



July 14, 2016

Dear parents,

Since it has been 9 years since I stepped down from being the head of Hyla, I may need to introduce myself to many of you -- perhaps to most of you, in fact. The bio that is included with the board's letter does some of that, but I would like to add a little more.

Whenever I mention to someone outside the school that I teach middle school, the most typical response is an expression of concern, or sympathy, or amazement, all of which are centered on the notion that middle schoolers are extremely challenging to be around. Although I will admit that there are times when some of them can try one's patience, they are also endearing and intriguing, capable and energetic, and exciting to teach. Furthermore, it has always been gratifying to watch the first stages of their metamorphosis into the adults they will become. The changes are simply astonishing that they go through in terms of their physical strength, their mental abilities, and their awareness of others and the world around them. In a school and in classes that are small enough to allow real relationships and understanding to grow between teachers and students, this middle school age is the only one I have ever wanted to work with.

And thus came Hyla Middle School, where middle schoolers are not seen as the non-cute older end of an elementary school, nor as the irritating, immature end of a middle school-high school combination, but are just who they are, in a setting that accepts them and is designed to give them what they need. I am delighted by what this school has been for its students, and proud of being part of the group that first planned to make it come to life.

It is an honor and a pleasure to step in again as the school's head for a year. I appreciate all that Vicki, and Thomas before her, have done to carry Hyla forward. As I look back at Hyla's history, I am also aware that the number of teachers who have touched students' lives and kept building this school has become substantial and they deserve our profound appreciation. Their energy, expertise, understanding, and pleasure in working with middle schoolers are what makes this school worthwhile, and it is so gratifying to me to be able to work with the current faculty this year.

I look forward to a productive year, and one that can illuminate where the school is heading and what characteristics Hyla would like to see in its new head. I also look forward to meeting you all, and encourage you to enjoy with me this school, this faculty, and these students.

Sincerely,

Paul Carroll
Interim Head of School