



R. J. Kinsella Magnet School of Performing Arts

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Pamela Totten-Alvarado, Principal

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Dear Kinsella Families,

We have had a tremendous beginning to our new school year. We appreciate your patience as we have ALL adjusted to our "temporary" school space. The new 6 day schedule began Monday, October 1, 2007. All students began their new schedule with students in grades 5-8 picking out areas of concentration. They will have their area of concentration numerous times during the 6 day schedule. All students will have dance. See the dance teachers, Ms. Howe and Ms. Thomas, about shoes.

Our extended day and PEAC program also began Monday October 1, 2007. Extended day includes 45 minutes of academic study and 1 hour of performing arts for students in grades K-8, Mon-Thurs from 2:45-4:30 p.m. The PEAC program is for K-3 students and they receive additional reading instruction from 2:45-4:15 on Mon, Wed, & Thurs. **THERE ARE NO PROGRAMS ON FRIDAYS. ALL students go home at 2:30.**

We are looking forward to a very productive and exciting year filled with great student success and growth. Nightly, please be sure your child reads 20-45 minutes, does content homework, and practices their performing arts skills.

Thank you for your continued support as we are Building Understanding, Growth, and Success (B.U.G.S.) by

A-Attitude,
R-Respect,
R-Responsible
T-Trustworthiness
S-Safety,
ARRTS!

Sincerely, **Pamela Totten-Alvarado**
Principal



Interview with Mr. Duran

1. How did you become a performing artist?

As a young child living in New Britain I was not exposed to the performing arts. My only opportunity came in the form of break dancing in front of the local grocery store. It was there that I met a modern dancer who owned a studio and I began to take dance classes. Initially, it was completely unaffordable, but the dance teacher made a deal with me. For every break dancing class I taught her students, she would give me one jazz dance class in exchange. The opportunity launched my interest in performing. By High School, in addition to dancing, I was also in the show choir and the madrigal singers.

2. What was your formal training?

I received my bachelor's degree from Hofstra University in New York and my graduate degree from Purdue University, but my real training was on the professional level in New York. I worked professionally for seven years and by 2000 landed at Hartford Stage in Michael Wilson's production of Macbeth. I continued to work there in many productions including Camino Real, A Christmas Carol; A Ghost Story of Christmas, The Williams Marathon and Write On.

3. What led you to Performing Arts education?

I've been teaching children since 1988, but while at Hartford Stage I began to develop a theatre literacy program that changed my view of learning. As the Education Director at Hartford Stage, I created a new approach to theatre education. I would visit classrooms and work with students prior to them reading a specific story. I acted out the most suspenseful moments in the story and created intense levels of anticipation. The students developed empathy for the characters and became invested in the story prior to even touching the book. By the end of the residencies, students could not wait to read the book! I knew I was onto something hot. Teaching theatre for art's sake was no longer my primary objective; instead, I used theatre as a vehicle to engage students emotionally and generate interest in reading. My first year I led nine residencies, seven years later the number of classes involved in the program rose to 159.

4. What are your goals at Kinsella?

My goal at Kinsella is to focus the efforts of both the performing arts faculty and the classroom teachers in order to engage students on the most profound emotional level and in turn inspire their parents. Performing arts have the ability to motivate and inspire students and to increase insight into the human condition. I am here to see a vision come together in all areas of performance, learning, communicating and growing. The best of Kinsella is yet to come and I'm thrilled to be part of it.

News From The Classrooms

PreK

Mrs. Baker reports that in September, the class learned the rules for coming to school. We also learned about ourselves, our feelings, and playing with friends. In October, we will learn about families, our 5 senses, Fall, and apples and pumpkins.

Kindergarten

Mrs. Grimaldi reports that in September, the class learned letter names and sounds. They also learned to make their own picture story books. In October, the class will go on a field trip to the Pumpkin Patch in Somers to learn about how things grow.

Mrs. Saperstein reports that in September, the class worked on phonemic awareness, literacy activities, and started a science unit about Sunshine and Shadows.

1st Grade

Ms. Stamos reports that in September, the class has been investigating their new MONDO reading program-we love the songs! We have also been reading different alphabet books. In October, we will be going with Mrs. Andrusia's and Mrs. Joyce's classes to Johnny Appleseed's Orchard in Ellington to learn about growing apples, the legend of Johnny Appleseed, and to enjoy some apple picking.

Mrs. Joyce reports that in September, the class enjoyed making new friends, worked hard in class and during Writer's Workshop and in their task groups.

2nd Grade

Mrs. Bernabucci reports that in September, students worked on the 2nd grade science unit: The exploration of soils, worms, and helping the earth. Math began with a review of addition and subtraction skills and calendar skills. DRA testing also began. In October, classes will continue practicing addition and subtraction skills. Let's practice at home too! We will also begin to send books from our classroom libraries home. Please make sure that your child reads out loud every night for 20 minutes or more.

Ms. Opton reports that in September, the class worked hard in literacy centers, learned the school rules and worked hard to earn AARTS tickets to use at the school store. In October, the class will carve pumpkins and estimate the total number of pumpkin seeds, continue to make great choices to earn AARTS tickets, and read spooky stories and sing spooky songs.

3rd Grade

Ms. Hurteau reports that in September, the class learned about Rocks and Minerals. In October, the class will be completing various readings, writing, and math activities based on pumpkin exploration.

Mrs. Gray reports that in September, the class did an excellent job getting used to our new building; studied Rocks and Minerals; worked in literacy centers and started practicing for the Math CMT. In October, the class will begin suspense in the writing block. We will continue to

work hard in our MONDO block and to continue to earn AARTS tickets for our excellent behavior.

Mrs. Rivera (3/4) reports that in September, the class has been working in reading centers, focusing on CMT strand A1. They also worked in centers for math, learning about place value and numbers. In October, the class will continue working in reading centers and focusing on CMT strand A2. In math, students will be working in math centers and focusing on pictorial representations of numbers.

4th Grade

Mrs. Kozlowski reports that in September, her class and Mrs. Dimattio's went to Bluff Point with their Pen-pals from Coventry. They explored diversity in the natural and social worlds by investigating plant and animal life in the Long Island Sound.

Mrs. Dimattio reports that in September, the class started reviewing place value and pictorial representation to prepare for the CMTs. In science, the class started a unit on Land and Water. In reading, the class started literature circles. In October, the class will continue studying land and water and perfecting their literature circles to ensure high reading scores on the CMTs.

5th Grade

Miss Noonan reports that in September, the class started learning about sound. We did experiments to explore pitch. We have also been practicing our reading strategies of clarifying, predicting, summarizing, and questioning. In October, the class will be involved in literature circles and we will start learning about light.

6th Grade

Mr. Nieves reports that In September, the class learned about astronomy in science and statistics in math. In October, Mrs. Dinnald will be returning to the class. Welcome back Mrs. Dinnald! Thanks to Mr. Nieves for teaching the class during September!

Mrs. Hassell reports that in September, the class began moon journals. The students are recording the nightly changes in the moon and researching facts about the moon. The class also traveled to Woodstock to reunite with students from Emerson Williams School. In October, the class will begin math projects about data. Students will formulate qualitative and quantitative questions to collect data and then show the results using Excel.

Mrs. Shimkus reports that in September, the class was happy to be back in school. We took a tour of the building and then started to work on learning! We are becoming very good at discussion in our literacy circles. In October, the class will spend a lot of time on the SmartBoards doing math, science, and writing. We will also be doing a few experiments in science to bring out the scientist in all of us.

7th Grade

Mr. Stohl reports that in September, language arts students were visited by Mr. James Tillman who was wrongfully imprisoned for 18 ½ years. He is a true role model for us. We also saw a play about witches and read a great mystery book Ziggy And The Black Dinosaurs. In

October, we will begin the mystery novel Wanted by Caroline Cooney. In addition all the students will begin their personalized special schedule.

Mr. Pepe reports that in September, science classes studied human body systems and how they interact. In October, they will be studying health.

Mrs. Piotrowski reports that in September, the class had a guest speaker, Mr. James Tillman who was wrongfully convicted of a crime and exonerated after 18 ½ years. The students were captivated by his story and thanked him for coming. In October, social studies classes will travel to the Noah Webster house for a hands on fieldtrip. The students will be assigned characters from colonial times and will have to complete certain tasks within the house.

8th Grade

Mrs. Tocionis reports that in September, language arts students began a new unit with the book Seedfolks. The students prepared monologues using criteria from the book. Students will perform their monologues using weight, time, and space.

Mr. Pepe reports that in September, science classes studied plant and animal cells and their various functions. In October, the class will be studying genetics.

Mrs. Piotrowski reports that in September, the class had a guest speaker, Mr. James Tillman, who was wrongfully convicted of a crime and exonerated after 18 ½ years. The students were captivated by his story and thanked him for coming. In October, social studies classes will travel to the Noah Webster house for a hands on fieldtrip. The students will be assigned characters from colonial times and will have to complete certain tasks within the house.

Performing Arts

Dance

Miss Howe and Ms. Thomas report that in September, the class practiced role call order and explored moving in personal versus general space. We mimicked basic aerobic routines to warm up our bodies in half time and regular tempo, along with stretching. In Pre-K through 6th grade we explored creating personal body shapes, group sculptures, pathways through space, and stationary and traveling movement. 7th and 8th graders started learning the basic steps of meringue and swing dance. In October, all grades will start the study of African and Latin cultural dances. Students will also work with double time tempo and establish routines of locomotor moves across the dance floor.

Vocal

Mr. Jimenez reports that in September, all grade levels were exposed to a sequence of lessons exploring steady beat, word pattern making, and rhythmic patterns connected to melodic patterns or tonal patterns of 2 sounds Sol and Mi. In October, students will continue to explore a sequence of lessons adding half and whole notes, patterns and tonal patterns within the range of the 5 sounds Do-Re-Mi-Fa-Sol ascending and descending. These will be explored. Through a series of folk song materials, students will be encouraged to write their own word rhythm patterns and create their own short songs.

Band

Mrs. Kroqi reports that in September, band

members worked very hard in rehearsals to get ready for the 9-11 commemoration. They gave a great performance. Congratulations to all the band students! In October, the band is preparing for the November Hispanic Heritage performance. Also, I want to congratulate new band students for participating in the instrumental program.

Violin

Ms. Jones reports that In late September, students learned the parts of the violin, rest position feet, and playing position feet. We also learned different rhythm variations of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star". In October, we are reinforcing what we learned in September plus we are learning how to hold our violins up with our head and balancing it on our shoulders for an extended period of time. We will also start learning how to hold our bow and E string posture.

Drama

Mrs. Chiucarello reports that in September, students in every grade began their introduction to drama doing games, physical and vocal warm-ups and acting exercises. We concentrated on learning the acting skill called pantomime. In pantomime, actors communicate an idea or action through movement, gestures, and body language; there is no speaking or dialogue. Pantomime removes the pressure of dialogue and allows the actor to become aware of the space around them and helps them to explore how to express themselves physically. We also worked on expressing emotions physically and through facial expressions. In October, students will be creating and performing presentations for the Hispanic Heritage celebration in November.

Stage Craft

Ms. Wizniak reports that In September, In Kindergarten we learned about 2 of the 7 Elements of Design, lines and shapes. In 1st grade we made "Family Portraits" focusing on creating a boarder and how to draw our families. In 2nd grade we learned about lines and movement. We are creating images that reflect these elements and principles of design. In 3rd grade we made coqui out of model magic. We also made rocks out of paper mache to connect to our science theme. In 4th grade we made Oaxacan Animals from Mexico out of model magic and construction paper. In 5th grade we made Vejigante Masks from Puerto Rico using plaster paris. In 6th grade we made large lizards using oil pastels, focusing on blending colors and design. In 7th grade we used paper mache to make large Oaxacan Animals, painting in the Oaxacan style. In 8th grade we worked on creating inspirational murals to hang up in the school.

PTO-Parents Teachers Organization

Mrs. Rivera, the Family Resource Aide, reports that in September, the PTO began the committee signup for parents. Committees include the School Improvement team, The PTO executive team, Halloween and Christmas teams and the Parents Volunteer Committee. On Wednesday, September 19th 2007, we had our 1st "second cup of coffee", a free parent workshop. Our guest speaker was Mrs. VanNostrand, Kinsella's literacy coach. For grades K-3. We discussed the new reading program MONDO. Mrs. VanNostrand also told parents about the reading strategies that they can use with their children at home and free books available for parents and children. Thanks to all for coming.

Remembering September 11th.



By Mr. Saxon and Mr. Duran

On September 14th, students and staff of the R. J. Kinsella Magnet School of Performing Arts gathered to commemorate the tragedy of September 11th 2001. Joining them were representatives of the Hartford Fire Department honoring the thousands of firefighters who risked their lives to help the victims of 9-11.

The solemn ceremony included orchestral and chorus performances of patriotic songs and the African-American spiritual “Amazing Grace.” A poem of reflection read by Mrs. Alvarado opened the ceremony. A violin solo of the “Star Spangled Banner” complemented a movement-dance piece entitled *Bodies and Buildings*, which recalled the events of that fateful day. In addition, a spoken word presentation highlighted the resilience of Americans and our hopes beyond 9-11. Throughout the ceremony, students waved red, white, and blue stars to symbolize our country and the values we hold dear.

The commemoration reminded all present of the resilience of America. Listening to the “Star Spangled Banner”, we were all reminded that our nation has been attacked before, and yet we defended our country and Americans remained a strong and united people. Remembering our past and honoring the fundamental values of our nation is at the heart of education, citizenship and wisdom. For one moment, our school stopped everything to recognize the profound significance of that historic day in September six years ago.

Thanks to all those who helped to organize the commemoration, to all the Performing Arts staff and teachers, to all the students who performed magnificently, and to all the students who attended.

Teacher Honored

By Mr. Saxon

In June, Mrs. Janice Grimaldi was chosen by her colleagues as Kinsella’s 2006-2007 Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Grimaldi has taught Kindergarten at the Kinsella school for 17 years. Mrs. Grimaldi is the daughter of prominent educators. Her father was the head of the Science Department at Bloomfield High School for many years. Her mother taught 32 years in the Hartford Public Schools-including teaching Kindergarten at Kinsella!

Mrs. Grimaldi is the proud mother of two sons, Justin who is 27 and David who is 23. In her spare time, as a passionate Red Sox fan, she makes frequent pilgrimages to Fenway Park in Boston to root for the team. She is also an avid gardener.

Asked what keeps her so motivated, Mrs. Grimaldi explains “I love the children. I feel needed.” Her advice to new teachers? “Take one day at a time and always do your best!” Many thanks to Mrs. Grimaldi for helping to make Kinsella School the best it can be.

