

*"Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success." --Henry Ford*

This September marks the beginning of my fourth year as Principal of Hillery Park Elementary School. The past three school years have been the most enjoyable and gratifying of my twenty-five year career. As I quickly look back at the progress we have made as a school community, the relationships and partnership we have developed with our parents and families are an area of success. However, I know we have a ways to go before we will reach my level of expectation.

As a school we know that communication is the key to improving the partnership we are looking to forge with our parents and families. You have probably already noticed an increase in our use of School Connect telephone calls to make important announcements. We also began pushing out more information via Facebook on our *Hillery Park Elementary PTO* page. Anyone with a Facebook account can search for this page and request membership. Additionally, we are looking to increase use of our school website which you can access via the district website www.buffaloschools.org. Simply go to the *Our Schools* button and then click on PS 27 Hillery Park Elementary.

In this day of instant access to information we have all become used to immediate access to information. Try as we might, answering all questions ahead of time is unlikely. Therefore, the best method of getting an answer to a specific question is to send an email or call the school. My goal this year is to answer parent emails and phone calls within 24 hrs. Please feel free to email me 24/7 at vvanderlip@buffaloschools.org. For a directory of our entire faculty and staff please visit our webpage.

Continuing with the topic of communication, we are seeking parents' cooperation regarding the District "Cell Phone Policy" and the practices we utilize here to adhere to the policy. Cell phones are to be put away and then locked up in lockers as soon as students enter the building. Many teachers are happy to hold the phone until the end of the day and return to the students at dismissal. Students should bring a lock to secure belongings.

We completely understand the need for students to have their cell phones while traveling to and from school. However, there is no need for students to access phones during the school day. We have phones in every office and classroom. If a parent needs to speak to their child or a student needs to talk to someone outside of school we will allow them to use our phones. Cell phone are a distraction and a barrier to students learning. As for accessing information, each student has been assigned their own mobile learning device. They have wireless access to the internet.

Please review the calendar on the opposite side of this letter for important happenings here at Hillery Park Elementary School this September. We hope to see all of you at our **Open House on Thursday, September 26th from 5pm-7pm.**

Respectfully,

Vincent T. Vanderlip-Principal