

**NORTH COLONIE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
91 FIDDLERS LANE
LATHAM, NY 12110**

August 2010

Dear Parents:

This hot and humid summer reminds me of my youth growing up downstate and the inevitable progression as we close out one school year and begin another. As you read this letter, you will find that I refer to a number of different events, changes, and opportunities that will be occurring next year. Please take the time to review this letter carefully and discuss the contents with your child. Your acknowledgement helps to reinforce the importance of school practices and the messages we deliver to students in order to ensure a positive and safe school environment. This coming year will be an unprecedented challenge as the District prepares a budget for the 2011-2012 school year while continuing to meet community expectations of a quality education while facing uncertain reductions in our state revenue source.

We will continue to provide a positive learning environment through our consistent enforcement of discipline and building practices. This upcoming year, we will be allowing students to use cell phones on a limited basis. Last year, a committee of teachers, parents and students met to consider student cell phone use at the high school during the school day. I have enclosed the final recommendations that were made through the committee and the administrative team at the high school. The new student usage recognizes the fact that while technology has a strong connection to our students' lives, it is still important that we safeguard the learning environment. Students must respect and follow these rules. Students who do not will receive disciplinary consequences. I ask that you discuss cell phone use and the new rules at the high school with your child. The committee will reconvene in early spring 2011 to review the impact of the cell phone use changes.

In addition to the guidelines regarding cell phone usage, I would like to remind you of several other building practices which are in place in order to maintain an optimal learning environment for all. Students must use after school bus passes for the 4:05 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. runs. Passes will be made available by teachers and coaches supporting students after school. As a reminder, there will not be a 5:00 p.m. bus run on Fridays. In addition, rules against plagiarism will be enforced. Ms. Skeals (English Supervisor) will serve as the contact person if you have any questions. Please remind your child about this important information. For more information, please refer to the Student Handbook. The hall principals will be discussing these items with students at the class assemblies at the beginning of the year.

On October 6, Rachel's Challenge will return to Shaker High School. Our students will participate in assemblies on that day, experiencing the inspirational message of hope, kindness, and civility to others. That evening we will host Rachel's Challenge for the community and parents. I encourage you to consider attending the program. I have included additional information in this mailing.

Of course, achievement continues to be a high priority at Shaker High School. Students once again have demonstrated outstanding academic performance. This past June, 96% of our students received Regents diplomas. A total of 71% received a Regents diploma with Advanced designation. Two hundred ninety one students wrote 558 Advanced Placement examinations, with 89% scoring 3 or higher. The historically low dropout rate for Shaker High School continues. The North Colonie Central School District was ranked number four of 85 school districts in the Greater Capital District Region by the *Business Review*.

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To better help you monitor your child's individual progress, this fall you will be given the opportunity to access your child's educational information found in the student database. Report cards, attendance and demographic information will be available through the Parent Portal accessed through the Internet. There will be four days for parents to sign up for access to the Parent Portal. Please refer to more detailed information found in this mailing for dates and times.

Finally, some important dates for your calendar. The 2010-2011 school year will begin for all students on Wednesday, September 8, at 7:30 a.m. and end at 2:17 p.m. Schedules for tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders will be distributed in homerooms that morning. Homeroom assignments and important school-related information will be mailed to you during the week of **August 23**. The annual Welcome to North Colonie Picnic and orientation for students and parents who are new to the district will be held **Thursday, September 2, from 4:45-7:30 p.m.** at Shaker High School. **The Ninth Grade Orientation Program for students will begin in the H Gym at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 7.** When the students are dismissed to meet with their guidance counselors, their parents and/or guardians are asked to remain in the gym in order to meet with the high school administrators. The school store will be open prior to and after orientation. School supplies and planners will be available. The cost for planners is \$6.00 for a full year, and \$4.00 for a half year. The Pupil Services Department will send separate notifications about these events to involved families.

The annual Back-to-School-Night Program will be held on **Thursday, September 30, at 7:00 p.m.** The Student Government will be serving coffee beginning at 6:15 p.m. in the LaFollette Dining Room. During this program, you will have an opportunity to meet teachers and to begin to establish relationships, which can be highly beneficial to your child's educational growth, development, and success. This year, parking will be available at the Our Lady of Assumption Church parking lot. Beginning at 6:30 p.m., shuttle buses will bring people from the church to Shaker High School. Shuttle buses will return parents at the end of the evening. It is hoped that this will mitigate parking problems during the evening. My thanks to Father Burke for his permission. The Shaker High School Open House will be held on **Friday, November 12**, between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 2:17 p.m. If you plan to attend Open House, please contact the Taft or LaFollette Hall Principal prior to the day. **Please either circle or record all of these dates on the enclosed calendar and make every effort to attend these events.**

Thank you for your wonderful support. The faculty and I look forward to our continued partnership with you as we work together for the benefit of your child and all students of Shaker High School.

Sincerely,

Richard W. Murphy
Principal

RWM/jb
Enclosures