August 2016

Dear Student, Parent/Guardian:

Welcome to the 2016-2017 school year! I look forward to a challenging, interesting and fun year as we explore current world news stories, the history of journalism in the United States, the professional rights and responsibilities of being a journalist, as well as the art of interviewing, writing an article and presenting an article in the best light. The following information will assist you in having a productive and successful year. Please keep this letter in your notebook as a quick reference for frequently asked questions.

**Course Outline**
The Journalism Curriculum is divided into six units of varying length. Students will hone their writing skills throughout the course while exploring the history of journalism in the United States, interviewing skills and current school, city, national and world events.

Students will be writing on a daily basis in their notebooks and as such, will need to come prepared to class with a notebook and pencil. Students will also be required to maintain a portfolio of completed original articles.

**IBMYP ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**
There are four major assessment criteria incorporated in the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IBMYP). These criteria are:

**Analyzing**
- Identifying and explaining the content, context, language, structure technique and style of texts.
- Identifying and explaining the effects of the creator’s choices on an audience.
- Justifying opinions and ideas, using examples, explanation and terminology.
- Interpreting similarities and differences in features within and between genres and texts.

**Organizing**
- Employing organizational structures that serve the context and intention.
- Organizing opinions and ideas in a coherent and logical manner.
- Using referencing and formatting tools to create a presentation style suitable to the context and intention.

**Producing Text**
- Producing texts that demonstrate thought, imagination and sensitivity, while exploring and considering new perspectives and ideas arising from personal engagement with the creative process.
- Making stylistic choices in terms of linguistic, literary and visual devices, demonstrating awareness of impact on an audience.
- Selecting relevant details and examples to develop ideas.

**Using Language**
- Using appropriate and varied vocabulary, sentence structure and forms of expression.
- Writing and speaking in an appropriate register and style.
- Using correct grammar, syntax and punctuation.
- Spelling, writing and pronouncing with accuracy.
• Using appropriate non-verbal communication techniques.

**Grading Scale**
All work is graded on a percentage basis, but is weighted according to the type of assignment. The Pittsburgh Public Schools requires the following distribution:

- Classwork 25%
- Assessment 25%
- Writing 20%
- Participation 20%
- Homework 10%

90-100% - A  
80-89% - B  
70-79% - C  
60-69% - D  
50-59% - E

**Necessary Materials**
All students should bring a notebook to be used throughout the course. This notebook is to be used only for Journalism and will remain in the classroom most of the time. You will also need to bring a pencil and agenda book every day.

**Homework**
Homework will be assigned throughout the week and will be expected the following day. “No Homework” slips will be used to track missing homework and student explanations for not completing the homework in a timely fashion. Please use your agendas to keep track of your homework assignments.

**Late Work**
Late homework is accepted but will only be given ½ credit. Class work should never be turned in late. It is due on the day that it is assigned. Unless a student makes a prior arrangement with the teacher, any class work assignment that is submitted late will also be given ½ credit.

**Make-up Work**
If you miss an assignment due to an absence from school you have the same number of days you were gone to make up the work. Generally, you must make up homework, tests, and notes, but it is not necessary to make up class work. **Students missing class due to school activities are expected to get all assignments for the day before leaving for the activity and to turn them in ON THE DUE DATE.** Students who begin to miss significant class time due to activities should meet with the teacher to see if additional arrangements need to be made.

**Extra-Credit**
**There will be no opportunities for extra credit.** Students should make every effort to complete work and achieve the highest grade possible during the report period and not rely on extra credit to boost their grade. It is important that students begin to develop the study habits necessary to complete quality work the first time.
Behavioral Expectations
I have high expectations regarding behavior that are not easily summed up in a list of rules. I trust that we will develop a classroom community that fosters mutual respect and courtesy. Below are a few of the expectations that I have:

• **Be present.** You cannot learn if you are not in class. If you miss class for valid reasons, do everything within your power to see me before you miss the class. If you are out due to illness or other health concerns, you are welcome to e-mail me for assignments that you missed.

• **Be prompt.** You must be in your seat at the ringing of the bell. It will not be acceptable to arrive at my classroom after the bell has rung.

• **Be prepared.** This presumes completed homework and necessary tools. It also means coming to class having thought about what we are doing and what you have read or written and how you plan to participate in the current learning or discussion.

• **Be polite.** We may not all come to class with the same working definition of “polite”, so you will need to accept my definition. There is, of course, no eating, drinking or chewing gum. No demeaning speech of any kind will be tolerated. You should feel free to articulate your thoughts, but not at the expense of one of your classmates. No foul speech will be tolerated whether it is directed at someone or used as an expletive.

Contacting Mr. Denlinger
My room’s phone number is (412) 529-7830. You are always welcome to leave a voice mail message for me. It may be more expeditious to e-mail me. My e-mail is tdenlingert1@pghboe.net. I do check my e-mail numerous times throughout the day and will be sure to respond to your concern as quickly as possible.

I hope that this information has been helpful. Again, I am looking forward to an exciting year and trust that we all (student, teacher, parent) will work together to create an environment that is conducive to personal learning and growth.

Cordially,

Mr. Ted Denlinger

Approved: Ms. Aisha Robinson, Director

Please sign to indicate that you have read the above letter.

Parent Signature __________________________________ Student Signature __________________________