Dear Horizon Families & Friends,

The entire Horizon staff would like to welcome back all of our returning families and extend an especially warm welcome to all of the new families who will be joining us for the 2018-2019 school year. Hopefully you were able to enjoy some family time together with your children during our summer break. Our staff has been working hard to prepare for the arrival of students and to ensure we have a successful year.

We have new faces joining our staff this year. Please check out our website: https://www.d49.org/horizon to see our new and returning staff as some of them have made grade level changes. The majority of teacher pages and biographies have been updated; the rest will be done soon. We will work with LifeTouch to get staff pictures on the website following make-up picture day on August 3rd as well. I am always extremely selective in hiring, and only want the best for our students; I believe we have made some excellent additions to our staff. My expectations are that all staff will maintain excellent relationships with your child and show a willingness to do whatever it takes for your student. I encourage you to always maintain consistent communication with your child’s teachers. If you contact a teacher by email or voicemail, you should expect a response in no more than one school day. By working together in the education of your children, we will successfully develop life-long learners.

If you have been inside the building you have probably noticed some of the great improvements to Horizon that have occurred over the past four years. This summer we replaced all lighting throughout the building, upgrading to LED lighting throughout. In addition, we added mounted projectors in the gym and we have begun carpet replacement in the classrooms. Over the summer we replaced the carpet in 10 of our classrooms; the remaining classrooms will have the carpet replaced over October break.

We will be holding our Open House during the first week of school this year. Open house will be held on Thursday, August 2nd from 4:30 – 8:00 pm. There will be two sessions, the first from 4:30 – 6:00 and the second session from 6:30 – 8:00. You only need to attend one session, however if you have children in two different grade levels this schedule allows you the opportunity to attend both sessions. We encourage you to attend, as it will be beneficial for you and your child. It is always nice to be able to meet your child’s teachers, put faces to names, and establish lines of communication. We will share some general school information and procedures, but the primary purpose is to go through your child’s schedule and meet their teachers while hearing the expectations and procedures for each class. We will also have cookies and drinks available in the cafeteria throughout open house.

I invite you to participate in our School Accountability Committee, which will meet once per quarter. The first meeting will be held in the library on Thursday, August 9th from 5:30 – 7:30pm. Through SAC you can stay informed of school curriculum, policies, budget, and other things happening in the school. I hope you join me to be a part of, and contribute to, the school decision-making process as well as get a free dinner at each meeting. Please RSVP to Hassie Daron at 495-5200, so we can ensure there is enough food.

Horizon’s fourth annual PASTRIES with PARENTS on Thursday, August 30th beginning at 7:45 a.m. in the library. We will not have a set agenda, but would like to provide a forum for all of you to come in, ask questions, and find out information about the things happening at Horizon. Hopefully you will be able to join us, even for a short amount of time. You can RSVP for this event by calling the front office at 495-5210.

The school day will begin at 8:00 am each day. School hours are 8:00 – 3:15 pm. We will still begin serving breakfast, and allowing students into the building, beginning at 7:40 am. 7th and 8th graders will have a seven-period day and will attend each of their classes every day for 55 minutes. 6th grade will remain in “teams” for one more year, their core classes will be held in the Panther Den and they will come to the main building for enrichments and lunch.

If you haven’t already done so, we would like to encourage you to sign up for online access to your students grades and attendance in PowerSchool. Through the PowerSchool, online access or the app on your phone, you will be able to view your child’s attendance and grades, and you can email your child’s teachers as well as receive notifications from the teacher. To sign up for the PowerSchool, please stop by the office to pick up an application form. PowerSchool is a new database for us this year, we anticipate some hiccups early in the year so please be patient as we work with this new system.

Horizon will continue our standard based, rubric-grading system. You are able to see the “overall” grade at all times. The report cards will include letter grades and the IB criteria. Beginning in second quarter, the report card will be accessible online through the PowerSchool. We will not be sending home a paper copy of the report card unless it is requested after the 1st quarter. We will also continue to have students send mid-quarter emails to you, reflecting on their current grades – please ensure we have your current email address.

The Student/Parent Handbook is located in the front of student planners; you can also find it on the website http://www.d49.org/domain/1807. Please take time to review this with your child so you will both know some of our important policies and procedures as there are changes every year. The District 49 Student Discipline and Code of Conduct manual is also posted on the district website (www.d49.org) for you to reference and review.
Breakfast and lunch prices have changed slightly this year. Breakfast will cost $1.75, lunch will cost $2.65, and extra milk will be $.50. Students who qualify for reduced prices will have free breakfast and $.40 for lunch. Applications for free and reduced lunch can be completed online at: [http://www.schoolnutritionandfitness.com/index.php?page=lunchapps&sid=2809100421322656](http://www.schoolnutritionandfitness.com/index.php?page=lunchapps&sid=2809100421322656) or you can pick up a paper copy in the office. We encourage you to apply online as you will receive an immediate response, if you need computer access to complete this application we will have computers available to use. You may also find additional information for free and reduced prices on the district’s website under the Nutrition Services tab. These applications must be filled out each year and do not carry over from one year to the next. Students who qualify for free and reduced prices will also have athletic fees, classroom fees, and transportation adjusted accordingly. The Nutrition Department has an online payment system where families can check their student’s balances, purchases, and receive low-balance reminders. This system can be accessed at [www.payforit.net](http://www.payforit.net). We encourage any family, who does not have Internet access at home, to come to the school to complete free/reduced applications, pay for lunches and/or fees, and check Parent Portal at any time.

We welcome visitors to the school and will continue to implement the Raptorware Visitor Check in System for checking students out of school or visiting the school during the school day. The Raptorware software in the office requires a valid driver’s license. Therefore, all parents/guardians, volunteers, and guests of the school must report to the office with a picture ID upon entering the building. We have two Security Officers, who will be very visible in all areas of the school in continuing to make Horizon as safe as possible for our students. We also encourage volunteers, if you are interested please review the Volunteer page on the district website: [http://www.d49.org/domain/1471](http://www.d49.org/domain/1471). The district has a new process to verify volunteers, once requirement is a background check, you can find the details on the webpage: [http://www.d49.org/domain/1471](http://www.d49.org/domain/1471). All volunteers are required to complete this process including for any field trips you wish to attend.

I am especially excited about the Renaissance program as we embark on the fifth year of implementation. For students who made Renaissance during 4th quarter of the 2017-2018 school year we have activities planned during the 1st quarter to celebrate their accomplishment. Our first, all school Renaissance Rally, to kick off the year will be held in August.

I am also excited to let you know about Praiseworthy Panthers, a place on our school website where our staff can be recognized for the great things they do. Please go to our website [http://www.d49.org/hms](http://www.d49.org/hms) then navigate to the right under the heading of “Leadership” in the drop down menu you will see something called “Praiseworthy Panthers”. By clicking on this link you will be taken to our “Praiseworthy Panthers” staff recognition program. Through here you are able to nominate any Horizon employee for anything you would like. Once submitted, the nomination will come directly to me and I will recognize the staff member at our next staff meeting. We have a staff that cares greatly about your children and do awesome things everyday for them; I’d love to hear more about it from you.

Horizon continually strives to be the best for our students. Changes occur with the intention of doing whatever we can for our students to help them be successful. It is difficult to tell you about all of the things we are doing and have planned for our students in one newsletter. Therefore, we will not publish a monthly or quarterly newsletter on a regular basis. Instead, I will frequently utilize our school-wide email system to communicate many updates, upcoming events, school information, etc. throughout the year and our website will be updated with additional information on a frequent basis. Please ensure your email is updated, and accurate, so you receive these important communications.

Finally, please ensure you have a copy of our school calendar. It is posted on both the school and district websites. It is important to refer to the calendar often to keep informed of the days students are not in school, conferences, etc. If you need a paper copy of the calendar, please stop by the front office.

Again, I want to welcome all of you, whether returning or new to Horizon. Please feel free to stop by or contact me through email, dhorris@d49.org, or call the school at 495-5210 any time you have any questions regarding your child’s education.

Mr. Dustin Horras  
Principal