

Pine Hill Middle School

January 10, 2025

Hello PHMS Parents and Guardians,

I hope this message finds you well and that you had a joyful and restful holiday season. As we begin the second half of the school year, I want to take a moment to express my gratitude for your continued support and partnership in ensuring the success and well-being of our students.

As we enter 2025, we are excited to continue fostering an environment where our students can grow academically, socially, and emotionally. Our dedicated staff remains committed to providing high-quality instruction and offering meaningful experiences that support each student's individual needs and strengths.

We recognize that the middle school years are a time of transition and growth, and we are here to help guide and support your child as they navigate this important stage of development. Please continue to stay connected with us—whether through conferences, emails, or other school events—to ensure that we are working together to make this a successful year for your child.

In the coming months, we will also be focusing on fostering positive school culture, encouraging leadership, and promoting resilience in our students. We truly believe that when families, students, and staff work together, we can achieve great things.

Thank you once again for your ongoing involvement and for trusting us with the privilege of educating your child. Let's make this year one of growth, learning, and positive change for all of our students!

Pia Garbutt

Pia Garbutt, MA., M.Ed. ABD.
Pine Hill Middle School, Principal



Before the holiday break, PHMS band teacher, Erica Burr and her students put on an **AWESOME WINTER CONCERT PERFORMANCE!!!**



What a Wonderful Season of Giving!

Also, before the holiday break, our PHMS psychologist, Ms. **Desiree Marasa** and the SpEd/ CST Team worked with the community to ensure that students and families in need receive help during the Holidays!



Marking Period 1 Honor Roll and Character Awards Celebration was a Success!



Our staff members and our National Junior Honor Society members helped with this wonderful celebration.





*This year we have implemented a program called **Transformative Student Voice**. This program helps to uplift student voice and teaches students how to advocate for themselves within a research based method.*

We are in the problem solving stage in our program. I am excited to hear our students' thoughts regarding how to take data and turn it into issues that need to be addressed in order to solve as a team!

10 Reasons to Elevate Student Voice

- 1 Increases student engagement
- 2 Enhances school culture and climate
- 3 Supports inclusivity and equity
- 4 Creates belonging
- 5 Informs interventions
- 6 Identifies schoolwide improvements
- 7 Fosters ownership and accountability
- 8 Promotes democratic education
- 9 Develops critical thinking
- 10 Builds agency

Breakfast After the Bell Info

The New Jersey Department of Agriculture has determined that 70% of PHMS students are eligible for free or reduced priced meals. Therefore, we will need to offer the Breakfast After the Bell program as mandated by the state of NJ.

This simply means that we will continue to serve hot breakfast during arrival time, however, at approximately 8:05 am if any student arrives at or after that time, the cafeteria will need to remain open for the students who arrive after the late bell until the end of first period (9:04 am). During this time frame, the students who are late, will have to punch in their student ID in the cafeteria and are given a “grab and go” breakfast. They will then need to report immediately to class.

A joint memo between the Department of Agriculture and Department of Education dated June 25, 2019 communicates that breakfast can be served and eaten during morning activities such as announcement, attendance, homeroom or turning in homework.



Game Club Trip! Super Fun with Learning

Students had a great time exploring the wonders of science at The **Franklin Institute**, from the mysteries of the universe to the intricacies of the human body.



A DAY OF BASKETBALL IN PHILLY

On Saturday, January 4th, the Middle School Girls' Basketball team was invited by Coach Cade of Overbrook's Lady Rams on a trip to attend an Ivy League basketball game between UPenn and Columbia.



The field trip began with a skill-building, mixed-team scrimmage and



post-discussion with the Lady Rams before heading out to the UPenn campus in Philadelphia, where we received a complimentary lunch and UPenn-logo toiletry bags from the Vice Provost for Student Engagement.

After an inspirational talk by the coaches and a video on the origins of UPenn (did you know that it was founded by Benjamin Franklin?), we set out into the crisp, winter air for a walking tour towards the historic Palestra, where the games are held.

Although UPenn lost, it was a close and intense game at times and we enjoyed watching every minute of it over nachos and other refreshments. After the game, we got to meet and chat with the UPenn team and get their autographs! Some of our own players even had their photos taken with UPenn's Guard, #22 Mataya Gayle!



Miss Shanelle Griffin, M.Ed.

PHMS Girls' Basketball Assistant Coach



Attendance Matters



Thinking about staying home? Research shows that students that miss more than 10 days a year are 20% less likely to graduate on time. By coming to school each day they aren't sick, your students are staying on track for graduation. (Source).

Key Upcoming Events and Initiatives:

- **Parent-Teacher Conferences:** These will take place in February, and I encourage you to sign up for a time to meet with your child's teachers. This is a great opportunity to discuss progress, address any concerns, and set goals for the remainder of the year. Remember to check Genesis!
- **Spring Extracurricular Activities:** Winter sports has started but as we move closer to the spring season, many of our clubs and spring sports will begin. We encourage your child to participate in these activities, as they are a great way to explore new interests, build friendships, and develop leadership skills.
- **Academic Support:** If your child needs additional academic support, please don't hesitate to reach out to our staff. We have a variety of resources available, including the after-school Project Success program and study hall groups. Our goal is to ensure every student has the tools they need to succeed.



January 14: Picture Makeup Day
January 17: Half Day/ Staff Inservice
January 20: MLK Day of Service School is Out
January 28: Last Day of MP 2
February 14: School is Out/ Staff Inservice
February 17: President's Day School Closed
February 19: Night Conferences
February 18,19, 20: Half Day Conferences
February 21: Half Day & MP2 Honor Roll Celebration

Wishing you a prosperous and happy new year!

Warm regards,

Pia Garbutt

Pia Garbutt, MA., M.Ed. ABD.
Pine Hill Middle School, Principal