

“We tend to forget that happiness doesn’t come as a result of getting something we don’t have, but rather of recognizing and appreciating what we do have.”

Frederick Keonig

Dear Armatage Families,

We are now within days of the much anticipated spring break  . I hope you have fabulous plans that include time to rest, relax and enjoy some down time with your family.

### **BUDGET**

Last Friday, I submitted the 2017 -2018 budget. I am thrilled to share we will be able to maintain our current staffing roster! Due in part to the amazing Maude, Mingle & Montessori fund raising effort that raised approximately \$35,000 and the school districts willingness to adjust some funding lines for particular positions; we were able to present a balanced budget. Achieving a balanced budget with no reduction in staffing was definitely a collaborative effort!

Thank you to everyone who supported our fund raiser, participated in the Site Council and PTA discussions regarding the budget and offered ideas regarding staffing & financial resources; your support, involvement and encouragement was greatly appreciated!

### **SUMMER SCHOOL**

Minneapolis Public Schools will be offering a summer school opportunity for any student who would benefit from additional instructional support during vacation. Summer school will take place June 26<sup>th</sup> - August 3<sup>rd</sup> (No school the week of July 4<sup>th</sup>).

Please contact our office at 612.668.3180 if you have not received a registration form and would like your child/ren to attend summer school.

### **LITERACY ADOPTION PILOT**

Prior to winter break, Lucilla Davilia requested Armatage School participate in the district literacy adoption pilot to ensure magnets and Montessori schools had a voice at the table. During the past eight weeks, 11 Armatage teachers in grades 1 - 5 used one of the three literacy curriculums to teach reading. Taking this on was A LOT of extra work for these teachers. Last Friday, Armatage teachers piloting the literacy materials met with district representatives to provide feedback about the materials they used and listen to the experiences of colleagues using different materials. Based on the information the district receives from all teachers involved in the pilot process, an adoption of a new literacy curriculum will be made. The new curriculum will be used beginning next fall.

A special thank you is extended to Heidi Olson, Juliet Holder, Susie King, Jean Avecilla Kelly Alexander, Tina Swift, Stacy Katzovitz, Kristen Hanson, Christian Houdek, Michelle Loomans and Marie Vorais for all their extra time, effort and expertise.

### **CONSTRUCTION**

There is no new information to share other than the timeline has been adjusted; construction will not begin until June. This modification will allow minimal interruption of the academic school day for our students.

### **Classification**

Now that the budget is final and we know the staffing for next year; we will begin the classification process for the 2017 - 2018 school year. This is an opportunity for grade level teachers to work collaboratively to decide which students would work well together as they move to the next grade. This work is important and time consuming. This year, one aspect of the process will be modified i.e. groupings will be made with no teacher's name attached. The goal is to create 22 balanced classrooms using the following criteria:

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Academics
- Behavior
- Other (Special Education, ELL)

One of the biggest changes some families may experience is that siblings will no longer be automatically placed with the teacher/s their brothers or sisters had in the past. Limiting where a child can be placed puts constraints on the process and does not treat every child the same. Our goal is to provide an equitable process that ensures every child is placed into a new classroom based on their individual attributes.

In order to get balanced classrooms across all grade levels, the process will require two years of classifying using this system.

We believe all Armatage Montessori teachers are fabulous and have the skills to work with and challenge any and all students assigned to their classroom.

### **SOMALIA FUND RAISER**

Somalia is experiencing the worst famine since World War II, due to severe drought, war and many other issues. Millions of people are in need of the basic necessities. According to the United Nations, Somalia is on the edge of a catastrophic famine.

If you are interested in donating to this cause, please reference one of the links below. If so desired, share this information with your friends and family.

According to the district's General Counsel's Office, "Principals may authorize charitable giving campaigns that solicit contributions from students in response to natural disasters or for the purpose of supporting health research, or other charitable purposes so long as the campaign does not inure to the benefit of an identifiable student or employee. It is preferred that such charitable giving campaigns concentrate on non-monetary contributions, such as food, used or new toys and clothing. Monetary contributions should be limited to small-value coin collection. Prior parent notification is required for any charitable solicitation from students. Participation must be completely voluntary and not tied to any extrinsic reward system." Policy 5544 ¶ IV. B.

Contributions should be directed toward the charitable organizations listed below:

- ARAHA (www.araha.org), <https://www.icrc.org/en/where-we-work/africa/somalia>
- <https://www.oxfam.org/en/countries/somalia>

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the needs of Somalia, please contact Abdullahi Aden at 612.668.3180.

### **SPRING BREAK**

Just a reminder there is no school this Friday, March 31<sup>st</sup> - Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup>. Enjoy the time off!

Sincerely,

Joan Franks, Principal