

NEW HEIGHTS SCHOOL

Academics • Balance • Citizenship
The Power of Choice

March 2020

Based on Principal



At the time I am writing this, there are only two weeks to go until spring break, and only four weeks until the end of 3rd quarter—which hopefully marks the end of the snow and cold weather. So, to an extent, I think it is fair to say that the “culture” of the school is well established for the year; but there are still some things I feel we can improve on. When I say “culture,” I am referring to how things generally go at school. In other words, what are some attributes that anyone coming into our building would notice, as well as what do the people who work here see and what do the students experience on a daily basis?

As the principal, I have an idea as to what I’d like to see, as do the teachers. As the educational leaders of our students, we want to promote a safe, healthy, and fun school experience for all. At the same time, we also want to reach our professional and academic goals with our students, which should mean helping them acquire skills and habits that will assist them later in life as adults in the world of work. So, I’d like to share a few things that I am still thinking we can improve upon before this year closes out.



First, nothing we do here on a daily basis is beneficial to students who aren’t coming to school every day or who aren’t arriving to each class on time. Part of the school experience includes learning the value of being where you are scheduled to be and to get there on time.

During the formative years of being a student, children’s brains are developing connections and they are forming habits—some good, some bad. Are our students understanding that being at school everyday and arriving on time is a valuable habit to form? Right now, I’d say some do and some don’t.

If for no other reason, our students should be learning that they would do better, get more done, and have less stress in their lives by being here every day and being in the places there are scheduled to be. Missing school usually means an excess of work piling up, failing grades or classes, and pressure coming from school officials and parents. It’s



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IMPORTANT DATES

- March 9-13– Spring Break
- March 16– School Resumes
- March 17– MCA Testing Begins
- March 27– End of 3rd Trimester
- March 30– No School– Grad-ing Day
- April 3– Parent Teacher Conferences

Welcome
Spring



very valuable to learn early-on that taking care of your responsibilities first usually means you will likely have more free time to do the things you want to do, and have less

pressure from adults. It's only when things pile up that we find ourselves unable to do the things that we enjoy, thus making us feel more stress and anxiety.

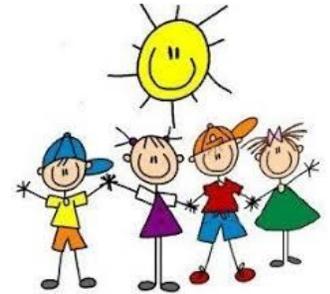
I'd also like to make a brief note about distraction devices coming to school. Many students are coming to school with things that, frankly, are getting in between them and learning. These things include cell phones, music devices and headphones, small video games, playing cards of several kinds, toys, and other things that really shouldn't be coming to school.

It is not uncommon for students to be reminded during one or more classes to put these distraction devices away. These issues are not unique to New Heights; they are epidemic of the current generation. We aren't taking a hardline here at school, but we are constantly reminding students and parents that we, the students and staff, have a very important mission to accomplish each day.

Our students are in a crucial time of life, meaning they have only one shot at gaining the meaningful and necessary tools needed to make it later in life.

If they grow up thinking life is about texting or swapping Pokémon cards all day long rather than engaging in more meaningful, skill-building activities, they are going to meet with insurmountable struggles later in life and they won't have the skills to handle them.

We are truly working to see that they don't have to experience that type of life, but we need your support. Please have some honest conversations with your kids and help them make better choices regarding what to bring to school.



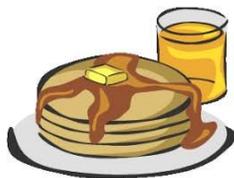
I can't think of a more important topic to discuss at this stage of their lives—at least with regard to their employment futures. Every moment doesn't have to be entertaining and comfortable. Sometimes life is plain hard and a good chunk of it is going to be spent working and solving problems; thus the point of school.

Also, please don't forget to come to conferences—date and times are listed in this newsletter.

Thomas Kearney, Principal, Superintendent

Cooking Competition

On February 13, Ms. Mankowski's 8th grade Life Skills class participated in a cooking competition. Working in small groups, the students made pancakes for Mrs. Hogan's kindergarten and first graders. The lucky judges loved tasting and judging the entries.



Secondary Field Trip to PINZ

New Heights' secondary students ended Spirit Week with a fun field trip to PINZ. Students and teachers spent the afternoon playing laser tag, video games, air hockey, bowling, eating and just hanging out. Here are just a few of the many highlights from the day.



Get Your 2019-2020 Yearbooks

**BUY A YEARBOOK—
HELP THE
ENVIRONMENT**

Ms. Geyer and the senior class have been working hard on the 2019-2020 New Heights yearbook.

The 2019-2020 yearbook is created using TreeR-ing, a company dedicated to the environment, that will plant a tree for every yearbook purchased.

All orders **MUST** be purchased online at:

treering.com

**Passcode:
1015695901432796**

The price for the yearbook is \$19.65—a low price to pay for memories your child will have in print for their lifetime! The deadline to order a yearbook through TreeR-ing is April 30!





From the School Counselor...

According to eatright.org, the month of March is National Nutrition Month. This month is focused on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits. Making sure to eat a healthy diet every day can help both adults and students be their best. Here are some tips to follow:

- Eat breakfast
- Include healthy foods from all food groups
- Explore new foods & flavors
- Drink water and stay hydrated throughout the day
- Practice portion control
- Share mealtime together as a family when possible
- Be active - children and teens should get 60 or more minutes of physical activity per day

EAT RIGHT



BITE BY BITE

National Nutrition Month®
March 2020

eat right Academy of Nutrition
and Dietetics

According to Stanford University, 56% of students report homework is a primary cause of stress.

New Height's No Homework Policy

Ask students what they enjoy most about New Heights, and the school's No Homework policy is sure to be a top response.

New Heights has long believed that time outside of school should be available for students to spend with their families, friends or participating in other hobbies— not doing homework.

New Height's classes are structured to allow students time to complete assignments at school rather than taking them home. This approach provides students with the support needed to be successful, while significantly reducing unnecessary school-related stress at home.

According to a study by Stanford University, 56% of students reported homework is a primary source of stress. The study also found that excessive homework led to sleep deprivation and other health problems for students including headaches, exhaustion, weight loss and stomach problems.

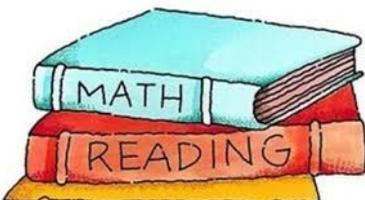
Another issue raised by the American Psychological Association is that

homework disproportionately affects students from less affluent families. The APA reported:

“Kids from wealthier homes are more likely to have resources such as computers, internet connections, dedicated areas to do schoolwork and parents who tend to be more educated and more available to help them with tricky assignments. Kids from disadvantaged homes are more

likely to work at afterschool jobs, or to be home without supervision in the evenings while their parents work multiple jobs.”

With regard to homework, Mr. Kearney says, “Leave the education to us. We want students to put a premium on time spent at school by being engaged and getting their work done and supported here by the teachers who create the assignments. In doing it our way, families will have way more time to do what they feel is important each night and they should also have way less stress about school—thus creating more balance in life.”



Teacher Feature– Mr. Kearney

Superintendent/Principal/Secondary Social Studies Teacher



New Heights is the oldest K-12 charter school in the country, which makes Mr. Kearney one of the longest serving charter school principals. Mr. Kearney started as a New Heights teacher in 1995 and became principal in 1996. In addition to serving as Principal and Superintendent, Mr. Kearney currently teaches 9th grade Civics and Government and 11th grade Psychology and Criminology. Here are some more interesting facts about our school's leader.

1. What inspired you to become a teacher?

When I was in high school, a lot of my friends thought teaching would be a natural fit for me because of my outgoing personality (I used to be funny and nice-ha ha). But, when I started college, I didn't really want to be a teacher or go to college for four years, so I began taking classes to become a police officer. After a few courses, I decided that there were too many things about law enforcement I didn't see as the right fit for me, so I changed my major to Education in Broad Field Social Studies, and I guess the rest is History—get it?

2. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

What I suppose I like best about teaching is trying to find an interesting way to connect school material to the students of today. For example, I teach Criminology. It is a fun class to teach because I can update it every year with new stories and cases to study. I also like that each class brings in their own energy. Some classes and students really get into the material; which makes teaching fun.

3. What is the most exciting thing you've ever done?

I don't know that my life would be categorized as exciting, but as a life-long athlete, I love the thrill of competing. I have been lucky enough to win championships in Baseball, Hockey, Basketball, Golf, and other competitions as well over my lifetime. I'd say it is equally important to learn to handle defeat, but I never did get used to losing. Winning a championship is a very exciting thing and I have always loved the accomplishment and excitement of competing at a high level, both as a member of a team or individually.

4. What is something people would be surprised to know about you?

People might be surprised to know about some of the jobs I had earlier in life. Because I have been in education so long as a teacher and principal, it's hard to imagine I did other things too. Here is a small list of places of I've worked, or the type of work I did: Landscaping; Kresge's/K-mart; a liquor store; painting; truck driver; delivery person for several companies including pizza; school bus driver; baseball umpire and basketball referee; laborer in several jobs, including operating a jack-hammer. I mention these because we are all on a life-long journey. Try lots of things to find out what you were made to do.



5. What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

When I have free time, which isn't really very often, anyone who knows me knows I love to golf. I also enjoy traveling, working in my yard, and taking on projects around my house. I rarely sit around with nothing to do. As an active person and a homeowner, there is always something to keep me busy.

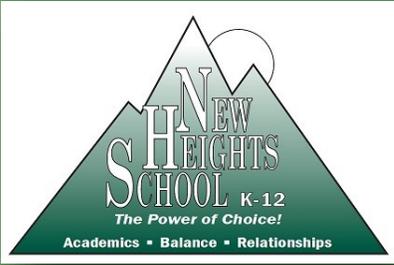
MCA Testing: March 17– April 16

Students in grades 3-11 will participate in the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA). This test is used to determine how students are performing on the Minnesota State standards in Math, Reading and Science.

Please see the testing schedule on New Heights' website for more information on elementary and secondary testing times.

<https://www.newheightsschool.com/testing-schedule>





March Monthly Planner

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 School Board Meeting 4:00pm	5	6 Elementary Field Trip to the MN Science Museum	7
8 Spring Ahead End of Daylight Savings Time	9					14
15	16 School Resumes	17 MCA Testing Begins St. Patrick's Day	18 School Board Meeting 4:00pm	19 First day of Spring	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27 End of 3rd Trimester	28
29	30 No School Grading Day	31	1	2	3 Parent Teacher Conferences 4-7pm	4