced and mastered. Time in the beginning of the school year is spent assessing students' knowledge, setting up classroom culture, expectations and routines. Thus, do not be alarmed if not many standards are marked during this reporting period! Starting at fourth grade, students receive letter grades that reflect the work that is graded and handed into classroom teachers. We welcome comments from our parents about our report cards so that we can continue to improve our reporting process.

# Upcoming Dates to Remember

November 17 <sup>th</sup>	Academic Chess
November 18 <sup>th</sup>	CSMH Board meeting at 7:00 pm at school Golf Club after school from 3:00-3:45 Middle school girl's basketball at 5:00 at Crossroads
November 19 <sup>th</sup>	Bike to School Day
November 20 <sup>th</sup>	Middle school boy's soccer at 4:00 at Aromas Middle school girl's basketball at 5:00 at Crossroads
November 19 <sup>th</sup> - 21 <sup>st</sup>	Minimum Days for Parent Conferences Book Fair
November 24 <sup>th</sup>	Middle school boy's soccer at 4:00 at Complex Middle school girl's basketball at 5:00 at Aromas
November 24 <sup>th</sup> - 25 <sup>th</sup>	Minimum Days for Parent Conferences Book Fair
November 26 <sup>th</sup> - 28 <sup>th</sup>	Thanksgiving Holiday - No School
December 1 <sup>st</sup>	Academic Chess Middle school girl's basketball at 6:00 at Crossroads
December 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Golf Club after school from 3:00-3:45 Middle school boy's soccer at 4:00 at CSMH
December 3 <sup>rd</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> graders on field trip Middle school girl's basketball at 5:00 at Crossroads
December 4 <sup>th</sup>	Assembly in multipurpose room - Opera in a Box Middle school talent show dress rehearsal at 2:45
December 5 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> graders on field trip Middle school talent show at 6:30 pm