

August 1, 2013

Middle School Staff,

Welcome to the 2013-2014 school year! A special greeting is extended to all of the staff members who are new or rejoining the Northfield Middle School team. Our August newsletter has been mailed out to each NMS family and is also posted on the district website at <http://nfld.k12.mn.us/news/newsletters/>. Please familiarize yourself with the information that was shared with families. There are many shifts in our traditional operations to help us become more efficient and to support our transformative technology efforts.

Please welcome our new or returning staff members:

Band	Stefanie Berkopec
Science	Heidi Muller-Peterson
Special Education	Patsy Ophaug
Industrial Technology	Steve Taggart
English	Ann Jerdee
Business Education	Julie Wolner
Educational Assistants	Janet Amundson, Liz Brewer Kathy Mellstrom, Molly Peterson
Americorps Promise Fellow	Shannon Fraser
Math Corps Promise Fellow	Adam Zweber
TORCH Vista	Rachel Sams

New licensed staff members have a district training session on August 19 and 20. All middle school staff members are invited to our welcome back staff meeting on August 26 from 7:45 to 8:45 a.m. in our auditorium. This will be our only chance prior to the first day of school for the full staff to come together. Educational assistants will be engaged in job specific training sessions the remainder of the day. Licensed staff will have an additional hour long faculty meeting and then have the rest of the day on Monday to work in their rooms and prepare for Parent Night. Our Parent Night will take place on August 28 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. All other staff members should take direction from their supervisor for training and work responsibilities during workshop week.

There are two exciting events that will happen for the first time ever this fall. Each student and teacher will be equipped with an iPad tablet computer. This year, students will substitute their Schoology account for the agenda planners of the past. Teachers are expected to have their courses set up in Schoology prior to Parent Night. For those who have already attended Schoology training, this will be a simple process. For those who didn't, I have set up a course titled *Back to School with Schoology*. This "training only" course will have several videos and tips to assist Schoology orientation and course creation. The course is set up to demonstrate what the student view of a course will look like. Anyone (including non-licensed staff) can create a Schoology account by using their district e-mail address and then requesting a change of password to whatever you would like it to be. To check it out, you will need to join my class with the access code of K7JSK-4VBXR.

Another exciting event will be the national conference of the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) taking place in Minneapolis. On November 8, the middle school will be the only district school not in session. All staff members are eligible to attend the conference, with their registration and transportation provided by our site staff development account. Shared-time teachers should inquire with their other principal about attendance options. This is an incredible opportunity which aligns wonderfully with our transformative technology initiative.

All staff members will also be issued new I.D. badges this year. The human resources department will be hosting badge photo sessions each morning in August to prevent long lines during workshop week. Staff members are also welcome to have their yearbook picture taken during the afternoon student sessions August 20-22 or on September 26.

Our custodial and building and grounds crews have worked diligently around summer programs and into August to prepare our school. Currently sound absorbing acoustic panels are being installed in the cafeteria and a new secure main entrance is being constructed. If you stop in during mid-August, please be prepared to dodge any final projects that need to be completed before Parent Night. The building will be unlocked at 7:00 a.m. on the remaining summer weekdays. Remember to use the sign-in board when accessing the building outside of custodial hours to prevent unnecessary police calls.

The middle school office will be staffed as fully as possible through the rest of the summer. The accompanying tentative school start schedule highlights major upcoming events. Each individual faculty member should note their specific assignments during the workshop week. We look forward to your return!

See you soon,  
Jeff