

Brookfield Effingham New Durham Ossipee Tuftonboro Wolfeboro

*Kingswood Regional Middle School
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*Kirkland O. Ross
Principal*

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Summer 2011

Dear Vista Parents and Guardians,

On behalf of the advisors, Mr. Charlie Edson, and the core teachers, Mrs. Mercedes Warren, Ms. Erin Drennan Doiron, Mr. Bert Ramsay, and Ms. Lynn Peterson, I welcome you. This is the sixteenth year of the Vista program. Although staff has changed through the years, each new core teacher has been hired with an understanding of our program and what it means to teach, learn and grow with our students. It is with great pride that I can tell you that the program has grown and matured over the years only to become better and stronger since its beginning. Each year since the beginning back in 1996, new thinking, rituals and traditions have been added that we believe have made us better teachers and created a better experience for our students. Learning is a lifelong process for the teachers and students on Team Vista

You are invited to our Meet the Team Night for Vista parents on **Wednesday, September 14**. It is a chance for you to learn about the team, meet the core teachers on Vista, and get to know other parents on the team. Some of the topics to be covered include:

- Teacher expectations, including topics to be covered, grading policy, late work, and classroom procedures
- Power School and the new standardize grading and report card
- Units and projects for the year
- Homework expectations
- Upcoming trips
- Friday hikes, observations, nature journals and Outdoor Education requirements
- Writing Workshop
- Reading Workshop and the expectations for it
- Math and algebra
- Integrated science and integrated American history and geography workshops

The program is tentatively scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m.; keep up-to-date for any changes to any event this year by logging on to our class blog at:

<http://ajviens.edublogs.org/>

Click on the Google calendar link.

Remember that the Vista summer reading program began for our 8th graders on June 20, and for our 7th graders as soon as they receive this mailing from the school. Summer reading continues until the first day of school. For more information about reading workshop and summer reading, go to:

<http://ajviens.edublogs.org>

Two other important dates are **Thursday and Friday, September 22-23**. For these two days, Vista is on our Annual Fall Overnight to the White Mountains. The trip features a variety of academic and team and community building activities. All students are required to attend; no one will be staying behind at school. More information about specific activities comes home on the first day of school. The other date to keep in mind is our **annual spring hiking trip scheduled for June 2012**. The cost of this trip ranges from \$150 to \$180 depending on our fundraising efforts for the year. More information about the trip will be sent home in September.

To be prepared for these trips, science field studies, and weekly nature observations in the field all year long, three items are crucial to success and safety: a **sturdy pair of hiking boots that come over the ankle (winter boots are required for cold weather); rain jacket and pants that are completely waterproof, seam-sealed, and large enough so that other layers can be worn under them; a day pack large enough to carry rain gear, food, water, journal, tool kit, and extra clothes**. These three items are needed during the first week of school and every Friday all year long. They are also needed on the overnight to the White Mountains on September 22-23. Rain gear is available from the team. All we ask is that the rain gear be returned in June washed and in excellent condition. Forms go out on the first day of school.

Finally, always remember that one of the most important things about Vista is community. Community defines Vista and Vista works on building our community all year long. Being part of a community means that you are a part of something—something bigger than yourself. It means being accepted by its members just the way you are. It takes time and effort to build community. We do it in advisory, in classes, in basecamps, on Friday hikes, trips off campus, at lunch, and moments when we least expect it. We have many rituals and ceremonies that are part of community building and we are always coming up with new ones. The forming of groups in a circle is an important one. In a circle we all are equals and respectful of one another. We can all see each other's faces and listen facing a speaker. We come to the circle an individual but the geometry of it makes us a part of the community of Vista. During the school year, our kids undoubtedly move around the circle as they grow, mature, and experience new things, but the nature of the circle always keeps them part of the community on this journey. I leave you with this quote:

'Home is where—when no one else wants you—they have to take you in.' That's what community is all about. When you are part of a

community and you get together with that community, it feels like you have come home—home, where you are loved and wanted, home, where you are known and appreciated, home, where you feel deeply connected to others...

—Howard Hanger and Vicki Garlock
From *A Precious Window of Time*

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at home at: 284-6903 or ajviens@gmail.com.

Again, on behalf of all the teachers on Vista, welcome to another school year, and we hope to see you on Wednesday evening, September 14, 2011.

Yours truly,

Arthur J. Viens, Jr.
Team Leader,
Social Studies, Outdoor Education, and Reading Workshop Teacher, Team Vista