

Dear Harbor Parents,

Think, read, talk, play, reflect, and build. That is what summer is for Harbor and me. The school capitalizes on a freer schedule to alter its focus and plan, for its future, both near and far. I've outlined for you here what we have completed for the near term with a number of projects being launched this fall.

Harbor has been buzzing with our June and August intersession/enrichment weeks, and Camp Harbor in full swing in its seven-week program. I was fortunate earlier this summer to join a group of 15 other Harbor teachers and administrators for a two-day workshop on social and emotional learning led by Josh Hendrickson, the executive director of an organization called Project Presence.

Debbie Decker and Amy Malone have been leaders in our expanding mindfulness program and they, too, attended this workshop, which was designed for teachers to learn new ways to support their own and their students' social and emotional development. You will be hearing more about this as the program grows this year. I found it extremely fascinating and a program that will support my own, as well as our students', social and emotional growth.

Beyond this, I want to fill you in on the projects that address many of our 2016-2020 Strategic Plan goals and long-range security plans:

1. Communication: With thanks to many Harbor parent contributions, we installed a campus-wide public address system. In every room, including the bathrooms and our outdoor space, we are now able to communicate with everyone on campus in the case of any emergency, certainly for our lockdown drills, and for other communication needs.
2. Safety and Security: Another new feature in our strategic plans for safety and security is the addition of placing someone at the front hall desk, from 7:45 to 10:00 a.m. to check people in and collect any forms for school. Carly Lange has accepted this role. Carly is known well by Harbor as a fourth year counselor and associate camp director this past summer.
3. Curriculum enhancement: The week after school dismissed all the teachers in kindergarten through grade five attended a four-day workshop led by a consultant from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project to learn more and enhance their knowledge about the reading portion of this curriculum to implement and continue to expand our literacy program.
4. Curriculum enhancement: I feel that all the hard the work we have been doing with curriculum enrichment the past three years needs broadcasting, most especially, in literacy, mathematics, STEAM, advisory/social-emotional learning, and global languages. I have asked the division heads to bring our curriculum guides up to date and

available for public consumption. The upper school curriculum guide will be ready by the opening of school and the lower school and early childhood by the end of September - all on our website. Stay tuned.

5. Communication: We will be completing and launching two new elements to help current and prospective parents stay in close touch with what is happening at Harbor. First, a new Harbor website will be launched this fall with new features to improve navigation and offer a cleaner, more modern design. Second, we will be offering parents an app for their phones, which will send notifications about events and important announcements to keep you up to date with the latest Harbor news. The Tuesday Weekly Update eblast will remain in place as a central source of information, and will also be broadcasted through the app.
6. The STEAM design team will be attending STEAM Camp for the second year in a row with other teachers who are planning new STEAM units as this program expands this year into second and third grade.
7. Staffing: I am delighted to share with you, and am enclosing, a full description of where a couple current teachers have changed positions within the school as well as profiles of the new people joining Harbor. Knowing that one of the most important jobs we have is hiring and placing teachers, I am very excited about the new teachers joining us this fall.
8. We have a spanking brand new member of the Harbor Community. I am excited to announce that Brittany Brandel, one of our kindergarten teachers, gave birth to a healthy baby boy in early July. His name is Connor and his mother, father, and Connor are doing magnificently well. Brittany and Daniel "...love him to the moon and back!"
9. In a week's time, you will be receiving letters and information from a number of administrators and included in this information will be a set of guidelines for snack and lunch time foods, called "Healthy Hawks." We do feel that what we eat can affect how we feel and learn. These are not required food choices, but guidelines for building a healthier and more alert faculty and student body!

In closing, as we look to the beginning of the new school year, I feel it is important to remind ourselves of what Harbor's goals are as an academic institution. We believe in building the strongest and broadest academic program possible that supports the needs of each student. Our constant professional development work and conversations about what we teach and how we teach support the continuing development of our dynamic curriculum. Just as important is the social and emotional health of each child. You have heard me say that a child is ready and open to learn when he or she feels safe and supported. Our work this summer with Project Presence and the implementation of the central aspects of this program help us meet our goal to create the most positive environment for learning.

I am proud of the work the faculty and school has been doing over the years, and especially this summer, to create a school that challenges and supports each child at Harbor.

Can't wait to get this all going and see each of you in a few short weeks.

Sincerely,

John Cissel  
Head of School

I am happy to introduce you to new members of our community as well as the new positions a few veterans are taking.

PK4: Gretchen Dobrowolski will be one of the lead teachers in PK4 with Marge Gabrielle as her teaching assistant. Gretchen has her B.A. from California Lutheran University in English and her M.A. in Early Childhood Education and Special Education. She has her certification in Early Childhood Education and Students with Learning Disabilities. Gretchen is married and has two sons with one, Sawyer, joining the PK3 program at Harbor.

Kindergarten: Kandra Kane will be the lead kindergarten teacher while Brittany Brandel is on maternity leave through Thanksgiving. This will be Kandra's third year at Harbor, with her previous two years working as a co-teacher in the fourth grade teaching Singapore math and as our learning specialist. Co-teaching in kindergarten with Kandra and joining Harbor for the first time is Dana Allen. Dana has her B.A. from SUNY Plattsburg in Childhood Education and M.A. in Special Education with certification in both Elementary and Special Education. Most recently, Dana has worked as a substitute in the Beekmantown CSD. She loves swimming and has been a water safety instructor in Three Village since 2011.

First Grade: Bryana Gensinger is matriculating to first grade as the lead teacher. As many of you know, Bryana has been one of the two co-teachers in kindergarten at Harbor for the past three years. Joining and assisting her for part of each day is Jackie Burt. Jackie earned her B.A. from Stonehill College in Elementary Education and Psychology and her M.A. from Boston College in Moderate Disabilities. She is certified in Childhood Education. For the past ten years, Jackie has been teaching in a second grade inclusion classroom.

Second Grade: Silvana Rugilo will be the co-teacher in second grade with Laura Huang-Ernst as well as assisting, on occasion, in the PK3 class. Silvana is well know by many at Harbor as she has served as a substitute at Harbor for a number of years. She was also a long-term substitute for lower school science a couple of years ago as well as a long-term substitute for English in the Upper School last year. Silvana has her B.S. from the Fashion Institute of Technology, her M.A. from Bank Street College of Education in Early Childhood Education, and her certification in Early Childhood Education and Students with Disabilities.

Third Grade: Assisting and co-teaching with Dawn Woods this year is her co-teacher Jackie Burt. Jackie has her B.A. from Stonehill College in Elementary Education and Psychology and her M.A. from Boston College in Moderate Disabilities. She is certified in Childhood Education. For the past ten years, Jackie has been teaching in a second grade inclusion classroom in New York City.

Early Childhood and Lower School Physical Education: Joining the Physical Education Department is Nicole Driscoll. Nicole has her B.A. in Physical Education from Dowling College and her Masters in Education from Purdue in Special Education. She has her Certification in Physical Education as well. Nicole was the P.E. teacher at Ivy League this past year after teaching P.E. at BOCES at Bellport and at Westbury Friends School before that. She is a lifelong athlete and has been coaching soccer for the past seven years, following a successful school career in soccer.

Head of the Early Childhood Division: Krystina Gallo is starting her sixth year as the lead teacher in the PK3 classroom and launching her career as the head of the lower school. Harbor is excited about her taking the reins from LaNae Netter, who has moved to Malaysia with her husband to teach in a new school there.