

## EXPLORING A WORLD OF WORDS – HEWITT PARP YEAR 2018-2019 FAMILY GUIDE



### OVERVIEW OF THE NYSPTA PARP PROGRAM

#### **What is PARP (Pick a Reading Partner)?**

PARP is a NYSPTA administered program that stresses collaborative reading and literacy-based activities. PARP is meant to: encourage strong reading skills; actively engage young minds; increase quality time spent with children at home; and cement the necessary bond between home and school. PARP stresses the importance of making reading fun and exciting.

#### **What are the NYSPTA's guidelines for success?**

At a minimum, participating PTA's should ask that students pick a reading partner to read with for at least 20 minutes daily. The NYSPTA also encourages creative use of literacy activities during the duration of the program for at least 15 minutes a day. Most programs employ both strategies.

The choice of reading materials can vary from books to anything with printed words. There is no required or annual theme. Instead, individual PTAs are tasked with creating their own program in order to be unique and creative. The most successful programs utilize themes as a basis for activities that motivate our children to read.

PARP is a voluntary effort guided by the PTA, operating with the support of faculty and advisors. Parents and partners are encouraged to participate in order to further shared goals.

We want to thank you for advance for your participation and interest. Attached, please find further PROGRAM DETAILS along with your child's PARP PLEDGE and FUTURE ACTIVITY GUIDE.

## Overview of This Year's Theme titled "PARP - An Exploration of a World of Words"

GOAL: to create a program that *inspires a love of reading*

### 1. Loving to Read - when we read what we love, we love to learn to read:

The NYSPTA and NYSUT agree that "learning to read is the single most important activity in a child's education". Then, if you teach a child how to read, they will continue to practice reading. If this was true, wouldn't all readers naturally develop a love for reading? Does this ring true for your family? Or does your child consider reading a chore?

**Mark Twain said, "a man who does not read has no advantage over the man who cannot read". Studies show that children who develop a love of reading will likely be successful life-long learners. But how do you create a program that nurtures a universal love of reading in a few short days? How do you inspire 465 students with unique qualities and talents to become motivated readers? Knowing that what motivates one child might not motivate another, we created a program that celebrates the individuality of our children yet focuses on their shared academic, social and emotional needs.**

### 2. Reading to "Succeed" – PARP as a tool for Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):

Our multi-themed approach to PARP was not only designed with literacy achievements in mind. This year we looked to promote: self-esteem; self-management; social-awareness; relationship skills and responsible decision-making. These are skills that matter across all generations and affect outcomes. By encouraging children to adopt positive social and emotional skills, we can instill in our children the positive mindsets they need to succeed in school and life. These skills are the core of SEL. And this is what educators talk about when they discuss educating the "whole child" or "educating hearts and minds".

SEL is not new to Hewitt or the PTA. It is getting a lot of attention these days because of the mounting evidence that it works; not to mention existing federal and state mandates requiring its implementation. The terminology and methodology may seem new to some, but the Rockville Centre School District is ahead of the curve when it comes to SEL. Our District adopted SEL approaches long before our children entered Hewitt.

SEL is also getting attention because it is a means to combat the negative effects of Social Media. While the Internet and Social Networking Tools can be beneficial (media literacy is used to reinforce existing teaching objectives), the negative effects can be extreme. Digital citizenship is an important concept that can help tackle the issue of media balance and well-being. Unplugging from technology on a short-term basis is important to sustain good social skills with friends and family members. We developed this year's PARP as an opportunity to achieve a healthy balance...and provide our families to ideas for spending both "plugged" and "un-plugged" time together as a family.

In short, since SEL is already reflected in the NYSPTA model, it made sense to merge PARP with the SEL processes taking place at Hewitt. The skills we reinforce this PARP year will help to highlight existing SEL programs that are an integral part of your child's education. In this regard, PARP will operate to help educate our families about SEL and further weave SEL within the framework of the formal school-family partnership. This may seem complicated but don't feel overwhelmed. The takeaway is that PARP is here to help our children achieve happiness so they can fulfill their potential.

### **Methodology: FREE-CHOICE BASED APPROACH**

This year's PARP is aimed to prepare our children to succeed at reading by encouraging positive emotions and connections through the introduction of choice. Our goal is to foster a love of reading by empowering our children to take charge of their academic experience. In order to do so, will be introducing our children to a variety of reading material and themes. We will also encourage our readers to introduce each other to their favorite genres and topics of interest.

#### **1. Reading Materials - Exploring Literature in all its forms**

There is a "world of words" out there for all of us to explore. By allowing your children to see themselves in their reading choices, you are allowing them to reinforce their individuality. And exposure to different forms of literature is a key element to developing a life-long love of reading. Thus, our natural first goal was to be to connect our children to different forms of reading materials. We will do so by encouraging our children and their partners to find themselves in what they read. Great books are important but allowing children to discover family preferences, express what they enjoy and appreciate the choices of others is life-changing. Exposing children to diversity in literature will also prepare them for the diverse world we live in and encourage them to become "citizens of the world". It's also fun to explore new worlds together.

#### **2. Themes - the Idea for an Interest Based PARP**

Our second goal is to connect our children to developing or yet-to-be-developed interests. Children are naturally curious. Like adults, they are driven by things that interest them. Children want to read materials that make them excited and happy. We can make reading more "interesting" for our children if we allow them to read what interests them. Our children can also share their interests with others in hopes of achieving a mutual respect for one another's preferences and differences.

### **Implementation - Literacy based activities:**

Your children were assigned activities in anticipation of the launch of PARP. We worked with our advisors to create age-appropriate project ideas meant to encourage an exploration of the world of words. Hewitt opened its doors early to the PTA to provide your children with an opportunity to celebrate their interests and favorite reading genres with a unique presentation all their own.

These activities were created to help kids strengthen familial bonds, work on social skills, manage their emotions and have fun along the way. We asked our reading partners to participate in the process because relationship building is at the core of PARP and SEL. We also wanted your children to understand a little more about themselves, their families and others.

PARP has only just begun and already we have received commentary demonstrating that families truly appreciate the opportunity to explore all sorts of literary-activities. Our children are producing dioramas and mobiles, but they are also taking the initiative to use “free choice” to produce short stories, media blogs, movie trailers, song compilations, recipe books, comic strips and so much more. We have also received commentary demonstrating that children are curious to see what their peers will share along the way. This shows that the process is already a success.

We engaged in this experiment not only to discover what your children want to read; we wanted to discover and share **how your family reads and what your family likes to read** whether it be: *novels; biographies; short-stories; poems; music lyrics; magazines; newspapers; journals; essays; recipes and cookbooks; screen-plays or play-bills; instruction manuals and guides; directions; cross-work puzzles; maps; art, world and musical-history books, astronomy books and just about any other coffee-table book under the sun; digital media, blogs and digital prints.* Children have realized that their reading options are endless. And your children are already sharing with their teachers and partners how good it feels to be given a choice and to express themselves in ways they haven't yet before. Our families also seem to be very excited to be able to share with their school community their own unique approach to reading.

**During PARP and the month of March, Reading Month at the Hewitt PTA** your children and their partners will be exploring a wide array of literature genres and topics of interest via a free-choice ***approach that was truly all your own.*** Some families picked from menu choices. Other families made free-choices. But this year, ***you all had a choice.***

We will be sharing and presenting your choices later this month. We have begun to gauge interests and will continue to do so. The PTA will be purchasing of a wide-array of literature for our children to share both inside and outside of their classrooms. Our classroom materials will reflect this year's theme. Your children will be visited by secret readers, visit a Book Fair, engage in book swaps, help create a video campaign for Hewitt and so much more. And, when PARP concludes we will share with our families: 1. individual and grade-wide presentations; and 2. the complete list of books we purchased so that your children can continue to explore the “World of Words” long after PARP has concluded.

## **“ASSIGNMENTS”**

→PARP is a voluntary enrichment program for our families. We are asking our student participants to pledge to read 20 minutes per day with their partners during PARP. Partners can also encourage 20 minutes of reading-time a day in order to help instill healthy reading habits.

→By the time you receive your Family Guide, your projects may have already been completed. For those who have yet to complete their assignments or for those interested in engaging in more literacy-based activities with our children during your free-time, the PTA has completed a “Future Explorables Guide” for your reference.

→“Future Explorables” also work to help achieve PARP-related goals long after March Reading Month concludes.

→This year we created a Reading Pledge. Read and take the PARP Pledge. It’s a neat way to reinforce this year’s theme and activities!

→Don’t forget to join us at the Scholastic Book Fair during the first week of PARP.

→Visit us at our next PTA meeting where we highlight literacy achievements both inside and outside of the classroom as well as the SEL programs that have given us some of the inspiration for this year’s PARP theme.

→We will continue to keep you apprised of all the exciting happenings in and around Hewitt during March Reading Month.

## **FUTURE EXPLORABLES**

### **1. General Activities for all interests**

→Engage with your children as they read. →Tell bed-time stories. It's fun to make up your own.  
→Have children use their imagination. Children can act as authors or illustrators. They can gather thoughts in journals and diaries, write short-stories, letters, greeting cards, emails, blogs or poems all their own. They can express their creative side and depict scenes and characters in drawings, photos, models, sets, mobiles, dioramas and more. →Create a book rating system for books found at your home. →Create a Children/Family Book Club. →Create a family web-page or newsletter.

### **2. "The Daily News" "Community Happenings" "Commerce Clubs"**

→Introduce your children to newspapers, magazines and catalogues. →Explore current events together. Find out what's happening in your neighborhood. The Rockville Centre Herald is a great place to start. →Create a "Weekend News" journal. →Review local events. →Create an ad.

### **3. "Not-So-Board-Games"**

→Play games and cross-words. →Explore instruction books and even tutorials and "how-tos".

### **4. "Rock and Roll into Reading"**

→Listen to music and sing with you children. →Read music notes together. →Incorporate a lullaby into your bedtime routine. →Explore the mind-music connection: play background music during homework hour. →Create a music video. →Change the lyrics to a song. →Explore your favorite music genre or era with your child. Read about the "British Rock Invasion", the roots of Jazz, or the history of MTV.

### **5. "Reading Olympics"**

→Further a love of statistics, learn about the Olympics, athletes and the wide-world-of sports.  
→Listen to sports' commentators and read articles about sporting events together.

### **6. "Travel Bug" and "National Geographic Explorer" Activities**

→Introduce your children to travel guides and periodicals such as Nat Geo for Kids and National Geographic for Little Kids. →Have children work on their own travel guide or blog about a place they have discovered or a place they could like to visit. →Introduce children to weather forecasting, GPS and Google Earth. Encourage children to create "directions" or road maps.

### **7. "Comedy Hour"**

→Tell and write jokes. →Create a comedy skit for your family. →Write a mini-sitcom about your family with your children. →Read the Sunday comics and create your own comic strip.

### **8. "The Little Gourmet" and "Recipe for Success" Activities**

→Explore family traditions and favorite recipes. Encourage your children to write down their favorite recipes on index cards or create their own recipes and share them with friends. Capitalize on the slime phenomenon and create your very own "family slime" recipe.

### **9. "Broadway Bound", "Hollywood Nights" and "Superhero Readers"**

→Explore local and not-so-local theatre; watch movies; and explore all forms of drama and fantasy as you read playbills and reference screen-plays. →Make your own mini-screen-play.

### **10. "Blast off into Reading", "Animal Planet" and "Wild About Reading"**

→The possibilities are truly endless. Visit zoos, parks, museums and incorporate some of the activities described above as you explore the beauty and history of our natural world and space.

**The PARP Pledge (inspired in part by the Lenox PTA, Baldwin NY)**

**I pledge to pick a reading partner to read with days or nights. A few minutes a day is all it takes to make my future bright.**

**I will pause all electronics and practice to maintain, the love of reading that is needed to exercise my brain.**

**I will listen to my partner, read in silence or read aloud. If I am brave or very excited, I might even read to a crowd.**

**I will strive to be a reader of all kinds and styles of text. When you open-up your world to words who knows what will happen next.**

**I pledge to explore the world of words and all sorts and types of prose, my brain is like a great big sponge and who knows where it all will go.**

**There is a world of words around us, just look around and you will see, the possibilities are endless for my family and friends and me.**