

Mountain Lakes Board of Education

400 BOULEVARD

MOUNTAIN LAKES, N.J. 07046

TEL: (973) 334-8280 • FAX: (973) 334-2316

September 2, 2016

Dear Mountain Lakes School Parents/Guardians,

We recognize that the adolescent years are a time of experimentation as our youngsters test the waters of adulthood, and that this time of pushing boundaries is natural and healthy. We also recognize that it is the responsibility of the adults in our students' lives to guide them to push limits in healthy ways in order to provide a safe and wholesome school and community environment.

In March of 2016, Mountain Lakes School District administered the anonymous, opt-in American Drug and Alcohol Survey to students in grades 8, 10, and 12. The survey results were tabulated, compiled, and analyzed by Dr. Harlow of DecisionStat, LLC and can be found on the District website at <http://mlschools.org/Page/3594>.

As a District, we fully support the line from the Prevention Implications: "The prevention and control of alcohol and drug use and abuse among young people requires ongoing effort in the community." As such, we are looking to join forces--the home and the school--to educate and work to prevent our youngsters from making poor choices about substance use and abuse.

- Throughout the Fall Semester, Ms. Yvonne Krasner-Cohen, the Student Assistance Counselor housed at the High School, will be hosting informal "coffee chats" at each school building with parents. These chats, co-sponsored by the Home & School Association, are to discuss the results of the drug and alcohol survey and to educate parents on trends throughout NJ and specifically Morris County. Q&A will be a major aspect of these chats.
- School Resource Officer Sgt. Gil Benitez of the ML Police Department will be working in Briarcliff, Wildwood, and Lake Drive schools to educate students at their level about drug use/abuse throughout the year. Sgt. Benitez and Ms. Krasner-Cohen will be visiting each MLHS student's English classroom to educate and warn our youngsters about the growing prevalence of heroin in surrounding communities.
- Additionally, Health educators across the district continue to teach alcohol and drug abuse prevention via the Health curriculum.
- MLHS continues to partner with the Morris County Prosecutor's Office and the Sheriff's K-9 Unit to operate bi-annual suspicionless drug searches of our school building.

What can a parent do now? We encourage dialogue with your child. Nothing is more powerful in the prevention of substance abuse than a conversation between a parent and child. See the NPR article from 2010 on the role of parents affecting teenage drinking choices: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=127222042>. Additionally, we have heard success from parents who have pledged together with a group of like-minded parents to always remain a "dry" home when students gather.

While the survey results indicate that our school and community needs ongoing efforts in prevention and control of alcohol and drug use, the positive information from the survey is that the line "everybody is doing it" is not true either.

We encourage you to spend some time with the results document and to use the survey as a launchpad of conversation with your child. We look forward to seeing you at one of the soon-to-be scheduled "coffee chats." In the meantime, if you have more immediate concerns or questions, please reach out to Ms. Krasner-Cohen directly by emailing ykrasner-cohen@mlschools.org or calling (973) 334-8400, ext. 253.

Regards,



Dr. Anne Mucci
Superintendent



Ms. Beth Azar
Wildwood Principal



Dr. Fran Schlenoff
Briarcliff Principal



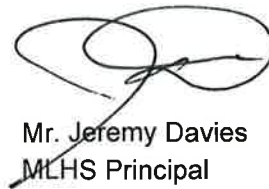
Ms. Julie Lazeration
Lake Drive Principal



Mr. Willieneil French
Director of Guidance



Ms. Yvonne Krasner-Cohen
Student Assistance Counselor



Mr. Jeremy Davies
MLHS Principal