



**GUIDANCE AND  
COUNSELING OFFICE**  
Philip Kavanagh  
Director

January 11, 2017

Dear 8<sup>th</sup> grade Parents/Guardians,

This year we are embarking on a significant modification to our middle school to high school transition program. This year, rather than having high school counselors and senior students visit Copper Beech MS to provide school and academic information, the **students will be bussed to their respective high schools for a broader experience on February 16, from 11:45am-2pm**. This will afford students the opportunity to learn about their new school, the students, counselors, teachers and administrators, as well as the high school daily schedule, habits of a successful high school student, graduation requirements and the myths and realities of high school life – all within the physical setting of their future school. During this time counselors will also be taking your 9<sup>th</sup> grade elective choices and explaining placement in core academic courses.

In addition to this event, the high schools will continue to offer the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Parent Orientation evenings, as well as the early arrival and high school orientation for 9<sup>th</sup> graders on the first day of school.

**While visiting their future high school, students will be making elective course selections only for their 9<sup>th</sup> grade year.** As will be explained to students, placement in the core academic subjects of English, history, math, science and foreign language is based upon several factors, including current course level, current and past academic performance, available testing measures and teacher recommendations. A complete summary of the electives that students have chosen and their core academic placement will be mailed home by late March or early April. This mailing will not be an actual schedule, but verification of course requests and academic placement. Ensuring that this verification is accurate is essential. **Beginning this year, any request to move to a higher academic level than the one to which a continuing student has been assigned must be completed and submitted by June 12<sup>th</sup>.**

Please also be aware that the level at which a student begins high school does not fix that student into a given track. Students may change academic levels in subsequent years, moving up or down as academic progress dictates. A complete list of all courses offered at the high school can be located in the High School Program of Studies, which can be found on the district guidance website by visiting [www.lakelandschools.org](http://www.lakelandschools.org), clicking on Departments and then Guidance. For any parent seeking to be prepared for the years ahead, this is a good place to begin.

As a reminder, **Lakeland High School's orientation will be held on January 12, at 7pm, and Walter Panas High School's orientation will be held on January 18, at 7pm.** I encourage parents to attend as we approach this important transition to high school.

Regards,