

February 26, 2017

Dear Silver Hill Families,

I hope everyone enjoyed the incredible weather during our vacation week. It felt more like spring break than winter!

March is a busy month, and hard to believe, it brings us into the third trimester of the year. Please take a look at “Planning Ahead” for important March dates. There is still time to donate to SHHMCS Foundation’s Annual Campaign and if you do so before March 1, Home Care Specialists, Inc., a local business, has generously offered to fully match all donations to our Annual Giving campaign up to \$5,000—double the value of your gift to our school just by donating once! Our SHHMCS Foundation is a non-profit organization made up of parents and community members committed to raising funds to ensure the ongoing success and achievements of our school. As a public Charter School in Massachusetts, we are required to meet unique Charter School mandates set by the MA Department of Education, including expenses above and beyond what our annual Haverhill Public School budget provides. These operating costs include an annual audit, part time business manager, state mandated student and staff data reporting, and required advertising for our lottery recruitment. Funds raised by the Foundation are not only used to enhance our curriculum, including the purchase of laptops for our teachers, but also fund our Charter operating costs which total over \$25,000 annually. The Foundation will again be holding its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Beer Tasting at the Barking Dog on March 18, from 6:00-9:00. You can feast on tasty beer and food pairings, try your hand at the “carnival games”, and have a fun grown-up night out while giving back to your child’s education! For more information about our Foundation, visit <http://silverhill.haverhill-ps.org>

This Friday night, March 3, students in grades 3-5 will be bringing their Very Important Person to our PTO sponsored VIP Dance! Word is out about how much fun our K-2 Sweetheart Dance was, so I know the VIP Dance will be a blast! See attached flyer!

With some of the changes happening at the federal level that could potentially impact schools, I want to take this opportunity to review the mission of our school: ***The Mission of Silver Hill Horace Mann Charter School is to be a thriving learning environment that educates, inspires, challenges and nurtures the minds and well-being of our diverse population of children Kindergarten through Grade 5; where all children achieve at their optimum academic level and develop positive citizenship and character. Silver Hill supports the growth of the Whole Child and the continuous improvement of the teachers in collaboration with the families of Silver Hill and the Haverhill community.*** We take pride in the diversity of our student body, and appreciate that our own little “melting pot” of learners will help us all better understand and value each other. The changes at the federal level have not changed the protections in place for transgender students in Massachusetts. The following is an excerpt from Commissioner Mitchell Chester & the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, **Commissioner’s Weekly Update** – February 24, 2017. *States can issue their own guidance, which can exceed federal guidelines. The Massachusetts state statute, which predates the federal guidance, ensures protections for all students and prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender identity. An Act Relative to Gender Identity ([Chapter 199 of the Acts of 2011](#)), amended several Massachusetts statutes prohibiting discrimination on the basis of specified categories, including gender identity, and subsequently, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education issued guidance to school districts to implement the gender identity provision. Additional resources are available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/lgbtq/default.html>. The*

*Department is proud that Massachusetts was a leader in this area and that schools have worked constructively and without great controversy to support their students. Silver Hill's priority will always be to provide a physically and emotionally safe school environment for all of our families.*

Good luck to Coach Hart and our Consentino/Silver Hill Academic Bowl students as they compete with Nettle on Tuesday, February 28, 9:30. We're cheering you on!

Have a happy week!

Margaret

[VIP Flyer](#)

**Planning Ahead:**

March 7 – Board Meeting – 5:30

March 9 – Trimester 2 Grades Close

March 13 – PTO – 6:00

March 17 – Report Cards issued

March 18 – Foundation Fundraiser at Barking Dog – 6:00-9:00

March 23 – Evening Conferences