



VERONA HIGH SCHOOL

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Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians of Verona High School Students:

We hope that you and your family are enjoying a nice summer. As the beginning of school approaches, we hope your student is as excited as we are to start this school year. The new school year brings plenty of opportunities for every student to engage in a wide variety of activities. Please remind your student to join a new club, join a sport, and embrace the process of making new friends.

I would like to highlight a few items and introduce you to our newest staff members.

Verona Values

Continued from last year is our focus on Positive Behavioral Supports in Schools (PBSIS). At Verona High School, we call our PBSIS, Verona Values. Our school's values of **Responsibility**, **Integrity**, and **Respect** function as our core beliefs. Throughout the school year, each student will have opportunities to earn Verona Value Cards when he or she is observed by a staff member doing something that embodies one or all of our core values. Although we try to identify all of the wonderful things our students are doing, we would love to have your help. Please let us know if you observe a student exhibiting one of these qualities so that we may recognize his or her effort. Throughout the school year, students who receive Verona Value cards will have a chance to earn a variety of amazing prizes. A school is a community, and we thank you for supporting our efforts to reward and reinforce positive behaviors.

VHS is going One-to-One with Chromebooks

For the first time ever at VHS, we will be 1:1 with technology by providing the opportunity for every student to have a school-issued Chromebook. Our 1:1 initiative is part of our school's mission to be a Future Ready School.

Starting in September 2019, students will have the option to take a school-issued Chromebook. Any student who decides to take a district-provided Chromebook, instead of using his or her own device, will be asked to accept the Chromebook Policy & Procedures Agreement and pay the insurance fee of \$30 for the school year.

It is an expectation that **all students** will have either a school-provided Chromebook or another personal device with similar capabilities. At VHS, this is important because all students will need to access Google Classroom and other educational software during the school day and for homework. For this reason, every student is required to have a personal computing device.

The school anticipates that Chromebooks will be distributed to students who want a district-provided device starting on **September 6, 2019**.

Please let us know if you would like your student to be issued a district-provided Chromebook by completing the Chromebook Form in the Genesis Parent Portal.

* To read the draft of the proposed policy, [please click here](#).

Student Usernames & Passwords

Student network Usernames and Passwords have been updated for the 2019-2020 school year. Please go to the **Summary** section of the [Genesis Parent Portal](#) to view your student's Username and Password.

Homework Free Breaks

Verona High School is happy to continue to provide time periods that offer our students a break from homework. We believe that it is important for students to have time to relax, and to enjoy spending time with family and friends. This time is critical to the student's social development and overall well-being.

This year's homework free dates are:

1. October 4-6 (Weekend)
2. October 17 (VMAC Family Night)
3. November 27-December 1 (Break)
4. December 20-January 1 (Break)
5. January 17-20 (Weekend)
6. February 13-17 (Weekend)
7. March 12 (VMAC Family Night)
8. March 13-15 (Weekend)

9. April 3-12 (Break)

Please note, there will be no assignments due or assessments given on the day the students return to school after the homework-free nights, weekends, and breaks.

Family Counseling Meetings

Continued for this year will be the opportunity for every family to have personalized meetings with their child's school counselor. The purpose of these meetings is to help the counselor learn more about the student's goals for high school, college, and beyond. Our role is to support each student and his or her family throughout the high school years. During the meeting, students will learn about topics such as the college application process, how to use Naviance, and other topics related to academics and personal growth.

We encourage you to learn more about the classes offered at VHS, the policies and procedures concerning scheduling, and other important information by clicking here to review our [Program of Studies](#).

New Staff

We are excited to welcome new staff to our school. Each one brings a unique skill set and each is looking forward to meeting with his or her students. Please read more about our new staff below:

- **Alyssa Boldurian:** Language Arts teacher with a specialization in Special Education
 - Ms. Boldurian comes to VHS after teaching 7th grade Language Arts in the Roselle School District for the last 3 years. Ms. Boldurian has experience in designing and implementing units that align with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. Additionally, she is adept at using educational technologies in the classroom to enhance lessons to engage students. Finally, Ms. Boldurian's teaching training was enhanced through a unique student teaching experience in the United Kingdom. Ms. Boldurian is excited to work at VHS as she will create fun and engaging lessons for our students. Please join me in welcoming Ms. Boldurian to our school.

- **Adriana Contreras:** Spanish World Language teacher
 - Ms. Contreras will be serving as a Spanish Leave Replacement teacher for the 2019-2020 school year. Most recently, Ms. Contreras worked at the Deerfield School as a middle school Spanish teacher. She completed her student teaching at Columbia High School in Maplewood, New Jersey. Additionally, she served as a long-term substitute while at Columbia High School. Ms. Contreras graduated with a Master of Arts in Teaching at Drew University. Ms. Contreras demonstrated in her interview lesson the ability to create interesting and engaging student-centered lessons. She believes that as a World Languages teacher, it is pertinent to encourage student

proficiency in the language by cultivating interest and passion for Spanish and Latin American cultures. We are happy to welcome Ms. Contreras to our school.

- **Mark Edgerton: Mathematics, Special Education teacher**

- Dr. Edgerton is an energetic and solution-minded educational professional with 13 years of special education teaching experience. He has earned a Master's Degree in Special Education and a Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership. During his career, he has gained meaningful experience teaching special education mathematics as LLD, Resource Room, and as an in-class support teacher. In addition to mathematics, he also has special education experience teaching social studies, science, and business classes. Most recently, Dr. Edgerton was serving as the Principal of the Sussex County Charter School for Technology, Grades 6-8. His background has given him a unique perspective as an educator. Dr. Edgerton has a passion for science and spends his personal time volunteering for the National Weather Service. We are excited to welcome Dr. Edgerton to our school district.

- **Ashley Enste: Language Arts teacher**

- Ms. Enste is coming to VHS with 9 years of experience in education. Most recently, Ms. Enste was working at Elmwood Park Public Schools as a k-12 Supervisor of Instruction. In her administrative role, she embraced the opportunity to work with all levels of learners in multiple subject areas and infused literacy across the curriculum. However, after a short time in administration, Ms. Enste realized her true passion lies in teaching students. It was this realization that brought Ms. Enste back to the classroom to work with our students at VHS. Ms. Enste's experience has brought a unique perspective and we are excited to observe the amazing lessons that she will develop for our students. Ms. Enste's objective as an educator is to always ignite each student's motivation so that he or she may develop his or her own critical thinking and awareness, and to establish a learner-centered environment in the classroom where each student's opinions and contributions are highly valued. Prior to being a school administrator, Ms. Enste was a Language Arts teacher for 5 years at Leonia High School, where she taught a wide array of levels: AP English Language, a fully-included double English course, and traditional college preparatory courses. We hope you are as excited as we are to welcome Ms. Enste to our school.

- **Jennifer Gladsky: Language Arts teacher**

- Ms. Gladsky comes to VHS with a unique employment history. Ms. Gladsky is a graduate of Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, where she earned a B.A., English and American Literature and a Minor French. After her undergraduate education, she continued her educational pursuits at the Chicago-Kent College of Law, where she earned her Juris Doctor. For many years, Ms. Gladsky worked in the field of law as a Team Leader, Law Clerk, and Attorney. Mrs. Gladsky then went back to school to earn a Post-Baccalaureate degree so that she could become a certified teacher. Since receiving her certification, Ms. Gladsky has taught in the Montclair

Public Schools District, Caldwell/West Caldwell Public Schools District, and most recently at The Village School in Waldwick, New Jersey. We are excited to welcome this life-long learner and educator to our school.

- **Elissa Malespina: High School Librarian and Media Specialist**

- Mrs. Malespina comes to VHS with 17 years of experience in education. She started her career as a Social Studies and Special Education teacher. In her latest position, Ms. Malespina served as the librarian at Somerville Middle School, where she was responsible for a library program that served over 375 students. In Somerville, Mrs. Malespina transformed the library and added a makerspace. Additionally, she evolved the role of the librarian by partnering with educators to infuse technology into the curriculum. Prior to working in Somerville, Ms. Malespina was the Supervisor of Educational Technology, Media, Multimedia and 6-12 STEM for the Parsippany-Troy Hills School District, where she supervised a staff of over 20 librarians, computer teachers, and TV production teachers. Additionally, she was in charge of technology professional development for the staff in the district. Over the last 17 years, Ms. Malespina was fortunate to be nationally recognized for her work as a librarian, not only by receiving the Bammy Award by the Academy of Arts and Education as School Librarian of the year, but she was also a part of the 2013 NJASL Progressive School Librarian Program. This award recognizes innovative ideas presented by a library media specialist that enhance the life-long learning skills of students and infuse technology into the curriculum. Additionally, Ms. Malespina received an ISTE Making IT Happen Award, which identifies and rewards educational technology leaders for their commitment and innovation. She is featured in the School Sleuth Case of the Wired Classroom Documentary, which aired on PBS, as an example of a teacher who is a technology integration specialist. Growth is important to Ms. Malespina. Outside of the classroom, she has worked closely with teachers and librarians around the world on ways to infuse technology into the classroom. She speaks at numerous technology conferences including ISTE, Maker Faire, Escape, NJEA, NJASA Techspo and more. Ms. Malespina is the Past President for the for the ISTE Librarians Networks, serves as the NJ Future Ready Librarians Taskforce Chairperson, helped write the NJ Future Ready Librarians Framework, and speaks nationally on the Future Ready Librarians Movement. You can read more from Mrs. Malespina as her work is featured in School Library Journal and School Librarian Connection. We are excited to welcome Mrs. Malespina to our team.

- **Lakendra McFadden: Harassment, Intimidation, & Bullying Specialist**

- Ms. McFadden's position is new to the Verona School District. Her role will be to investigate and ensure that all guidelines are met regarding the school's Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) policy. Her position will afford school counselors the ability to focus on social and emotional counseling, academic counseling, and other needs of the students. Ms. McFadden graduated from Montclair State University with a BA in Child Advocacy and Policy, and she also earned an MA in Counseling with a

concentration in Schools. Ms. McFadden has experience working as a school counselor at Branchburg Central Middle School and interning at both Saddle Brook Middle/High School and Rahway 7th and 8th Grade Academy. During her time as an intern, she worked alongside several professional school counselors, handled a small caseload of students at each school location, and provided students with any additional supports needed to succeed both academically and emotionally. Ms. McFadden has experience in using mindfulness techniques and peer mediation groups to discuss conflict resolution. We are happy to welcome Ms. McFadden to our school.

- **Rebecca Russell: Mathematics teacher**

- Mrs. Russell has a Bachelor's degree in Applied Mathematics, a Masters degree in Computer Science, and 8.5 years in the Maplewood School District. As a classroom teacher, she uses humor and passion to develop a sense of excitement for mathematics in her students. In addition to the 8.5 years of classroom teaching experience, Mrs. Russell has been a private tutor of middle and high school students for the last 10 years, where she gained a deeper understanding of individual learning styles. Today, she uses that experience as she plans and works collaboratively with her students during engaging mathematics lessons. Mrs. Russell is excited to join our team and we look forward to her creative lessons.

- **Quinn Stoeber: School Counselor**

- Ms. Stoeber is joining our team after working the last year and a half with students in grades k-12. Ms. Stoeber graduated from Rutgers University, with a Master of Education in School Counseling and she earned her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Drew University in Madison, New Jersey. However, the most notable attribute of Ms. Stoeber is her ability to connect with people. Throughout the interview process, she demonstrated high interpersonal skills and a student-centered approach to counseling. Ms. Stoeber has experience meeting with students to support academic and social concerns including, but not limited to, individual counseling, college counseling, 504, I&RS, IEP meetings, and Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB). She has experience working with students from different backgrounds and she understands the value that diversity brings to a school. We are happy to welcome Ms. Stoeber to our school and excited that she will be fostering strong counseling relationships with our students and families.

Student Handbook

The Student Handbook is online and available for viewing. In the Student Handbook, you will find the most pertinent information a student will need to know throughout high school. This includes bell schedules, code of conduct, and other important items. [To view the Student Handbook click here.](#)

First Day of School & Back-to-School Night

Our first day of school for students will be on **Wednesday, September 4, 2019**. There will be a delayed opening (10:00 AM) on September 4th for students in grades 10-12.

The freshmen class is asked to arrive at school no later than 8:00 AM to participate in Freshmen Orientation, which will be run by our Peer Leaders. We encourage all freshmen to arrive by 7:45 AM if they wish to socialize with their classmates and enjoy a continental breakfast provided by our SCA. Each 9th-grade student is encouraged to bring a copy of his or her schedule on the first day of school. The schedule can be printed from the [Genesis Parent Portal](#). We kindly ask that each student print **both** his or her **rotating bell schedule** (the schedule listing the classes in the A, B, C, & D day sequence) and his or her **list schedule** (the schedule listing the periods in the order of 1 through 8).

On the first day of school, each student will meet all of his or her teachers and attend all of his or her classes (Periods 1-8). Prior to the first period of the school day, students will be asked to report to homeroom. A student's homeroom assignment can be found on the student's schedule. If you cannot locate the homeroom number on the schedule, a homeroom list will be posted in the main lobby of the school for your student's convenience.

- To view the bell schedules, [please click here](#).
- To view a map of the school, [please click here](#).
- [Please click here to see all pertinent Back-to-School Information](#).

This year our Back-to-School Night is on Thursday, September 26, 2019, at 7:00 PM.

I encourage you to please follow me on **Twitter** [@PrincipalVerona](#) or on **Instagram** at [principalverona](#) where I will post high school accomplishments and information pertaining to thought-provoking ideas within the educational landscape.

We look forward to a great school year and we thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Joshua Cogdill
Principal
Verona High School