

August 2011

Dear Parents/ Guardians and Students,

On behalf of the administration, faculty and staff at Rocky Hill High School, I hope that this letter finds you and your family well and having a fun and relaxing summer. I welcome you to the start of the 2011-2012 school year.

We have been working hard this summer to ensure a smooth opening for the new school year. As a reminder, incoming 9th grade students are invited to attend our Freshman Orientation Program on Monday, August 22, 2011 from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in the auditorium. We encourage parents to join us after the presentation at 11:30 a.m. for our Freshman Kickoff Celebration in front of the school. Hotdogs, popcorn, Italian ice and drinks will be provided, as well as entertainment by our high school band. Our regular first full day of school will be **Monday, August 29, 2011.**

We are starting the 2011-2012 school year by taking a positive approach to improving student behavior by implementing a system called Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) at RHHS. PBIS is a research-based, school-wide approach to improve school climate and creating safer and more effective schools. This program was implemented in our district a few years ago and has been successful at our elementary and middle schools. The goal of the program is to create an atmosphere for learning by setting clear, consistent expectations and directly teaching and reinforcing our expectations. **ROCK (Respectful, Organized, Compassionate, Knowledge)** was chosen as our motto by our PBIS Student Team in an effort to instill school-wide pride. These PBIS guiding principles spell out exactly what is expected from our students at all times in the classroom, hallways, common areas, bathrooms, and study halls. There will be a PBIS presentation on the first day of school. Staff and students from our PBIS Team will go over our student expectations, and what **ROCK** means to them.

The preliminary results and data from the 2011 Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) look very positive and show increases in all four areas with Writing Across the Disciplines seeing the largest growth. Rocky Hill High School sophomores scored higher than their last year counterparts in Math, Science, Reading and Writing. In **Math**, there was a 6.8% increase in students who scored at/above goal and 3.6% increase in students who scored at/above proficiency. In **Science**, there was a 5.7% increase in students who scored at/above goal and a minimal 0.2% difference in students who scored at/above proficiency 3.6%. In **Reading across the Disciplines**, there was a 9.2% increase in students who scored at/above goal and a 2.6% increase in students who scored at/above proficiency. In **Writing across the Disciplines**, there was a 12.3% increase in students who scored at/above goal and a 3.9% increase in students who scored at/above proficiency.

Along with this letter, I have included information to frequently asked questions as well as helpful tips for your son or daughter to be successful in the new school year. We seek your support as we work to maintain the positive school climate at our high school. During the first few days, teachers will be reviewing class and school expectations with their students and each student will receive an updated copy of the Student Handbook. Parents and students should review this information together.

We look forward to the new school year and the many plans that we have to make it a successful one. The staff and I look forward to working with you to achieve our shared goal of helping your son/daughter achieve his/her potential. Please feel welcome to contact us if you have any questions or concerns to address prior to the start of school.

May the remainder of the summer prove restful and enjoyable for you and your family.

Respectfully,

Mario J. Almeida
Principal

Enclosures

INFORMATION FOR THE FIRST DAYS OF SCHOOL

REGISTRATION AND SCHEDULE CHANGES

Counselors will be available on August 17, 18, 19, 20, 22 and 23 for registration and for those students who need to make schedule changes. Please call the guidance department at 258-7724 to make an appointment. All schedule changes for first semester must be completed by the fifth day of school (**September 2**). Please be reminded that, as we continue to balance our classes and accommodate requests, some student's schedules may change. This is done in an attempt to maintain all classes at an appropriate class size. Thank you for your understanding.

THE FIRST DAY - MONDAY, AUGUST 29, 2011

Students should report directly to their homeroom at 7:20 a.m. period, a number of paperwork items will be completed. It is parent/guardian's work numbers as well as emergency contact numbers so that the homeroom forms can be quickly completed. Your cooperation in this area is greatly appreciated.



During an extended homeroom essential that students have their

GRADE 9 ORIENTATION

Welcome to the Class of 2015! Our orientation for grade 9 students is scheduled for Monday, August 22nd from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in the auditorium. Parents are invited to join us at 11:30 a.m. for our "**Freshman Kickoff Celebration**" in front of the school. Hotdogs, popcorn, Italian ice and drinks will be provided.

PARENT PORTAL

Just a reminder... parents and students can easily access grades and email teachers with questions through our Parent Portal. In order to reduce mailing costs and help save the environment, we will no longer be mailing home progress reports. You may monitor your student's progress by checking the Parent Portal regularly. We have worked many of the kinks out of the system and grades are entered regularly. If you have no access to the internet, you can contact your student's guidance counselor, who will provide you with a copy of the grades. Report cards will continue to be sent home via students. If the external website is down, the Parent Portal is still accessible by typing in <http://ps.rockyhillps.com/public/home.html> to the address bar at the top of the browser.

STUDENT PARKING

Parking at RHHS is a privilege and very limited... offered to senior students first, and only then to junior students space permitting. Seniors should only be parking in the senior parking lot, on the North side; juniors on the South side parking lot within the white parking spaces near the tennis courts. Students are not permitted to park in the back of the building or in the teacher's yellow painted rows. Students wishing to obtain parking privileges must register in the main office and obtain a current school year parking decal. After registration, students will be assigned a numbered parking space on a first come, first serve basis. Only one parking space will be assigned per family. Students parking without a permit or in unauthorized spaces will receive a school consequence. Parking privileges are available to students with licenses, as long as they comply with all school rules, have a parent's written permission to drive to school and space is available.

STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK and SCHOOL AGENDA

We will once again provide each student with a School Agenda and Planner. This document will enable each student to record daily assignments and appointments. The Agenda also contains helpful information on study skills, goal setting, the school calendar, as well as our Student-Parent Handbook, containing our rules and regulations.

Students are to utilize the School Agenda and Planner to record daily homework assignments and other class requirements. Please review this document with your son or daughter and encourage its use on a daily basis.

A REMINDER ABOUT SUMMER READING

A Summer Reading Packet was mailed home in early July. Students could choose a minimum of two self selected books to read over the summer. In September, as a group, during homeroom, students will discuss the books they read with their fellow classmates. In order to be prepared for the book discussions, students may choose to create and bring in a personal interpretation of the books read. The interpretations will not be graded; however, they will assist students in expressing their responses to the books.

MEET OUR NEW FACULTY

We are pleased to welcome the following staff to our high school:

David Dubos – P.E./Health

David has been the district wide P.E. program supervisor for the last several years. He has taught at West Hill since 2001. He is an avid cyclist and competes weekly throughout New England. For the past three years David has raced up Mount Washington.

Cara Persico – English

Cara filled in as a long-term substitute last year for Teresa Aurigemma. She graduated from the University of Hartford as a Secondary English Education Major. She also studied abroad at the University of Manchester in Manchester, England. Most recently, she was employed at Bristol Eastern High School as a grade 12 English teacher and a Reading instructor for ELL students.

Rebecca Ebert – Special Education

Rebecca is certified in special education and social studies. She and her husband have recently moved from upstate New York to Connecticut. She taught both middle and high school in Rochester, NY, where she was born and raised. She graduated with a B.S. in Special Education from SUNY Geneseo and a M.S. in Special Education from Nazareth College in New York.

Catherine Mader – P.E./Health

Catherine has been a P.E. teacher since 2007 at Stevens School. She loves to travel, eat and runs to stay sane. She looks forward to working with high school students.

HIGH SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

We are pleased to invite you to Open House at Rocky Hill High **September 19th**, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. After receiving homeroom, parents will follow their child's schedule for the During each ten-minute period, classroom teachers will present



School on Monday, student's schedules in remainder of the evening. an overview of course

content, with emphasis on their expectations for student performance and achievement. Follow-up meetings and telephone calls are encouraged.

Administrators, guidance counselors, and support staff will be available throughout the evening to answer questions. Members of the Student Senate will be on hand to serve as guides as parents travel from class to class. Refreshments will be served in the cafeteria. Please stop by during your child's study period.

Parents with more than one child at the high school will need to make some decisions about which classes to visit, or may wish to invite another adult family member to attend some classes. We look forward to seeing you!

LEND-A-PAW

We are very excited to be sponsoring the tenth annual Lend-A-Paw community service initiative on **Friday, September 30th (rain date will be Thursday, October 6th)**. In past years, students, staff, parent volunteers, and community members have all had a very positive response to this day of service and giving to the greater Rocky Hill Community. The event grows larger every year. This year, we hope to continue to add additional sites and increase our number of student volunteers. **In order to make this possible, we need more parent chaperones!** Parent chaperones work with a faculty chaperone to supervise a group of students at each site. Please consider giving of your time to support this very important, character-building initiative. If you are willing to chaperone, please contact the Main Office at 258-7721.

PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Research indicates that parent involvement is a critical factor not only in the success of the individual student, but also in the overall success of the school. All parents are encouraged to become members of our Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) which meets monthly on the third Wednesday of every month. Our first meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, September 21st**. All meetings are at 7:00 p.m. in the school library. Your support and input are always welcome.

PROJECT GRADUATION - 2012

Senior parents; Project Graduation needs your assistance! The time, planning, and preparation required to ensure a successful and enjoyable Project Graduation party for our seniors is overwhelming. We are sure that you share our commitment to a safe, substance-free celebration in June. Please make a decision to get involved and join the Project Graduation Planning Committee. This is your final opportunity to be involved in your child's school program.

FOR YOUR REFERENCE

A REMINDER ABOUT THE "NEW" GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

As noted in our Program of Studies booklet, beginning with the class of 2006, and for each graduating class thereafter, the local Board of Education must specify the basic skills include a process to assess the student's level of competency our already established standards for graduation as outlined of Studies booklet, we have also established specific skills in demonstrate proficiency. Specifically, students will be proficiency in the areas of research, writing, mathematics, technology. They may achieve proficiency in these five areas in the following ways:



necessary for graduation and in those skills. In addition to on page seven of our Program which students must required to demonstrate oral presentation, and

- Score at level three or better on each sub-test of the CAPT (or)
- Score a forty or greater on the math and verbal sections of the PSAT (or)
- Score a four hundred or greater on the math and verbal sections of the SAT (or)
- Score a three or better on rubrics created for research, writing, mathematics, oral presentation, and technology and applied to approve course specific projects.

Students will have four years in which to demonstrate their proficiency in these five areas. Parents will be notified on a regular basis regarding their child's progress.

DRESS CODE

We continue to ask for your support with our dress code. School is a place of learning and students are expected to dress accordingly. The full policy as written in our student handbook follows – it may be helpful for back-to-school shopping!

Page 31-32 of the Student Handbook:

The community and general public often judge the quality of education by the behavior, appearance, and activities of its student body. The results of one's dress, appearance, and behavior generally go far beyond the individual student.

In general, attire and grooming of individual students in this school system are the responsibility of the students and their parents. There are, however, general principles of good taste and modesty which must and shall be observed.

Students' overall appearance shall fall within the generally accepted definitions of neatness and cleanliness. Generally, the students are expected to dress and groom themselves for the business of school so as to neither distract other students nor teachers, disrupt the education process, or pose a health or safety threat to anyone.

Clothing should be clean, untorn, free from promotion or reference to drugs, alcohol and tobacco and of slogans, names, titles or the like which are defamatory toward person(s), group(s), the school or other organizations of which they are likely to incite or inflame.

Students whose dress or grooming is judged by the staff to be distracting, disruptive, or dangerous to personal safety will be subject to administrative action. The intent of this policy is to encourage all concerned to dress, groom, and conduct themselves in keeping with the atmosphere which reflects a sensitivity to and respect for self and others and the overall functions of the school.

The following clothing styles are specifically prohibited:

1. *Black soled shoes, boots or sneakers which mark the floor.*
2. *"See-through" style and/or mesh-style shirts, blouses, or midriff tops.
(Note: an exception may be made if worn over another top which fits the guidelines outlined here regarding suitable coverage)*
3. *Underwear worn as outerwear and/or blatantly visible underwear (e.g. bra straps)*
4. *Jackets, coats, or boots normally worn as outerwear, (i.e. fleece cover-ups and light-weight vests are permitted);*
5. *Short shorts (i.e. no shorter than two inches above the limit for skirts under this policy);*
6. *Gang symbols of any type worn or displayed on school premises ("gang": any group of two or more persons whose purposes include the commission of illegal acts).*
7. *Accessories which may be a danger to self or others (spiked jewelry, long chains, etc.).*
8. *Hats and other head apparel.*
9. *Clothing which exposes midriff or cleavage; spaghetti straps and tank tops.*

All shirts and blouses should reach the waistline and provide appropriate cover under normal activity. All shirts must have straps or sleeves which provide adequate support for the garment. Skirts will be permitted as long as they are of mid-thigh length and of appropriate fit (i.e. not too tight). The “mid-thigh” mark, for the purposes of this policy, will be defined as ½ the length from the hip-bone to the knee-cap when the student is in a seated position. The skirt must then reach this mark when the student is standing. Pants must be worn high enough to cover the buttocks and should cover all layers and types of clothing worn underneath (e.g. underwear, boxer shorts, etc.).

Clothing which is worn in physical education shall not be worn in regular classes or other parts of the school, nor shall clothing worn in regular classes be worn in physical education. Physical education teachers will specify the kind of clothing appropriate for their activity and their guidelines may restrict clothing which is otherwise allowed in school (e.g. no spaghetti straps in P.E. class).

GUIDANCE: Assignment of Counselors

Counselor assignments are as follows:

<u>Last Name Beginning With:</u>	<u>Counselor:</u>
A – D	Mr. Dabkowski
E– K	Mrs. Carbutti
L – Rf	Mrs. Bikowski
Rg – Z	Mrs. Russell

If you have any questions, please feel welcome to contact the guidance department at 258-7724.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

We at Rocky Hill High School value each young person’s education and hold students to high standards regarding academic honesty. As each individual is responsible for his or her own learning, each student is expected to complete and submit only his/her own work. (This may include his/her own independent thought, reflection, or a compilation of resources and information appropriately credited.) Any violation of this standard is considered academic dishonesty and results in very serious academic and disciplinary consequences.

At the end of this newsletter, please find our complete policy information which will help both students and parents fully understand our definition regarding academic dishonesty. We have found that some of our students come to us with an incomplete understanding of what is and is not acceptable, especially with respect to citing sources. It is our hope that this information will be helpful to you both in your conversations prior to the start of school. Please review the information carefully and feel free to contact Mr. Almeida, Mr. Malizia, or the classroom teachers should you have any questions or concerns. Additional information can be found on page 11 of the Student Handbook. Thank you for helping us to maintain the highest academic standards for our students.

ATHLETICS and CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Mr. Thomas McCabe is the Director of Athletics and Students activities. The athletic programs continue to be successful and continue to provide meaningful experiences for our young men and women. In addition to our comprehensive [Athletic Handbook](#), we have also created a handbook for co-curricular activities. These handbooks contain valuable information on expectations, consequences, policies, and procedures. Parents and student participants will be expected to read the documents and abide by all that is contained within them.

In reference to the Athletic and Co-Curricular Handbooks, parents/guardians and students should note the language on pages 15-17 of the Athletic Handbook and page 6 of the Co-Curricular Handbook regarding substance abuse. Both handbooks are now available online on our school Website. Students are reminded that participation in athletics and co-curricular activities is a privilege and carries with it high expectations for students as role models.

Of special note is our goal to “raise the bar” relative to our behavioral expectations for not only our athletes, but also our parents and our fans. Let us all remember that our athletes, their coaches, the referees, opposing teams, and their fans deserve nothing less than our respect and courtesy.

STUDENT DISMISSALS

A reminder that students may only be dismissed from school by a parent for medical appointments or other necessary business that cannot be scheduled outside the school day. RHHS is **not an open campus**; students are expected to be in attendance from 7:20 – 2:10 including study halls, assemblies, and classes for which there is a substitute. Please do not dismiss students unnecessarily – it creates problematic interruptions in the school day, burdens the main office staff, and circumvents the rules of the school. Please also note: Students who are dismissed excessively will be ineligible for senior privileges (i.e. early dismissal/late arrival,) and may face formal disciplinary consequences.

PROMOTION STANDARD and HOMEROOM

Students must obtain the following number of credits each year in order to successfully graduate in four years with 22 credits:

- By the end of Year 1 - 5.50 credits
- Year 2 - 11.00 credits
- Year 3 - 16.50 credits
- Year 4 - 22.00 credits

Students will continue to remain in the same homeroom and Advisory Period for all high school years regardless of credit status.



ROCKY HILL HIGH SCHOOL
Academic Honesty Statement

(Media Center Handout)

Cheating and plagiarism constitutes academic dishonesty. Therefore, the Rocky Hill High School community will not tolerate cheating and plagiarism.

Plagiarism: “To steal and use as one’s own or to take and use as one’s own the writings or ideas of another” – from the Latin *plaga* meaning kidnapping.

Cheating: “A fraudulent acquisition of another’s property.”
American Heritage Dictionary of English Language

- I. There are three (3) types of plagiarism: ideas, information (data) and words (spoken or written).
 1. **Ideas:** If you use another person’s unique ideas – their original thoughts/theories, opinions, or philosophy – you must give them credit.
 2. **Information:** If you use their research information/statistics, graphs, diagrams, tables, or drawings (that are not common knowledge) – you must give them credit.
 3. **Words:** If you use a person’s actual spoken or written words, you must either “quote” verbatim or paraphrase – and you must give them credit.

In each case, you must give credit to the originator of the ideas, information or words. Failure to cite the source of information used is stealing. In addition, a list of sources cited (*Bibliography, Sources Consulted*) is always part of all research assignments.

- II. Research terminology
 - **Common knowledge:** Information found in three (3) or more sources and is usually known by many people.
 - **Paraphrase:** “A rewording of the meaning expressed in something spoken or written.”
Webster’s New World Dictionary
 - **Quote:** To take (incorporate into your essay), verbatim, a creator’s passage/statement. Quotation marks are placed around the used text.
- III. Why is plagiarism illegal and unethical?
 - Stealing another person’s ideas can (and has) lead to loss of a job, million-dollar-law suits, loss of reputations and expulsion from college/universities.
 - Teachers assign papers so that students may synthesize information, understand its significance and apply the information gathered. Plagiarism does not achieve these goals.
- IV. Repercussions for cheating and plagiarizing
 - Students caught by the teacher cheating or plagiarizing will receive a zero grade for the assignment.
 - First offense is a Saturday detention. Second offense is internal suspension. Third offense will result in a more significant disciplinary action.
 - At the teacher’s discretion, students may have to re-write the assignment, in order to understand the learning experience of honest research methodologies.