

*Brookfield    Effingham    New Durham    Ossipee    Tuftonboro    Wolfeboro*

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Principal*

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August 2012

Dear Vista Eighth Grade Students,

On behalf of Ms. Drennan Doiron, Mrs. Warren, Mr. Ramsay, and Mrs. Peterson, I welcome you to the start of your final fabulous year on Vista. We are looking forward to our new combination of teachers and students and are planning many exciting activities. Mr. Edson returns as an advisor and Ms. Bartlett and Ms. Cornwell will be new advisors on the team. We will all miss Mrs. Kenny as an advisor. Here's a special message from the Unified Arts Team and Mrs. Souza, team leader of the UA Team:

Being prepared for class is very important for you to achieve success in your learning. While at KRMS, you will be involved in Unified Arts as well as classes. Students are expected to attend Unified Arts classes with their 3-ring UA notebook, tool kit, agenda book, and reading workshop book. Your Unified Arts classes may require materials not specified here. Your UA teachers will explain what you may need when classes begin. Please note that band and chorus meet every other day, but the rest of your UA classes meet daily.

—Mrs. Souza and the Unified Arts Team

The first day of school this year is **Tuesday, September 4, 2012**. Don't forget to bring all your required materials for the first day. This letter and all Vista handouts will be posted on our class blog. Go to:

<http://ajviens.edublogs.org>

The blog has lots of features including work from last year; district calendar; Google calendar of team activities, dates, and assignments; and copies that you can print for reading workshop, summer letters; and coming soon, fall overnight permission slips and gear lists.

Two other important dates are **Thursday and Friday, September 20 and 21**—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 will be coming home on the first day of school. The other date to keep in mind is our **annual spring hiking trip scheduled for June 2013**. 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 outdoor education 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 20-21, 2012**. Rain gear is available from the team. All we ask is that the rain gear be returned in June washed and in excellent condition. The supply is limited, and forms go out on the first day of school.

If you sign up to participate in football, field hockey, boys or girls soccer or cross-country, you **MUST** have a physical examination before you can participate in that sport. Practices begin early, so it is best to schedule your exam early, get physically prepared, and find out when your sport begins.

We have many special activities planned for the beginning of the year. One of them is our special opening ceremony to welcome all of the 7th graders to the team. As you know, fifty seventh-graders join us. Time is needed to reconnect our community and to set a direction for our year. You are a very important part of that. We hope that when **September 4**, comes around, you are ready for your eighth grade year at KRMS and your second year as a member of Vista. All of you play an important role in welcoming our new students and making our community stronger. Your role as a natural leader is imperative.

We were very impressed with you on the last day of school. You took the activities we did seriously. Remember the importance of the circle. There are many opportunities for leadership on Vista this year. Remember what Julius said in *Remember the Titans*, "Attitude reflects leadership." All of us can display a positive attitude all of the time. If we do, it will become contagious with the seventh graders. Make them feel at home. Remember what it was like to be in their shoes. Go out of your way to welcome them to your advisory, basecamp, and UA classes. We all miss the ninth graders; they always have a home on Vista. But, now is the time to turn our attention to the year ahead and the new friendships that will develop. Our old friendships take a different path and only become stronger.

Yes, *Titans* is one of our first team building activities this year, a common ground from which to start. For like the Titans, we too must come together as a team and community. What are team and community building? It is "the process by which a group of individuals with different backgrounds and experiences become a caring community of active learners." Ms. Peterson, Ms. Drennan Doiron, Mrs. Warren, Mr. Ramsay and I are very excited about the coming year. Together, we can accomplish great things. It takes hard work and perseverance. We know you are capable of both. You know that we like to laugh, play, have fun, and learn at the same time.

We believe you learn best when you are having fun. But learning is also hard work. To become the best at something demands hard work. We can come together just like the Titans did.

Finally, always remember that one of the most important things about Vista is community. Community defines Vista and we work 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 and listen facing the speaker. We come to the circle an individual but the geometry of it makes us a part of the community of Vista. As you go through the school year, you will undoubtedly move around the circle as you grow, mature, and experience new things, but the nature of the circle always keeps you 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: [ajviens@gmail.com](mailto:ajviens@gmail.com).

Yours truly,

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

**Remember, all the Vista forms for the opening of school will be posted on my blog. Go to:**  
<http://ajviens.edublogs.org>