



Fort Lee Public Schools

Frank Romano, III, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent of Schools

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Dear New Colleague,

Once again, I would like to welcome you to the Fort Lee educational community. This particular welcome letter and the New Teacher Orientation in general are notable for me because I am fairly new to Fort Lee Public Schools and this is my first orientation delivery. My work over this past year with Dr. Bandlow, Board of Education members, parents, administrators, supervisors, teachers, secretaries, custodians, and students has consistently reinforced my initial impressions of Fort Lee as a place where teaching and learning hold great value to all stakeholders.

Fort Lee is a wonderful school district, and that is due in no small part to the work of our professional staff. During my one year tenure, I've found an abundance of evidence that suggests how fortunate we are to work in Fort Lee. When we consider the global issues and, closer to home, the challenges that often interfere with public education, we must realize how lucky we are to be relatively insulated from what so many others face. That does, however, leave us with the noble work of fostering tomorrow's leaders.

The next three days serve as the first of several professional development experiences that support and guide teachers who are new to the District. You will find a New Teacher Orientation Feedback Sheet in your orientation notebook. Please take the time to consider the next three days and comment as you process. Your input is valuable to me and crucial for the development of your future experiences.

As you come "back to school" this year, I hope that you ask yourselves questions that sound something like: "What is my educational philosophy?" "What do students really need from me in order to survive and thrive in the 21st century?" "What is curriculum...Is it simply content and skill, or does it include such concepts as social responsibility, character, and tolerance?" and "How will I approach my craft?" In answering these questions, I offer you the attached Habits of Mind by Arthur Costa and Bena Kallick. In a nutshell, I offer you a personal application of them as the ultimate teacher—a father. Each morning before leaving for work, I kiss my three-and-a-half-year-old son goodbye and leave him with three thoughts, "Have fun today; learn a lot; I love you." This is my attempt to address his whole being and introduce him to some habits of mind.

I do look forward to working with all of you as we explore the art and science of teaching, solve problems, learn, and grow together. Know that my door is always open to you and that I am committed to your success. Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss issues, successes, concerns, or even just to say hello.

In closing, I'll refer you back to the poem that I mailed you. It encapsulates the wonder of our work and its impact on the future, one student at a time. The poem, written by Margaret O'Rourke and titled "Molders of the Future," captures the importance of our work with the children at Fort Lee Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Frank Romano, III, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent