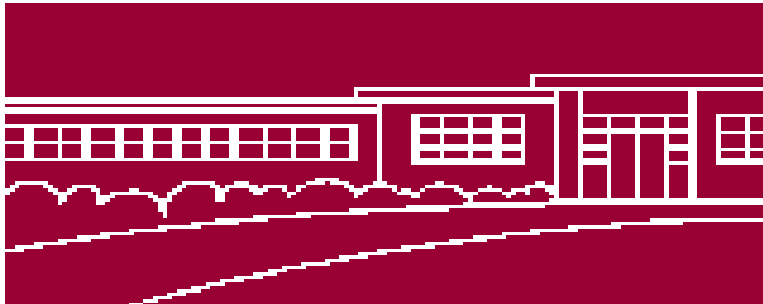


Hillcrest Middle School Handbook

2013 – 2014



Oakland Unified School District

Hillcrest Middle School Handbook

2013-2014

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Welcome to Hillcrest Middle School

Introduction

Welcome to Hillcrest Middle School. While coming back to Hillcrest for Middle School may at first seem like business as usual, sixth grade students and parents quickly discover that the Middle School experience is different and special. The objective of this handbook is to help families navigate the new environment successfully, to provide important contact information, and to encourage families to be actively involved in creating a positive Hillcrest Middle School experience.

The Hillcrest Middle School Story

In January 1950, construction began on what was known as Rockridge Highlands School. The school was originally designed to house a maximum of 210 students in grades K-3. In May 1951, the PTA voted to rename the school "Hillcrest." A 4th grade was added in the fall of 1951; 5th and 6th grades followed in 1966.

In October 1991 a devastating fire displaced 67 Hillcrest students and impacted the entire school attendance area. The district proposed closing the school and merging students to the Kaiser school site. The district was also exploring reconfiguration for the entire district. In response to these and a number of other factors, the Hillcrest School community submitted a proposal to the Oakland Unified School District to add middle school grades to its configuration. This proposal was approved in 1993.

Portable units were added to the grounds as attendance increased with the rebuilding of the neighborhood. The community mobilized to raise funds to replace the portables with a permanent building that could more adequately house the K-8 population. In 2006 construction was completed on the new building, which houses five classrooms, a library, a computer lab and a science lab.

With a K-8 configuration, Hillcrest preserves the academic culture of a small, neighborhood school through the middle grades. Students benefit by receiving a quality education with easy access to staff and a high level of parent involvement. The result is a high level of student achievement.

Academics:

Teaching Staff, Course of Study, Homework and Grading

Overview

The Middle School academic and grading cycle differs from elementary school in that the Middle School is on a two semester cycle, and students receive letter grades for all courses of study. Students rotate through several classrooms throughout the day, and generally study with at least four different teachers on a given day.

Teaching Staff

The Middle School teaching staff for the 2013-2014 school year is listed below:

Teacher	Class
Eileen Massey	English & History (7th – 8th grade)
Patrick Dyer	English & History (6th grade) Science (6th – 8th grade)
Gail Scruggs	Math (6th – 8th grade)
Jesse Inclan	PE (6th – 8th grade)
TBD	Spanish (6th – 8th grade)
TBD	French (6th – 8th grade)
TBD	Information Technology (6th – 8th grade)
Denys Adida	Art (6th – 8th grade)

Course of Study

English/Language Arts

All grades will use the district adopted texts, as well as supporting novels. State Standards and Common Core Standards will be followed. Varied writing assignments will be expected throughout the year.

History

6th graders will study Ancient Civilizations, including Ancient Egypt, India, China, Greece, and Rome, using state adopted TCI – History Alive materials. Independent projects will be assigned.

7th and 8th graders will study the American History, through Reconstruction. Several independent projects will be assigned.

Science

6th and 7th graders will study Middle School Earth Science, using the CPO district adopted Science Program, incorporating many investigations and experiments.

8th graders will study Middle School Physical Science, using the CPO district adopted Science Program, incorporating many investigations and experiments.

Math

All 6th graders will study Common Core Mathematics 6. District developed materials will be used.

Most 7th graders will study Common Core Mathematics 7. District developed materials will be used. There is an accelerated 7th grade group that took pre-Algebra last year and this group will take Common Core Mathematics 8 (“Linear Algebra”).

Most 8th graders will study Common Core Mathematics 8 (“Linear Algebra”). District developed materials will be used. There is an accelerated 8th grade group that took Algebra I last year and this group will study Geometry. Students will use the adopted text Holt Geometry, as well as other materials.

French & Spanish

All Middle Schoolers study French or Spanish. Each student will be placed in Level 1 or 2, depending on his/her skill level.

Other

In addition, all students take 100 minutes per week of several different enrichment classes, including PE, Art, and Information Technology.

Homework

Homework will be assigned on an as needed basis. Homework assignments can vary greatly and can include math practice, reading, writing assignments, studying for tests, conducting research, and culminating projects. Most assignments are due the following day, and some are longer-term projects. Homework is posted daily and is accessible to students and parents on Schoology.

Makeup: When absent from school, it is the student's or family's responsibility to get the homework assignments, and turn them in on time. If a student is absent for an extended period of time, it is the student's/family's responsibility to contact the teacher to arrange for appropriate academic support.

Grading

Each student receives a final grade at the end of each semester in the subject areas listed below. Students also receive progress grades two times during the semester. Grades range from A+ to F. Subjects listed together are compiled into a single grade.

- ♦ English
- ♦ History
- ♦ Math
- ♦ Science
- ♦ Spanish or French
- ♦ PE & Art (compiled for one grade)
- ♦ IT

Grading Periods (or marking periods) end every 6 weeks. Report Cards are issued within two weeks following the end of a marking period. Grades reported during the first two marking periods are progress reports only. **The final grades for each semester are the average of the three marking periods in that semester, and are the only grades that appear on a students' formal transcript.**

Last day of marking periods for 2013-2014:

- ♦ October 4
- ♦ November 15
- ♦ January 24 (1st Semester Grade)
- ♦ March 7
- ♦ April 25
- ♦ June 12 (2nd Semester Grade)

ABI Parent Portal

Students and parents are strongly encouraged to follow progress on the **OUSD AERIES Browser Interface (ABI)** (<https://abi.oaklandusd.org/>) where individual grades are posted for each assignment. Each family will be given individualized passwords to view their student's progress. It is strongly

advised that both parents and students check the ABI parent portal regularly. This will help students understand their progress and allow for timely communications with teachers about any potential academic issues. Students and parents are highly encouraged to contact teachers with questions or concerns about individual assignments or overall progress results as the semester progresses, rather than waiting until the end of a marking period after report cards have been issued. By monitoring ongoing progress, teachers, parents and students can work together to keep the students' academic experience positive and on track.

Policies

Discipline

We strongly believe that learning must take place within a safe and positive environment. Thus, our discipline policy is intended to be progressive, balanced, and applied in a fair and consistent manner. It is however only a guideline. Instances may arise that are not specified in the policy. We will address those issues in a manner consistent with the intent of our policy. Detailed descriptions of offenses and consequences are delineated in the Parent Guide to Oakland Public Schools. See the School Handbook page and the Schoolwide Expected Behaviors page of the Hillcrest PTA web site for complete text.

Cell Phones

Students are permitted to bring cell phones to school; however, they are to be turned off (not on silent or vibration mode) during the hours of instruction and must be placed in the student's backpack. Please note that the use of phones for texting, gaming, Internet use and listening to music will not be allowed. If a student's cell phone rings during the hours of instruction or is seen in plain sight, the phone will be confiscated and a parent will be required to retrieve the phone from the school principal. The student will also receive a consequence per our progressive discipline plan. For example, repetition of this offense may require the student to check his/her cellular phone in and out of the office daily, and could possibly lead to leaving the phone at home for the remainder of the school year if infractions continue. Please keep in mind that Hillcrest School is not responsible for lost or stolen phones and that an office phone is always available for student use.

Personal Appearance

Although Hillcrest does not require students to dress in uniform, we do expect students to come to school dressed in a manner that is conducive to work and learning. Pants, shorts and skirts must be worn on the waist and have a waistline no larger than two inches larger than the student's waist. Tops must cover the upper half of the body to the hip, leaving no gap through which the body/skin beneath is visible. Shorts and skirts must be of reasonable length, and not be distracting to classmates or teachers. Shoes must be secured firmly to the feet, provide safe support to the feet and have a heel that allows for safe daily activity – including running or other rigorous physical activity. Flip-flop style sandals or shoes are not considered safe. Sleeveless and tank tops are acceptable, but spaghetti strap tops are only acceptable when paired with a sleeved top. Hats and caps, other than religious headgear, and dark glasses are for outdoor use only.

Students, who wear clothing that is determined as inappropriate, distracting to the educational process, and/or dangerous to health and safety, will be sent home.

Medication

Students who take medication during the school day on a limited and/or regular schedule, must have a written prescription/authorization from their doctor on file with the school. Appropriate forms are available in the office. All medication must be kept in the office.

Governance & Communication

Governance

Middle School (MS) families are represented on the PTA Board by two volunteers, the **Middle School Board Representatives**, who are nominated and elected by the entire PTA body during the regular board slating process in the spring. These two people also serve as 1) the primary point of communication for all MS information; and 2) members of the **Middle School Advisory Committee**, an internal MS communication and volunteer coordination group.

The **Middle School Advisory Committee** is comprised of the Principal, MS English Language Arts Teachers and several key Middle School parent volunteers, including (generally) the following: PTA Personnel Coordinator, Field Trip Coordinator, MS Treasurer, one Community Service Representative, Social Coordinator, Athletic Director and a Coordinator from one of the MS fundraisers.

The purpose of the committee is to provide an opportunity for MS teachers, administration and MS parent leaders to communicate about the daily workings of the Middle School, discuss issues and come up with solutions when necessary. The MS Advisory Committee meets monthly and minutes and dates for meetings will be distributed via Schoology. Anyone is welcome to attend these meetings. Agenda items for meetings should be submitted to a committee member no less than 48 hours in advance of the meeting. Parents are encouraged to contact any member of the committee with questions or thoughts about MS activities.

Communication

The MS PTA Board Representative coordinates communication to MS families about **most non-academic topics**. If you have an item you would like distributed to MS families, please send it to the MS Board Rep who will compile and forward it in an email newsletter format. If it is an item that requires urgent communication, please indicate such in the subject line of your note and the MS Board Rep will make every effort to pass along the information as quickly as possible. Please note: only the MS Board Rep, the Principal, MS teachers, and webmaster have access to send out an email—even in the form of a reply—to MS families via Schoology. Please read any communications carefully and if action is required, reply to the person designated within the body of the email.

Teachers

Teachers will always be your primary contact for academic questions. Please contact them directly with any questions, issues or concerns. Their contact information can be found on the Hillcrest PTA Web Site and will also be communicated at Back to School Night.

Grades

Grades for all assignments are posted on the ABI Parent Portal (<https://abi.oaklandusd.org/>). Parents and students will both be informed of their personalized password to access student information. It is strongly advised that both parents and students check ABI regularly. This will help students understand their progress and allow for timely communications with teachers about any potential academic issues. Families will also receive formal grade progress reports for each marking period. There are three marking periods in each semester, so families will receive two formal progress reports prior to each of the final semester grades. But checking for feedback on individual assignments as the semester progresses allows students and parents to track status on an ongoing basis.

Other Issues or Concerns

If you have an item you would like discussed by the MS Advisory Committee, simply contact one of the Middle School Representatives to include it on the agenda for the next meeting (see below).

Volunteers

At the end of this handbook is detailed information about every volunteer position available in the MS. The MS philosophy is that teachers, administration and parents are partners in the education of their children. This includes the need for a significant investment by parents to run fundraisers, coach teams, coordinate community service activities, and chaperone social activities and field trips. Although many key positions are filled prior to the start of school, many are not. Parents are encouraged to come to the Back to School Coffee and Back to School Night to learn more about open volunteer positions and sign up to help. For more information about the various roles and time commitments involved, refer to the "Volunteering" section in the handbook.

Budgeting & Fundraising

Overview

Unlike lower grades, the 6th, 7th and 8th grades do not have individual room parents or separate class funds for items like teacher gifts, field trips, parties, etc. Rather, the MS Treasurer collects and manages funds for the entire MS. In addition, families and kids participate in fundraisers to help offset some of the costs of MS activities. **It is important to note that the PTA continues to fund the key academic support needs of the Middle School and so it is critical that MS families continue to stay engaged in all school fundraisers, not just those that offset MS-specific costs.**

The following is an outline of key expenses and the source of funds for those activities.

Expense	Funding Source
Academic Support	PTA General Fund, which comes primarily from the Hillcrest Benefit/Auction, Walkathon and beginning of the year Donation Drive
Field Trip	Individual families pay the majority of the cost of the annual field trip, however the cost is significantly offset by fundraising efforts such as Pizza Friday, Pumpkin Patch etc. Scholarships are available for the individual portion of the expense. Contact the Field Trip Coordinator or Treasurer for more information
Teacher Appreciation	Collected by MS Treasurer at the beginning of the year – this is separate from Field Trip costs and cannot be generated through MS PTA budget
Yearbook	Either individual books purchased by families or funded through MS fundraisers. MS Budget (income from fundraisers) funds yearbooks for teachers
Graduation	Small expense for ceremony and activities funded through MS budget (income from fundraisers)
Dances	Small expense funded through MS budget (income from fundraisers, including nominal “entrance” fee to dances)
Athletics	Individuals pay directly to cover costs of sports participation. All students will be allowed to play regardless of ability to pay.

Scholarships are available. Contact Athletic Director for more information.

MS Families Benefit Contribution – Instant Wine Cellar & Basket	The MS Benefit Coordinator will ask MS families to contribute to the Instant Wine Cellar. This is the MS “class contribution” to the Benefit (similar to the class art projects in younger grades). In addition, the MS Treasurer will ask for a small contribution for the class wine themed basket at the beginning of the year as well.
MS Families Walkathon Contribution	MS students are asked to bake cakes and volunteer their time for the Cake Walk at the spring Walkathon. Parents are also asked to volunteer their time at the Walkathon as well
Team Building	Each year teachers, administration and parents work together to find opportunities to maintain and improve the MS climate. Over the years, this has included: an overnight trip on the Balclutha, as well as team-building days at the school. The PTA has contributed significantly to these expenses (through Programming and Personnel budgets), but income raised from MS fundraisers occasionally contributes to cover these costs as well

Middle School Fundraisers

Middle School fundraisers are conducted throughout the year primarily to offset the cost of the MS field trip, as well as to provide small contributions toward social activities, team building activities, scholarships, and other needs as outlined above. The MS conducts two types of fundraisers: ongoing and periodic. The success of the fundraisers largely impacts the amount each family pays to cover the costs of the annual field trip.

Ongoing Fundraisers

A variety of fundraisers are conducted throughout the entire school year. These include:

Pizza Friday – pizza is served to participating 4th – 8th grade students each Friday. Requires an overall coordinator and weekly volunteers.

Periodic Fundraisers

In addition to ongoing fundraisers, periodic activities are also conducted to offset costs. These include:

Emergency Packet – At the beginning of each school year, parents are asked to provide a small packet of food in case of an emergency where students would be kept at school beyond the school day. Requires coordinator to purchase items and involves assembly/delivering of packets by MS

students.

Pumpkin Patch – During the month of October, the MS coordinates a pumpkin patch and bake sale. Requires an overall coordinator, committee to assist, and volunteers to oversee pumpkin patch shifts.

Parent's Night Out (PNO) – Parents drop their K-5th grade student at school on designated afternoons/evenings for 3 hours of activities and entertainment provided by MS students. These activities are designed and led by students with volunteer assistance. The evening usually ends with movie time, including popcorn/refreshments for all. Requires up to 3 coordinators, adult volunteers for each activity, and several more “floating” volunteers to run smoothly.

Please see job descriptions in the “Volunteering” section for more information on how to help.

Field Trip

Overview

All Hillcrest Middle School students participate in an annual outdoor education excursion to one of three destinations (in rotation throughout their three years in middle school): Yosemite National Park, El Capitan State beach (on the Santa Barbara coast) and Pinnacles National Monument. This multi-night (generally 4-day/3-night) trip is organized in partnership with Naturalists At Large, an outdoor education organization. NAL naturalists facilitate the student experience through daily activities (some, depending upon location) such as hiking, team-building exercises, hands-on science, kayaking, climbing, etc. Hillcrest parents and teachers serve as chaperones. In addition to delivering the multi-day curriculum, NAL provides sleeping tents plus all food, including prep and cooking. Students are actively involved in camp life – from setting up tents to daily assistance with after meal clean up. For each trip, students are split into small multi-grade groups. Each group is assigned a Naturalist as well as a parent chaperone. Teachers rotate between groups. The trip is taken in the spring season (May) to take advantage of best weather options coupled with easing of academic demands (post STAR testing). For more information about NAL go to: <http://www.naturalistsatlarge.com/>.

Costs

Fees for the trip are offset by various MS fundraising efforts (see details in Fundraising Section above); families pay the balance. Transport to and from each destination is by hired coach. One chaperone car will also follow buses in case a need arises during the field trip requiring a vehicle. Scholarships are available.

Logistics

Coordination of all pre-trip planning is handled by the parent Field Trip Coordinator. Responsibilities for this role center on communication with parents, teachers, administration and NAL. The parent Field Trip Coordinator is also the lead chaperone for the trip.

Parents will receive more information about the field trip at Back to School Night and in specially scheduled meetings and communications throughout the year. Parents will have an opportunity to submit their name to be chaperones at a meeting in the fall. Most years there are more names submitted than slots available and not all people volunteering to chaperone will be able to attend. Each selected chaperone goes through a rigorous and lengthy approval process, including fingerprinting that is run through FBI screening, and testing for TB and other contagious diseases. People selected to chaperone must be willing to go through the screening process before the end of the fall in order to ensure that the results are returned before the spring field trip. In the event that test results are not returned in time and/or come back with a result providing a reason that someone should not chaperone, an alternate who has previously passed the screening process will be selected. Your flexibility with this process is appreciated.

During the year the Field Trip Coordinator will make multiple requests for paperwork and other information from your family. Please be responsive - this is a challenging outing to organize and your prompt responses are very helpful!

Comprehensive trip information is available on the Hillcrest website:

<http://www.hillcrestpta.org/classroom/midschool/fieldtrip/>

Community Service

Overview

The Middle School Community Service program is a continuation and extension of the activities in which they have participated since Kindergarten.

Hillcrest Community Service Guiding Principles:

- ♦ Connect with our school community.
- ♦ Connect with our greater Oakland schools community.
- ♦ Connect with our greater Oakland community.
- ♦ Honor community service work done by students with their families and community groups.

Philosophy and Expectations

You don't have to be powerful to make a huge impact on your community. Community Service TEACHES and MODELS for our children what it means to be part of a community. Our community is Oakland. All Hillcrest students can contribute their time and effort to better their community.

In the past, children collected money or things to contribute to organizations to which they had little connection or follow-up. The child's focus was on competing to see who could collect the most. We believe there is more power in DOING. When we give more of ourselves in the form of time, effort and talent, we create an opportunity to connect and interact with those we are helping.

Every Middle School student will have the opportunity to connect and feel ownership of their school through their service to the younger students, and the Hillcrest community as a whole. Ongoing projects have been established at each grade level as defined below. Other projects are funded with volunteer time and effort as they arise.

Parent Support

As detailed in Volunteer section of this handbook, the Community Service coordinator works with established service opportunities and helps students find interesting and fulfilling service activities. If you have an idea for service activities feel free to get in contact with the coordinator.

Service Activities at Hillcrest

Listed below are examples of possible service activities at Hillcrest. Activities are focused in three areas:

- Helping younger students (e.g. tutors/reading buddies, PTA babysitters),
- Making the school a better place for all (e.g. safety patrol, green team), and

- Raising money for the middle school (e.g. Pizza Friday and the Pumpkin Patch).

Expected Grade-Level Service Activities

Grade Level	Activities
6th & 7th Grade	Spring carnival/walk-a-thon Pizza Friday Pumpkin Patch
8th Grade	Fall Annual Benefit Pumpkin Patch

Service Opportunities for All MS Grades

Activity	Description
First Grade Reading Buddies	Read with a 1st grade student for 30 minutes a day on Tuesdays, Thursdays and/or Fridays after school under the supervision of a first grade teacher.
Tutors	Tutor a 2nd – 5th grade student after school for 30 - 60 minutes on topics assigned by the student’s teacher, in that teacher’s classroom.
Teacher’s Assistants	Assist teachers with projects, usually before or after school.
Fundraising Volunteers	Assist with middle school fundraisers (Pizza Friday, Pumpkin Patch, etc.) to raise money that defrays the cost of the annual middle school overnight trip.
Green Ambassadors	Help younger students organize lunch waste into food waste, recycling, and trash so that they will deposit waste into appropriate bins. Opportunities exist every day at lunch.
Office Assistants	Answer phones, take messages and log student absences in the school front office

before school starts.

Library Assistants

Help monitor the library, check out books, and shelve books before school, after school and/or during lunch recess.

PTA Babysitters

Babysit for PTA Board Members/PTA Meetings once a month from 6:00 – 7:00 pm. Volunteer shifts are listed on MS Community Service Bulletin Board.

Safety Patrol

Assist 4th & 5th grade safety patrol members with car door opening before school. Safety Patrol training class required.

School Garden Projects

Assist with the school gardening projects to beautify our school grounds, as directed by Hillcrest Gardening Committee.

Service Activities in Hillcrest at Large

Our school community service coordinator looks for opportunities several times per year as part of our “Hillcrest Helps Out: Families Reaching Out to Other Oakland Schools” program. The goal is for Hillcrest parents and students to work together to make a difference at other Oakland Schools. The program tries to select projects that encourage parents and children from the school we are helping to join us in making a difference.

Hillcrest is currently “Sister Schools” with Lockwood, Santa Fe, Sankofa, and Piedmont Avenue. Over the years, we have also provided support to Allendale, Think College Now, Lincoln, Reach Academy, Lakeview, Madison Middle, Lazear, Maxwell Park, Place at Prescott, Hoover, West Oakland Middle School and Emerson.

We encourage MS students and their families to participate in “Hillcrest Helps Out” as much as possible.

Athletics

Overview

All Hillcrest MS students are invited to participate in the athletics program. All MS sports except cross-country are organized through Middle School Sports League, a small school league in the area, which includes: Redwood Day, St. Paul's, Tehiyah Day School, Bentley, Prospect Sierra, Athenian, Park Day, Raskob, Oakland Military Academy (OMI), Black Pine Circle, East Bay School for Boys, Julia Morgan School for Girls, The Academy and Archway. This year we hope to field the teams listed in the table below.

Sport	Season
Co-ed Football	Fall (Sept through Mid-Nov); for 2013 practices will be on Tuesdays and Wednesdays beginning 8/27/13
Co-ed Cross Country Running	Fall (Sept through Mid-Nov); meets are typically on Mondays and Thursdays
Boys' Basketball (JV & Varsity)	Winter (Dec through Mid-March); practice days TBD
Girls' Basketball (JV & Varsity)	Winter (Dec through Mid-March); practice days TBD
Co-ed Volleyball (JV & Varsity)	Spring (Mid-March through May); practice days TBD

Philosophy

The athletic program at Hillcrest is intended to be fun, educational, team-spirited and inclusive. We are a small school, and thus, it is expected that participants will have a wide variety of experience and skill levels. Most students who come out for a sport in 6th grade have not previously played the sport in an organized fashion. The following outlines some basic tenets on which the program is run.

- Every MS student is invited to play, regardless of experience; there are no cuts
- The number of teams fielded for a given sport is dependent on student interest, experience level of the collective group and number of coaches available to assist

- If there is more than one team:
 - 6th graders should generally expect to play on the JV team. Exceptions to this may be made for players who have significant experience with the sport. Our league guidelines specify that JV is a learning league. If a player is significantly more advanced than kids who are new to the sport they may be placed on the varsity team both to allow their own teammates the best opportunity to develop, and also to ensure we have a JV team that is appropriately competitive in our league
 - 8th graders, particularly if they have participated in the sport for the prior two years, can expect to play on the Varsity team. However, 8th graders are not guaranteed to play Varsity. Coaches will consider prior commitment and experience of individual players, and also the experience level of all players when forming teams
 - At the JV level, coaches are instructed to create game line-up's with approximately equal play time regardless of player experience
 - At the Varsity level we are expected to field a competitive team and equal play time is not guaranteed. However, all players should have an opportunity to play in most games, and coaches are instructed to use opportunities where our team is comfortably ahead to attempt to give non-starting players game experience

Costs

The MS athletics program must be financially self-sufficient. By its charter, the PTA is not permitted to support MS athletics financially.

This year, except for Cross Country, which does not currently incur expenses (except a small fee to participate in the Championship races), we are requesting a donation of \$180 per athlete. Funds requested are voluntary and scholarships are available such that every interested student should be able to play. Contact the MS Athletic Director for more information on scholarships.

Volunteer coaches help keep the cost of participation down. If you are a parent with a skill set that would help, please let us know. Parent volunteers (and all coaches) are asked to go through the OUSD security clearance process.

Program expenses include: field/court rentals, league referee fees, coaching costs, and equipment maintenance costs. The Athletic Director collects and distributes all funds. This is not a fundraiser—the fees collected for MS sports are expected to directly offset the costs.

Social Activities

Dances

Several times a year the MS Social Committee helps organize a MS dance in the multi-purpose room. Dances are in the evening for approximately two hours. Parents act as organizers and chaperones. Often, other schools are formally asked to join us (for example St. Theresa's or St. Paul's).

A permission slip is required to attend the dance. Guests are permitted, but must also have a permission slip. Parent pick up is required and parent drivers must be seen by a chaperone before students are released (students will not be released to leave on their own). Strict standards for respectful behavior are maintained by students and guests, and implemented at the discretion of the chaperones on the evening of the event. Parents will be called and asked to pick up any student or guest who does not behave in a respectful manner.

Songs are pre-screened by an adult volunteer, and every effort is made to choose music that reflects the taste of the students while exercising reasonable parental oversight with respect to content.

Other Social Activities

Opportunities for the group to gather in a safe, fun and positive way (for example, bowling night) are encouraged. Parent volunteers are needed to organize, drive to, and supervise such activities. If you have suggestions for a social event, please contact the MS Social Committee.

School Climate/Team Building

Teachers, administration and parents are always looking for ways to facilitate and encourage a positive school climate. In 2013-2014 the PTA has budgeted for team building consultant Dave Nettell to return and work with all MS students in grade specific groupings over multiple sessions throughout the year. Dave Nettell worked with the students in 2010-2011 and received overwhelming positive feedback from the students, parents, and administration.

Volunteering

Below is a list of the key Middle School volunteer positions. Although most of the key positions are filled prior to the start of school, many are not. Parents are encouraged to come to the Back to School Coffee and Back to School Night to learn more about open volunteer positions, and to sign up to help.

MS PTA Board Representatives

The Middle School PTA Board Representatives function largely as the “room parents” for the Middle School. They are generally the only parents who have access rights to the Middle School Parent and Teacher Group on Schoology. As such, most communications to parents for fundraising efforts, social events, athletic activities, field trip needs, etc., are funneled through them. As with other room parent duties, the MS PTA Board Representatives ensure that all volunteer positions have been filled, and occasionally check in with each main area coordinator to make sure any efforts (specifically related to fundraising) are on track. In addition, the MS PTA Board Representatives attend PTA Board meetings and actively participate on the MS Advisory Committee. On “Back to School” night for the MS, the Representatives also coordinate the MS parent volunteer communications part of the evening. Finally, the Representatives work with the Principal, MS teachers, and both incoming and outgoing members of the Middle School Advisory Committee (MSAC) to revise the MS Handbook in the summer in preparation for distributing an updated version in the week before school begins.

2013-2014 Volunteers: Lisa Chavez and Katrina Saba

Field Trip Coordinator

Each year, the Middle School goes on a four-day, three-night field trip, usually in the spring (see “Field Trip” section of the handbook). The MS Field Trip Coordinator is responsible for the overall organization of this annual event, and also serves on the MS Advisory Committee.

A major duty for the FT Coordinator includes communicating with families, NAL and school administration throughout the entire year. The FT Coordinator organizes, distributes and collects all required documentation. This includes: getting contracts, invoices and payment schedule from NAL; forwarding them to the Hillcrest Principal for review and approval; and getting documents signed/submitted by families (ensuring 100% completion of each student’s packet of permission forms and waivers before departure). He/she oversees all bus transportation details, develops a trip budget with MS Treasurer, collects trip fees from families and oversees scholarships, if requested. The FT Coordinator works with an NAL spokesperson to organize an informational assembly for parents at the school. He/she also coordinates all parent chaperone requirements, including communication to them, finding backups, hosting an orientation meeting before the trip, and making sure each chaperone has all OUSD required clearance documents on file before departure.

Throughout the year, the FT Coordinator works with the MS Communications Coordinator to share any pertinent trip details with parents, including emergency contact procedures, form submission

dates, departure/arrival information, etc. Finally, the FT Coordinator attends the trip as head chaperone and has a blast!

2013-2014 Volunteer: Sarah Holliman

Athletic Director

The Middle School Athletic Director oversees all activities pertaining to all Middle School sports teams, which have traditionally included: Co-ed Cross Country, Co-ed Football, Boys and Girls Basketball, and Co-ed Volleyball. All sports teams except Cross Country are organized through the Middle School Sports League.

Duties related to organizing the sports teams include the following for each sport: league interaction and coordination; financial management; facilities and equipment coordination; hiring and management of coaches; scheduling games and referees; and coordination of communication between all parties. This person also serves on the MS Advisory Committee.

2013-2014 Volunteer: Monica Marcone

Middle School Treasurer

The MS Treasurer prepares and tracks the annual MS budget (working closely with the PTA Treasurer and Deposit Manager). The MS Treasurer keeps records of all MS financial transactions, monitors all MS expenses, and keeps track of requests for reimbursement, etc. This includes deposits and expenses for MS fundraising efforts, social events, and the overnight field trip. The MS Treasurer also handles funds for MS holiday and year-end gifts and serves on the MS Advisory Committee. In addition, he/she prepares a monthly budget report for the MS Advisory Committee and presents a bi-annual MS Budget report to the PTA.

2013-2014 Volunteer: Melissa Zaharias

8th Grade Night of Benefit Supervisor

Traditionally, the 8th grade students are invited to help on the night of the Benefit. One or two parents are required to coordinate this effort. This involves: working with the Benefit Committee to understand roles and responsibilities needed; coordinating with teachers to solicit student volunteers; communicating volunteer roles and expectations with 8th grade students and their parents in advance of the Benefit; collecting parent permission slips; selecting certain students to help with different Benefit needs; arriving early the night of the Benefit to provide final instruction to student volunteers; and supervising students to ensure appropriate behavior throughout the evening. This is a great role for someone who would like to participate in the Benefit, but who doesn't anticipate being an active bidder in the Live or Silent Auctions.

2013-2014 Volunteers: Cathy Ward & Elizabeth Goldman

Instant Wine Cellar Captain & Benefit Wine Basket Coordinator

The MS class contribution to the Benefit is to coordinate the Instant Wine Cellar and an accompanying “class basket” with a wine theme. Two or more parents are required to coordinate this effort. Activities related to this position include identifying a lead donor for the wine cellar (for example, a local wine shop); finding creative ways to solicit wine donations from all Hillcrest families, but in particular, from MS families (which includes communications in the Yellow Pages and Benefit newsletter); collecting wine at the school in the weeks prior to the Benefit; compiling information on wines collected; helping write up the catalog description of the offering; and creating a compelling display the night of the event.

Except for soliciting a lead donor, similar activities are needed to put together a wine basket. The Instant Wine Cellar often has contributions from the entire school population; however the Wine Basket contributions come from the MS families alone.

2013-2014 Volunteers: Leigh Kjeldsen, Barbara Murrer and Per Ljung

Walkathon Coordinator

The MS Walkathon Coordinator oversees all aspects of the Middle School contribution to the Walkathon and acts as the primary contact for the Walkathon committee. While Middle School kids are encouraged to walk and raise funds for the school, many would rather contribute by volunteering the day of the event with carnival games, booths, activities, etc., or by organizing and running the Cake Walk. Responsibilities include coordination with the Walkathon Committee to understand logistics and volunteer needs; communicating volunteer needs to students and families; scheduling MS volunteers the day of the Walkathon; securing a parent volunteer to execute and run the Cake Walk; and supervising MS student volunteers the day of the carnival.

2013-2014 Volunteers: Donna Hanson and Anna Mae Wilson

Social Activities Coordinator

The Social Activities Coordinator organizes and executes all MS social events, such as dances, bowling nights, etc. He/she works closely with MS teachers, principal and custodial staff to schedule and communicate dates. For dances, this also requires coordination with parent(s) designated to provide sound/music. The Social Activities Coordinator prepares permissions slips for students and collects any funds that might be associated with the event. This position is sometimes shared, and the parent(s) coordinating these activities often enlist the help of their middle school student and other student representatives in planning events, as well as creating and distributing flyers. The Social Activities Coordinator recruits parental volunteers to help monitor and supervise events. He/she also sits on the MS Advisory Committee.

2013-2014 Volunteers: Sarah Campbell and Sarah Bedford

Community Service Coordinator

The Community Service Coordinator communicates with grade-level Community Service representatives, teachers and others who organize service opportunities described above, reaches out to the Hillcrest community and outside community to provide volunteer opportunities for the students and inspires students to come up with their own ideas for service. Students in the middle school are expected to participate in activities that support the Hillcrest school community. In particular, 8th graders play a critical role helping the PTA with a host of tasks associated with the fall Benefit / auction. 7th and 6th grade students actively assist with the spring carnival / walk-a-thon, and they regularly help with Pizza Friday. In addition, all MS students are encouraged to participate in school-wide community service events; teachers, parents, and all Hillcrest staff support MS student engagement in these activities to support students' personal growth and development and also to serve as important role models to younger children at the school

2013-2014 Volunteers: Jill Berrick (Coordinator and 6th Grade Representative)

Cathy Ward (7th Grade Representative) and Julie Fleming (8th Grade Representative)

Graduation Committee Coordinator

The Graduation Committee Coordinator works with the Principal, MS teachers, student representatives and a committee of 8th grade parents to organize graduation-related activities. This includes: creating a graduation invitation, designing, printing and distributing a program; finding a location for an 8th grade graduation party (typically at an 8th graders home); and communicating graduation activities to parents and students. This may also include collecting funds and coordinating with an outside location if the graduation party is not at someone's home.

2013-2014 Volunteer: Diane Diamond

Pumpkin Patch Fundraiser Coordinator

The Pumpkin Patch Coordinator is responsible for all aspects of the annual Hillcrest Pumpkin Patch/Bake Sale, conducted each October. The Pumpkin Patch Coordinator orders the pumpkins and other supplies; work with the Middle School teachers to arrange for student Pumpkin Patch volunteers; solicits MS parents to supervise the students; publicizes the event to the school and neighborhood; communicate needs to students and parents for bringing in baked goods, volunteering for Pumpkin Patch shifts and handling the money raised.

2013-2014 Volunteer: Lisa Chavez

Pizza Friday Coordinator

Pizza Friday, which runs year round and is available to students in grades 4-8, is the largest MS fundraiser. The Coordinator for Pizza Friday: creates a flyer for inclusion in Yellow Pages at the beginning of each semester; collects payments (which are required before the semester begins, in

advance of sales); places orders; and arranges to have pizza and drinks delivered and available each Friday for participating students. This person also: oversees a committee of parent and student volunteers to distribute food on Fridays; creates deposits; and reports deposits to MS Treasurer at the beginning and end of each semester. No money is handled on Pizza Fridays.

2013-2014 Volunteers: Amanda Noguera & Shawn Wong

Emergency Packet Coordinator

This is a newer periodic fundraiser that takes a small amount of time to complete, approx. 10 hours total. The coordinator produces a flyer to be included with the back-to-school Welcome Packet detailing order information; collects money raised; creates deposits; and reports deposits to MS Treasurer. They can also choose to distribute flyers in person at back-to-school community events. When the bulk of the orders are received, they then purchase all packet items for assembly by MS students. The assembly can take place at school or a home, determined by the coordinator. After completion, packets are delivered to the students' classrooms or school office for storage.

2013-2014 Volunteer: Candes Lecocq

Parents' Night Out Coordinators

This is a newer periodic fundraiser that is extremely popular, fun for the entire school community and lucrative. The PNO coordinator(s) schedules a date/dates with the Principal and files required facility use forms with OUSD. The coordinator solicits MS student feedback & participation for activities; produces a flyer to be included with weekly electronic Yellow Pages and/or Schoology detailing order information; collects money raised; creates deposits; and reports deposits to MS Treasurer. The coordinators purchase/collect/solicit items needed for activities, such as arts & crafts items, fingernail polish, games, popcorn/drinks, etc.; request parent and MS student volunteers from the MS community, and appropriately staff the facility for the evening. A Fall Parents Night Out will be a Pizza/Movie night for the kids. In the Spring, a larger Parents' Night Out will involve multiple activities for the children.

2013-2014 Volunteers: Fall Event: Gina Hunt & Suzie Inadomi; Spring Event: Caryn Kramer

