

Fairfield Public Schools
MILL HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
635 Mill Hill Terrace · Southport, Connecticut 06890-1262
Kevin Chase, Principal · Telephone: 203-255-8320 · Fax: 203-255-8205

Principal's Message

October 5, 2015

Dear Families:

As I had mentioned at Open House, we are again off to an outstanding start to the new school year. I also spoke of the importance of communication and working together as partners in education. In that vein I have identified my own level of communication to all of you as an area that is in need of improvement. I will be working on this goal of better communication through a variety of means. I will use newsletters such as this as a means to inform you about all things Mill Hill, including academics, special events, and school culture & climate. I will also use this as a way for all of you to get to know "who I am" a little better.

That being said, I realize that many of you might not even know my background...

I hold an undergraduate degree in history from Fordham University, a master's in teaching with a concentration in intermediate grades from Southern Connecticut State University, and a sixth year degree in educational leadership from Sacred Heart University. I hold two professional educator certificates. One is for teaching grades K-6, and the other is in administration and supervision.

Upon my graduation from Fordham, I found employment in the corporate world and rose to a regional management position fairly quickly. While my financial future seemed promising, I felt a void. My work was unfulfilling. It wasn't until I volunteered during my lunch hour in a special education resource room at a school not too far from my office that I found my passion. I knew from that point forward that teaching was my calling.

I first worked as an inclusion paraprofessional while getting my certification at FWMS and Dwight. I then taught grades 3 and 5 for a number of years at Dwight and Burr. I left Burr to become the instructional improvement teacher at McKinley as well as the elementary summer school principal. I spent one year as IIT and summer school principal before coming to Mill Hill in 2008. I am pleased to say, that's how I landed the position that I love in a community that I am so grateful to be a part of.

However, while that quickly tells how I came to Mill Hill, it by no means tells who I am. I am extremely passionate about what I do, and how well I do it. I expect nothing but the best of myself and those who surround me. As, I stated at open house, I am fortunate to be surrounded by people of the highest caliber in the staff at Mill Hill. "The Best", what does it mean? It holds both a common meaning as well as a meaning unique to the individual making the statement. I know that I want nothing but the best for our students, your children. I want my staff to give me nothing less than their best in their efforts to be the best for our students, your children. However, I don't know that "the best" means that you get it right every time. Rather, I think part of being the best is being humble enough, reflective enough, and determined enough to never stop learning, never stop growing, never stop achieving new and greater heights.

Achievement data will show gains and drops and surveys will indicate areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, but there should never be a child who does not want to come to Mill Hill. Furthermore, it's what we do with those gains, drops, satisfaction, and dissatisfaction that matter. I can tell you that I am never one to give up or give in. I will outline in future correspondence the logistics of our data analysis process and how we reflect on all information in hopes to be the "best" for our students, your children. I will outline how we use sound, smart educational thinking and research to implement the most beneficial practices. However, the truth of the matter is that we are human, and sometimes, despite nothing less than the best in effort and ideas, we end up with less than the best results. I can assure you that when that does occur there is a great level of dissatisfaction experienced within my staff and me.

That is who I am. That is what drives me. I want to be the best for you, for my staff, and, most importantly, for your children.



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As is evidenced by the fact that we have been acknowledged as a National PTA School of Excellence, we greatly value the input and collaboration of our community. Let us continue to work *together* to be better... to be the best for our children. Let's put our energies toward what matters most – our children.

By no means will these newsletters, IC messages, or web posts replace or change my philosophy of an open door policy at Mill Hill. You are always welcome to come see me to share your thoughts, concerns, or questions. I want to thank you for all you do as families to support our school and make it the wonderful place it is for our children. The connection between school and home is invaluable to the overall success and well being of our children. I look forward to another wonderful year at Mill Hill. I wanted to end with what I have composed as the vision for our school as its Principal.

We at Mill Hill strive to be champions of education, champions of children. We believe that we can reach higher levels of achievement through a constant cycle of reflection that lends itself to close examination and analysis of past and current practice to lead to continuous improvement. Each child is an individual in their own right and thus growth is commensurate to their individual needs and abilities.

More specifically, we collaborate in teams throughout our entire organization. We believe that inherent in the power of collaboration is that collectively we are smarter than any individual in the collective. Through this philosophy we will improve the capacity of administrators, teachers, and other key stakeholders to improve both the overall learning environment for our students and in turn their academic achievement and personal growth.

We are constantly examining student achievement outcomes. This close examination leads to focused reflection to identify instructional practice that produces positive student achievement outcomes for, as we know, there can exist instructional practice that is viewed as effective, but does not produce the desired results. In short, if we are responsive to student learner outcomes, we will improve student achievement.

This structure has clearly defined components that allow for a system of checks and balances that illuminate areas to both replicate and revise. This clear vision, communication of this vision, along with a transparent and well-articulated structure that is aligned in its documentation, tasks, and functioning throughout the organization is the backbone of our success. We strive to nurture the growth of the whole child. We will always work to follow our motto; "Mill Hill is a Home for the Mind and Heart." Keep your heart in mind.

Sincerely,



Kevin Chase
Principal

