

FAIRFIELD LUDLOWE HIGH SCHOOL

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Mr. Greg C. Hatzis, Headmaster

Headmaster's Report

November/December 2013

Dear parents/guardians of FLHS,

Here is our monthly newsletter with important updates and information:

School Climate

Over the last several weeks, our school has been the subject of press coverage and discussion in the community. As a school, we are not defined by the acts of any individual. We have an amazing set of dedicated, hardworking teachers who view student safety as a top priority and dedicate themselves to enriching the lives of students in positive ways. We conduct yearly training on the laws surrounding mandated reporting for any student we feel is in danger or if a student reports a danger. We inform all students of how they can report inappropriate behaviors they witness or encounter. Any controversy tends to cast immediate doubt on procedures. However, I can assure you that our staff is well trained in what is necessary to support our students. In addition, we plan to do work to help ensure all students and staff have a shared understanding of appropriate boundaries. Our counseling department is putting together a set of "talking points" to support parents discussing this topic with their children. We urge any child who is looking for further support to visit our trained counseling center staff. We encourage positive, meaningful, and appropriate interactions where teachers inspire greatness and our students are proud of their school.

Attendance Policy

The implementation of Infinite Campus caused a change in the way we were able to record and track student attendance. In addition, the Connecticut State Board of Education recently crafted definitions for excused and unexcused absences for purposes of determining when a student is considered truant. These two events prompted the staff of both high schools to review and update our attendance policies. The full document is available on our website and each student was provided a hard copy on November 25.

The highlights of the policy include:

1. Dating back to the start of the second marking period, we are tracking individual class attendance toward loss of credit. The maximum number of absences allowed before loss of credit is 18 for full year courses, 9 for semester courses, and 4 for PE and Health. Absences accrued prior to that day will not count toward the loss of credit calculation. Students will be issued warning letters when they reach the half-way point of each of these thresholds.

2. Dating back to September 3, we are applying the Board of Education policy #5112 stating that for school attendance, absences 1-9 will be considered excused with proper notice from parents/guardians. For absence 10 and each thereafter, absences will be considered excused only for the specific reasons listed in the policy. Illness can only be excused by a doctor's note after the ninth absence. Parents will be issued a warning letter after the eighth absence. This does not represent a change from the start of the year and was highlighted in the Student and Parent Handbook, but we thought it was important to remind all families here.

Honors received by Fairfield Ludlowe High School

We recently learned that FLHS was ranked number ONE in the state for our students' performance on the Connecticut Statewide Career and Technical Education Assessment in 2013 in the area of Textiles & Design. Family Consumer Science teacher Donna Huber will be attending a Career & Technical Education Conference later this month where they will be honoring our school for this achievement. Great work by our Textiles and Design students!

The **Fairfield School District** was selected for the **4th Annual AP District Honor Roll**. Only a total of 477 school districts across the U.S. and Canada are being honored by the College Board for simultaneously increasing access to Advanced Placement coursework while maintaining or increasing the percentage of students earning scores of 3 or higher on AP Exams. Eighteen districts in Connecticut met the criteria to be placed on the AP Honor Roll this year and FAIRFIELD is one of the eighteen. This is a testament to our hard working students, the amazing work of our AP teachers, and also to all the teachers who had these students leading up to their AP courses.

Notes about Report Cards

Honor Roll

We plan on recognizing students who achieved Honor Roll and Headmaster's List status from grades earned in the first marking period. This will come in the form of letter sometime in the coming weeks. We will be using the following criteria:

- For Honor Roll, earn a 3.0 or better average in the included courses
- For Headmaster List, earn a 4.0 or better average in the included courses
- No student may qualify for the Honor Roll with a grade below a "C"
- No student may qualify for the Headmaster's List with a grade below a "B"
- No failures (F), withdrawals (W), or incompletes (I) allowed
- Grades in Physical Education, Health, Computer Proficiency, and Pass/Fail Courses are not applied to the grade point average for Scholastic Honors

For this and all future marking periods, we will be using the TERM GPA for calculating honor roll, where a course level alters the weight of the GPA. We will no longer be using an unweighted GPA scale. This change only has a positive impact on any given student's chances of making honor roll.

The "W" grade

For any student withdrawing from a class after November 1, a "W" for withdraw will appear on the student's transcript. The original plan was that a W would be applied after the fifth week of school. When we reached that date and began assessing the issue, we found that some classes had not had enough assessments for students to really understand how well or not they were doing in a class. After a lot of discussion, the two high schools determined that it would better serve students to use the end of the first marking period as the deadline for applying a W. Students should always avoid registering for a course from which there is a good chance they will withdraw. We believe that by applying the policy in this way we can reduce the potential of W grades appearing and simultaneously make sure students are making informed and appropriate decisions when registering.

Thank you for your continued support of FLHS. I look forward to seeing you at school events throughout the year.



Greg C. Hatzis
Headmaster