

September 18, 2016

Dear Silver Hill Families,

Last week was the first full week of school, and combined with the full moon I think everyone was tired by Friday! Hope you all had a relaxing weekend.

It was great to see so many families at our Open House! Thank you for your partnership with all of us at Silver Hill...it makes such a positive difference in your child's education.

Our new web site is still under construction, but Sara Sanchez, our Title 1 Parent/Community Liaison AND webmaster has been working with the Haverhill Public School's iSchool to transfer our old site onto a new one linked to Haverhill Public School's home page. This will allow you to use the new HPS app, and have access to forms, policies, and calendar events. Sara will also be maintaining a Facebook page linked directly to the Silver Hill home page, with daily updates of school activities. You can now access our web site either by going to the Haverhill Public School's web page <http://www.haverhill-ps.org>, select Schools on the top menu bar, select Silver Hill on the drop down - OR go directly to Silver Hill's web page at <http://silverhill.haverhill-ps.org> For translations, please scroll all the way down to the bottom left of the page, and Select Language. We appreciate all feedback and value your input as we work to improve home/school communication...it's a work in progress!

Lately there has been a great deal in the news about Charter Schools. There are two types of Charter Schools in Massachusetts - Commonwealth Charters and Horace Mann Charters. There is a difference between the two, and Silver Hill is the largest of the nine remaining Horace Manns in Massachusetts. Here are some key features to know, but I will also be sending home a Fact Sheet within the next week or so.

- Question 2 proposes lifting the cap on the number of Commonwealth Charter Schools allowed in Massachusetts. Silver Hill is a Horace Mann Charter School, not a Commonwealth Charter School, and will not be impacted by this vote.
- Massachusetts has only nine Horace Mann Charter Schools like Silver Hill. They are in-district public schools, listed as a separate district in the Department of Education, and are governed by shared site based leadership and a Board of Trustees. There is a Memorandum of Understanding between the Charter and the Local Educational Agency (Haverhill Public Schools). All students are Haverhill residents and come in through a lottery. There must be an annual Recruitment and Retention Plan approved by DOE to maintain a percentage of High Needs students (Special Education, English Language Learners, and Economically Disadvantaged). Funding for Silver Hill is part of the local school district (Haverhill Public School's) budget, except we do not receive HPS's grant funding, and we are the only free kindergarten in Haverhill. Silver Hill writes it's own grants, but the funding is significantly lower than HPS's. The teachers at

Silver Hill are union members and covered by the collective bargaining agreement of the Haverhill Education Association.

Several parents and staff have sent me local news about Charters referencing Silver Hill Horace Mann Charter School with inaccurate information. I have responded to these articles with a Fact Sheet to correct the perception that many Haverhill residents and educators have about Silver Hill. The Board of Trustees will be sending their response to the August 26th Eagle Tribune article, *Committee, teachers oppose more charter schools*, to the Haverhill Public School Committee. The most recent article referring to Silver Hill appeared in the September 9th edition of WHAV, <http://www.whav.net/cms/hispanic-coalition-calls-for-ouster-of-superintendent-scully/> To provide facts to address the misinformation in this article, I wrote a response to the Editor. It has not been published. I am attaching that response to this e-mail, as well as to our web site. Our Charter is up for renewal in two years, and the renewal process is on-going, with a great deal to be finished this year. It is important that all stakeholders understand the challenges of being one of the nine remaining Horace Mann Charter Schools in Massachusetts, and that we all work together to continue to provide Haverhill families with an alternative option for exemplary educational programs and faculty!

Wishing everyone a good week ahead!
Margaret

Planning Ahead

9-19 PTO – 6:00

9-28 Coffee with the Principal – 6:00 - *Health Services, Katie Vozeolas and Brian Curry-Krieger*

10-3 PTO – 6:00

10-4 Board of Trustees Meeting – 5:30

10-7 Early Release/Teacher Professional Development Day

10-10 Columbus Day – No School

10-20 First ROARS Assembly - RESPECT – 9:30 (Invitations will be sent home)