

Sept 12, 2025

Dear MS 447 Families,

We have now finished our first full week of school and are in full swing! It's exciting to watch the building go from dormant and bare in the summer to decorated and buzzing in the fall!

In this email, I'll list a few updates and housekeeping items. In general, however, your most frequent full-school communication will come through Amy Sirot's Friday Newsletter, so keep your eyes out for that each week.

Reaching me (Arin): When I blast emails like this one from the DOE messaging system, the return address is my DOE email. However, I *MUCH PREFER* to use arusch@ms447.org. If you need to reach me, please remember to use arusch@ms447 org.

Phones: Our pouch system is underway! Please continue to remind your child that their device should be off and away in their pouch for the day. Read the full phone policy [here](#).

Basketballs, soccer balls, footballs, volleyballs, handballs, all balls!: Balls must be put away in a locker or carried in a backpack or bag. They otherwise become very disruptive during the day!

LeAP After School Program: LeAP starts on Monday, 9/15. If you signed your child up and you received confirmation of enrollment, your child should head to the gym at the end of the school day on Monday.

First PTA Meeting: The first PTA meeting of the year will be on Tuesday morning (9/30) at 8:45am in the cafeteria. Please enter through 345 Dean Street.

Curriculum Night: Please join us on Zoom for Curriculum Night on Thursday (9/18), from 5:30-8:00pm. You will hear from the teachers about what to expect this year in their classes, as well as here from the related services providers and grade counselors for the grade. Please refer to Amy's dedicated email for details and Zoom links.

Upcoming MAP Testing: As you probably know, NYC schools conduct periodic assessments in math and ELA three times a year. Our district uses a test called MAP, a computer based assessment. MAP scores are not part of the students' grades; however, they do provide us with a useful starting point to monitor progress, notice patterns, and target instruction. We use MAP scores, among other things, to group children for their Lab classes, and to make decisions about schoolwide goals. Although we don't want children to feel anxious about MAP testing, we do want them to take it seriously and try their best. Our fall MAP testing begins next week, for the first few periods of the day, as follows:

- 9/16, Reading

- 9/17, Math
- Make-up will happen in the days that follow

Fairview Lake Camp (6th grade): 6th graders will head to camp for a special overnight trip from November 6-7. Please keep your eyes out for the paperwork!

Half-Days: MS 447 voted to enable us to schedule 6 half days throughout the year so staff can participate in professional learning. Our tentative half days (including SLCs) this year are October 24, November 13, January 30, March 12, March 27, June 17, June 18, June 26. Half Day dismissal time is 11:57.

Student Led Conferences (SLCs): Our fall SLCs will take place on November 13. Your child's Pack Leader will contact you to schedule a 20-minute meeting for that day. Please note that your child must be present for the conference, as they will be sharing some work and learning with you. November 13 is also a half day of school.

Grading: MS 447 uses competency based grading (CBE). CBE is a way of assessing and providing feedback to students based on how they are progressing towards learning targets. It uses a descriptive scale (such as 1-4) to show how fully a student has mastered the skills and content over time. Unlike on a traditionally graded assignment, where a grade represents a "percent correct", a student's grade on a competency-based task has feedback built in because the levels on each standard show how a student is progressing towards learning targets. Since this feedback is built into the assignment grade, students can reflect on their learning and next steps. Unlike a traditional grading system, which is often evaluated for the percentage of correct answers, a CBG assignment evaluates proficiency in a set of skills relevant to the assignment. I encourage you to read through our [Student and Family Competency Based Grading and JumpRope Guide](#), which describes in FAQ format how our grading system works. It is a useful document and can help you understand how your child is being assessed in their schoolwork, how they are provided feedback, and how their academic skills are developed across all of their subjects. We will notify you separately when JumpRope is opened for the year.

MS 447 Open Houses: During the fall, we show off our school to prospective 5th grade families. An important part of the open houses is having student and parent ambassadors to lead tours and answer questions. We will soon release dates for our open houses, and Amy will send out sign-ups for anyone who wants to come help show off MS 447.

Need help/have a question? Please visit our website for [this handy If-Then chart](#), which answers some common "What should I do if..." questions. We are always adding to this chart, so if you still can't find the answer, please let Amy (asirot@ms447.org) know. She will direct you and we may even add your question to the chart!

We hope the start of the year has been smooth for you and your child! We're glad to have everyone here.

Arin

Arin M. Rusch (*she/her*), [Hear My Name](#)

Principal

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For text message:

MS 447 Families: Please read these important updates from Arin: [\[link to webpage\]](#)