

February 22, 2018

Good afternoon North Hampton parents and families,

It has come to my attention that many North Hampton parents are concerned and/or confused by what they are hearing about the potential cancellation of the middle school overnight trips beyond this year. I share this response with you to help you understand what has taken place and our plans moving forward for the 6th, 7th and 8th grade trips.

Over many years, North Hampton School has consistently incorporated an extended, multiple night field trip for the 6th, 7th and 8th grades. The 6th grade trip has been an outdoor education oriented/environmental camp experience, held at Merrowvista in Tuftonboro for the past several years. The 7th grade trip has been to New York City and the 8th grade trip has been to Washington, D.C. These trips have become an important part of the middle school experience for North Hampton students.

Over a period of several months, beginning early last fall, staff members raised concerns about continuing the trips due to a number of different reasons. Assistant Principal Tracy Griffenhagen and I participated in a series of discussions with middle school teachers about the overnight trips to listen to their concerns and brainstorm about potential alternatives. The first outcome of these discussions was ensuring that the trips went ahead as planned for this school year, 2017-2018.

The school administration is well aware these trips are important to the North Hampton school community and to our student's middle school experience. Funding for the trips was included in the proposed 2018-19 budget, and at no time was there discussion of cutting them from the budget.

Another result of the discussions with the middle school teachers was a presentation I made last Thursday, February 15th to the North Hampton School Board regarding the 6th, 7th and 8th grade trips. Included in my presentation were ideas for alternative daylong field trips that would replace, if not replicate, the overnight trips. After my presentation, the School Board indicated in no uncertain terms that the trips were integral to the North Hampton experience and charged me with formulating a plan for the current 6th, 7th and 8th grade trips to continue.

Just yesterday, 2/21, the School Programs Director at Merrowvista confirmed that our school has the week of September 10-14, 2018 officially reserved. The trips to New York City and Washington, D.C. will also be planned for the spring of 2019, during their typical time frames. I want to thank teacher Mike Caron for continuing to organize and plan the trips, as he has for many years. Importantly, as teacher participation on overnight trips is voluntary, he, Ms. Griffenhagen and I will work with the teachers and staff to determine staffing and chaperones for each trip. Beyond next year, the administration and School Board intend to include the trips in our budgeting and planning while also, in collaboration with the staff and community, continue evaluating the expense and complexities of the New York City and Washington, D.C. trips, with the intent of always making decisions based upon what's best for kids.

Lastly, I look forward to continuing to support the trips and the learning and developmental experiences they provide.

Sincerely,

Erik M. Anderson
Principal

Please make note of the following dates/events:

February 26-March 2nd- Winter Break

Tuesday, March 13th- Voting Day- starting at 8:00am- at North Hampton School