



# Bridge School

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Principal's News September 2016

We are off to a wonderful start to the 2016/2017 school year. We are looking forward to many exciting events scheduled for the year, celebrating the success and achievements (socially and academically) of our students, and focusing our attention on the “whole learner.” You will hear students come home talking about mindfulness activities they have done, energizers their classes are involved in, and learning about what it means to have a growth mindset. It is our hope that these activities will help to refocus and recharge our students so that they can learn in an optimal way, while decreasing the levels of stress and anxiety that so many of our students experience.

The Lexington Public Schools in collaboration with the Town of Lexington is focusing a great deal of attention on analyzing the benefits of homework in connection with stress reduction. A district wide committee has been formed to reevaluate the amount, type, and benefit of homework at all grade levels. Here at Bridge, staff is encouraged to reevaluate the homework assigned keeping in mind the already rigorous school day as well as the many extracurricular activities children take part in. This year, the Bridge staff will be asking the questions: “How is the homework I assign benefiting the students?” “Is it thoughtful, engaging, and authentic?” If so, then it is worth assigning. If not, then they may not assign homework for that evening other than reading.

There is a great deal of research that supports the assignment of reading every night for elementary aged students. Homework can be beneficial and boost learning but it can also be detrimental if the right homework is not assigned. It is also important for students to learn study skills and time management through homework. Based on these beliefs, you will likely notice that on some evenings, students will only be assigned reading, other evenings they may have other subject matter assigned. In addition, teachers will periodically assign unfinished class work to be done at home as well as long-term assignments.

At Bridge, we focus on differentiation and in particular WIN (What I Need) as the motto for students to feel comfortable with differentiated work. Staff is strongly encouraged to follow this philosophy when assigning homework and keep in mind the questions: “Does each child need this? If not, why assign it?” Throughout the year, the amount, and type of homework will vary. That said, we will certainly keep in mind the district’s homework policy and look for further guidance by the district task force, School Committee, and Superintendent as they evaluate the subject of homework. Staff will be talking to students about their expectations regarding homework and will share their individual philosophies and expectations with you at Curriculum Night on September 22, 2016.

We hope that you will support our decision to re-evaluate homework in order to decrease stress and anxiety, and increase time at home for family and extracurricular activities.

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## **Save the Date**

*September 16*-Classroom Visitation, 8:30-9:00am (Bridge students, parents/guardians/siblings)

*September 22*-Back to School, Curriculum Night (ADULTS ONLY)

5:45 pm Doors Open

6:00 pm Grades K - 2 Presentations (in classrooms)

Grade 5 Camp Presentation (in gym)

6:30 pm Transition with Specialists Meet & Greet (in cafeteria)

7:00 pm Grades 3 - 5 Presentations (in classrooms)

*September 24*-The Quinn Amsler Memorial 5K Walk and Run

9:30am-Student Fun Run

10:00am-5K

*October 19*-Bridge Learns for Parents (more information to come)

-Meg Colella, Principal