



**New York State
"Essential Elements:
School to Watch"**



VAN WYCK JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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**Statewide Network of
Middle Level Support
Schools**

January 4, 2017

Dear Griffin Parent or Guardian,

I welcome students and their parents back to school from winter recess with renewed enthusiasm. I am confident that the new year will be a good one for the school community, students and their families.

There is a great new instructional initiative being planned for our students. Our faculty are busy at work researching and planning instruction around the theme of "Historic Hudson." Students will learn about the significance of the Hudson Valley and its historical landmarks in their social studies and English-Language Arts classes and then visit many of those historical landmarks during grade-level field trips by team. It is our belief that in order to appreciate and preserve our local historical landmarks students need to learn about and visit them. Too many of our local historical landmarks are giving way to real estate development. As this project gets underway you will hear and learn more about it from your children's teachers.

The Innovation Center has a new look. The District allocated time and resources to installing a new floor and lighting. New furniture is expected, as well, in the near future. The Innovation Center is an important feature of the instructional program. The English and Social Studies Departments already collaborate with the Innovation Center when conducting research projects. The research project results in some form of a capstone, or presentation, which in many cases is developed in the Innovation Center.

Our TV station is alive and well under the able direction of Mrs. Maher. A new team of anchors and technical experts help run the shows that are developed each Friday and aired for the entire school to watch. Our students' skills are really beginning to grow. We have very talented young people doing great things in so many ways here at Van Wyck.

In addition to the "Morning News" program, Mr. Glauda, Mr. Ellis, Mr. Schukal and the rest of the technology teachers, including students, are creating two models of Hopewell Junction to scale: "Historic Hopewell" and "Modern Day Hopewell." They are working with members of the East Fishkill Historical Society to create two realistic models for the public to view in the main lobby of the school once complete.

It is our desire to have every student contribute to the school in some way. Between sports, clubs, Student Government, department and team activities, we are getting increasingly closer to realizing this goal. By contributing, we believe that students will appreciate the benefits of giving and participating, while becoming increasingly more connected to Van Wyck.

In closing, teachers are planning the mid-year administration of i-Ready diagnostics. In this way as educators we are able to determine if students are continuing in their positive trajectory of academic success. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to your children's math and English-Language Arts teachers for more information.

Thank you and, once again, best wishes for the New Year.

Sincerely,

Dr. Steven H. Shuchat, Principal
Van Wyck Junior High

Van Wyck Junior High School faculty, staff, and administration-in partnership with parents, students and the community-will provide a safe, orderly, intellectually challenging, and respectful learning environment that promotes the academic, intellectual, personal and social development of children while maintaining rigorous standards and embracing curricula to prepare students for college and careers

Griffin Pride



**The National Forum
to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform**