



Parent Handbook 2011-12

309 St. Paul's Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10304-2232

(t) 347 857 6981
(f) 347 861 0601

Website: si-ccs.org
E-mail: info@si-ccs.org

Staten Island Community Charter School PARENT HANDBOOK 2011-12 (Draft)

PLEASE KEEP THESE TELEPHONE NUMBERS HANDY

School Office/General Information	347-857-6981
Principal's Office/Academic and administrative matters	347-857-6983
Operations Manager/Information on arrival and dismissal times, bus transportation, breakfast and lunch programs	347-857-6984
School Nurse	718-815-9262

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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO STATEN ISLAND'S FIRST COMMUNITY-BASED K-8 PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

At Staten Island Community Charter School (SICCS), we believe with the right support, adequate time and greater opportunities for learning, every child can succeed.

SICCS was founded by a group of parents, grandparents and educators from Staten Island's North Shore --- people with a direct, personal interest in the success of public

school students in our community. We welcomed our first kindergarten and first-grade students on September 13, 2010 and are adding our first second-grade class as we begin the 2011-12 school year.

Our goal for every SICCS student is the goal we have for our own children and grandchildren: success in school and in life.

That's why we offer a rigorous academic program that exceeds New York State's minimum learning standards --- including second language instruction in starting in kindergarten. That's why we've hired a school leader with imagination, enthusiasm and a proven track record of success. That's why almost every teacher who started with us last year was enthusiastic about renewing her/his commitment to our children for the 2011-12 school year. We know each one is committed to the SICCS goal of student success.

As the parent or guardian of an SICCS student, you're automatically a member of our Parent Team. This group elects a representative to the Board of Trustees, to make sure parents' concerns are heard and considered. Parent Team members are our school's and our students' biggest boosters and advocates, in the community and at events like Charter School Advocacy Day at the State Capitol. If you want to have a direct impact on your child's educational experience, Parent Team leaders are the people to talk to.

Again, welcome. We value your participation and look forward to working with you to help our students succeed. For a more complete profile of our school, I encourage you to visit the lively, colorful and informative Staten Island Community Charter School website at <http://si-ccs.org>

Lorna Harris, Chairperson
Board of Trustees
STATEN ISLAND COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL

OUR MISSION AS A PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

SICCS was founded by community residents who wanted a different kind of public school for their children and grandchildren; and a voice in setting school policy, designing curriculum and applying educational philosophy.

SICCS is run by a board of trustees, not a charter school management corporation. Most trustees --- including an elected Parent Team representative --- live in the same Staten Island neighborhoods our students do.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Staten Island Community Charter School will provide an exemplary K-8 education program for students on the North Shore of Staten Island, a program designed to produce a community of smart, responsible, creative citizens. All students will master New York State Learning Standards and graduate ready to attend college preparatory high schools.

SICCS will hold expectations high and inspire student achievement by cultivating close relationships between the school administration, students, teachers and parents.

THE IDEAS AND VALUES WE STAND FOR

Staten Island Community Charter School's culture is based on cooperation, not competition --- a culture of 'we,' not just 'me.'

SICCS has adopted the core elements of the **Yale School Development Plan**, which has shown that a strong relationship between school, home and community can boost student achievement. The Yale plan helps us build these strong relationships by bringing together teachers, parents and administrators to support students' social and academic development.

We use the curriculum of the highly regarded **Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP)** as the foundation of our social-emotional learning program, to enhance classroom instruction and promote cooperation, appreciation of diversity, and responsible decision-making.

INTRODUCING THE SICCS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

LORNA HARRIS, Chairperson
*Business Development Representative
Office of Business and Job Opportunity
Port Authority of New York and New Jersey*

ELLEN ICOLARI, Vice Chair
*Founder
Advisor on School Culture Development*

HAROUNA BA, Trustee
*Research Scientist
Center for Children and Technology
Educational Development Center*

MARIANNE CASTILLO, Trustee

Consultant in Property Management

JANET PATTI, Trustee
*Professor of Administration and Supervision
Department of Curriculum and Teaching
Hunter College, City University of New York*

G. CARL RUTBERG, Trustee
*Executive Director, The Alice Austen House Museum
Adjunct Professor, Fashion Institute of Technology*

CAROL SONNENBLICK, Trustee
*Dean of the Division of Continuing Education
New York City College of Technology, City University of New York*

MEET THE PRINCIPAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

MICHAEL COURTNEY, Interim Principal

Dr. Michael Courtney is a seasoned educational administrator with more than 35 years' experience in four states as principal of an elementary and a high school as well as a central office administrator. He has earned three graduate degrees from Columbia University, Teachers College and is an adjunct associate professor at Hunter College/CUNY, where he teaches courses in leadership, curriculum and instruction, organizational change and data-driven decision-making. Dr. Courtney says he's thrilled to have the opportunity to serve the children of Staten Island Community Charter School.

[ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF BIOS WILL APPEAR IN REVISED EDITION OF THIS HANDBOOK.]

GET TO KNOW YOUR CHILD'S TEACHERS

Building strong relationships --- between parents and teachers, and between home and school --- is fundamental to your child's academic and social success and to our school's success as a community institution.

When you have a child enrolled in his or her class, your child's teacher will share with you a dedicated cell phone number you can use to stay in touch. This is in addition to regular parent-teacher conferences and updates you may wish to schedule face-to-face.

A few ground rules:

1. Teachers are not permitted to answer their cell phones during instructional periods and are not required to answer them on weekdays after 7:30 p.m. or on weekends. Please leave a voicemail with your phone number, to ensure a prompt response.
2. To reach your child's teacher in an emergency situation during school hours, please call the SICCS office at 347-857-6981.

GRADE LEVEL	TEACHER	CLASS	
Kindergarten	Vanessa Rossi	K-101	
	Alexandria Malanka	K-102	
	Special Education Teacher	Kathleen Spencer	K-101
	Teacher Assistant*	Theresa Caraballo	
First Grade	Jennifer Quirk	1-200	
	Kathleen Adams	1-201	
	Eileen Mulroy	1-202	
	Special Education Teacher	Kristen Dalto	1-202
	Teacher Assistants*	Emiliana Castillo	
		Regina Bonelli	
		Claudia de la Fuente	
Second Grade	Heather Garr	2-103	
	Regina DeFelice	2-104	
	Special Education Teacher	Robyn Chernack	2-104
	Teacher Assistant*	Theresa Caraballo	

CLUSTER TEACHERS*

Art	Ashley Cox
Music	Regina Bonelli
Spanish	Claudia de la Fuente

INSTRUCTIONAL AND GUIDANCE SUPPORT

Instructional Coach*	Christine Manganaro
English-As-a-Second-Language (ESL)/Title I Teacher*	Amber Scordato
Guidance Counselor*	Michael Grippo

*Cluster teachers, teacher assistants and instructional and guidance support staff don't have fixed room assignments. They visit classrooms to work with an entire class, with

individual students, or with or small groups of students, according to schedule or as needed.

THE SICCS PARENT TEAM: YOU'RE ALREADY SIGNED UP!

As the parent of a child enrolled in our school, you're automatically a member of the SICCS Parent Team. You have a representative on the SICCS Board of Trustees. You have a voice in decision-making. Your opinion counts.

The Parent Team's goal is to enhance our children's educational experience. We do that by fund-raising . . . by advocating for our charter school and all New York State charter schools at the state capital . . . through parent education workshops and volunteer opportunities . . . and by planning activities and events that bring us closer together as a school community.

The SICCS Parent Team meets the last (or fourth) Thursday of each month at 7 p.m., at the school. If you'd like to add your name to the Parent Team group e-mail distribution database, please e-mail your request to siccsparentteam@gmail.com

SCHOOL CALENDARS AND SCHEDULES

SICCS SCHOOL CALENDAR, 2011-12¹

2011

August	26, Friday	New staff reports
	29, Monday to	All SICCS staff report to school for
September	2, Friday	professional development
	5, Monday	Labor Day (School closed.)
September	6, Tuesday to	Staff professional development +
	9, Friday	preparation of classrooms (Students
		not in attendance.)
	12, Monday	First day of 2011-12 school year for
		students
	29, Thursday to	Rosh
	30, Friday	Hashanah (School closed.)

¹ This school year calendar for 2011-12 meets the State Education Department requirement of a minimum of state aid-eligible days in all schools in New York State.

October	10, Monday	Columbus Day observed (School closed.)
November	8, Tuesday	Election Day. Staff development and training day (Students not in attendance.)
	11, Friday	Veterans Day (School closed.)
	24, Thursday to 25, Friday	Thanksgiving Recess (School closed.)
December	26, Monday through	Winter Recess, including Christmas and
January	2, Monday	New Year's Day (School closed.) Students return to SICCS on Tuesday, January 3, 2012.

2012

January	3, Tuesday	SICCS students return to school.
	16, Monday	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (School closed.)
February	20, Monday through 24, Friday	Mid-winter recess, including Washington's Birthday (School closed.)
April	6, Friday through 13, Friday	Spring recess including Good Friday, Easter and Passover (School closed.) Students return to school on Monday, April 16, 2012.
May	28, Monday	Memorial Day observed (School closed.)
June	7, Thursday	Staff development and training day. (Students not in attendance at public schools city-wide.)
	22, Friday	Last day of school for SICCS students ²
	25, Monday through 29, Friday	All SICCS staff reports

SICCS SCHOOL HOURS

Staten Island Community Charter School opens at 7:45 a.m. and closes and 3:45 p.m.

DAILY SCHEDULE

² If one or more snow days has been declared in the school year just past --- when students were excused from attending classes --- SICCS will add those snow days to the June school calendar. We will expect SICCS students to attend classes on those added days.

Within the basic daily schedule outlined below, teachers often create customized schedules based on the changing needs of their classes. Schedules also may change when classes participate in field trips, special events, etc. Each class schedule includes daily indoor or outdoor play time.

7:45 to
8:10 a.m.³ Breakfast
8:15 a.m. Morning meeting in each classroom
11:45 a.m. Lunch/Recess
12:45 p.m. Return to classrooms
3:45 p.m. Dismissal

CITY-WIDE PUBLIC SCHOOL EVENTS

Curriculum Conference Week	(Dates
Parent/Teacher Conferences	to be
Open School Week	announced.)

SICCS EVENTS

We will announce school-wide events on our website (si-ccs.org), on fliers and in letters as they are developed throughout the year. Our goal will be to give parents at least two weeks' notice, so you can include these events on your calendars and schedules.

SCHOOL POLICIES

ATTENDANCE

If a student isn't in school, he or she can't learn. If a student shows up late, it's disruptive for that student and for the entire class. Students who are frequently late or absent don't do as well in school as those who show up every day on time.

That's because learning is a building process. When a student misses a single day, there's a gap in that child's learning experience. Too many gaps, too many missed days, and the child begins to fall behind.

³ Arrival and dismissal times may vary according to bus schedules.

We can prevent this cycle from starting if we make sure our students get to school on time, ready to learn, every school day.

ARRIVAL

All students should arrive between 7:45 and 8:15 a.m. An SICCS staff member will greet your child at the front door and will direct or escort the child to the cafeteria, where we serve a free nutritious breakfast to every student who wants one.

By 8:15, students are with their classes and beginning to start their day. This calm entry is important for focusing children's attention, so they're ready to begin the day's learning. Students who arrive late not only disturb that calm entry for others; they themselves are often rushed and distracted and may need extra time and attention to settle down.

That's why getting to school on time is so important. It can make a real difference in how much and how well your child learns.

ABSENCE, LATENESS AND EARLY DISMISSAL POLICIES

Excused and unexcused absences. When your child returns to school after an absence, please be sure to send a written note explaining the reason for the absence --- or a doctor's note, if your child has been absent for three consecutive days or more. When you know in advance that your child will be absent on a certain day, please inform your child's teacher as early as you can.

SICCS classifies an absence as 'excused' only for the following reasons:

- Your child has been ill
- There's been a death in your immediate family
- For religious observance
- Because of severe weather conditions that might endanger your child's health or safety
- Exceptionally urgent personal or family matters

If your child is absent for a reason other than these, the absence will be considered 'unexcused.'

If your child is absent more than ten days in a school year, he or she may be considered for retention at his or her current grade level. SICCS will give special consideration to students whose absences are due to serious illness.

Lateness and early dismissal. When your child arrives late or must leave before the end of the school day, please provide SICCS with a written note explaining the reason for the lateness or early departure; or visit the office in person and sign your child in or out.

SICCS will consider each lateness or early dismissal as 'excused' or 'unexcused,' using the same standards we apply to student absences.

CRITERIA FOR PROMOTION

SICCS bases promotion decisions on three factors: The recommendation of your child's teacher; your child's completion of the required work for his or her grade level; and your son or daughter's mastery of the academic skills set forth in the New York State Learning Standards.

If you disagree with a promotion decision, please consult the principal, who will render the final decision.

PARENT PARTICIPATION: A SCHOOL-WIDE PRIORITY

HOW WE MAKE PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THE LIFE OF OUR SCHOOL

Partnership between school, home and community is a foundational idea at Staten Island Community Charter School. But it's more than just an idea. We've incorporated the team concept of the Yale School Development Plan into our planning and practice, to make sure that partnership becomes central to SICCS's structure, programs and operations.

What's more, as a Title I school and a Local Education Agency (LEA) --- offering Title I School Wide Project (SWP) programs --- we're also able to offer parents of children participating in those programs a framework for organized, systematic, ongoing, informed and timely involvement in decision-making about SICCS's Title I services. This framework fulfills Title I's LEA- and school-level parent involvement policy requirements.

HOW SICCS SUPPORTS HOME/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP AS A TITLE I SCHOOL/LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY

1. By developing an infrastructure that continually assesses, plans and develops strategies for home/school partnership:

- Our school-wide committee of parents, teachers and administrators guides overall program efforts and serves as a home/school partnership network.
 - We coordinate activities through the staff development system in areas of teacher in-service (skill-building and updating); assessment of teaching strengths; and communication with parents, to create the best possible learning experience for each child.
2. By assembling teams composed of parents, teachers and the principal, who evaluate SICCS's parental engagement practices according to these basic principles, considered essential for successful home/school partnerships:
- The school climate is open, helpful and friendly.
 - Communications between school and parents, whether about school policies and programs or about an individual child, are frequent, clear and two-way.
 - Parents are treated as collaborators in the educational process, with a strong complementary role to play in their children's education.
 - Parents are encouraged, formally and informally, to comment on school policies and to participate in decision-making.
 - The principal and school administrators actively endorse and promote the philosophy of home/school partnership.
 - The school encourages volunteer participation among parents and the community.
 - The school recognizes its responsibility to forge a partnership with all school families, not only those who are most active or readily available.
3. By making resources available to the principal, teachers and parents through SICCS's coordinator of Title I services.

HOW SICCS INVOLVES PARENTS OF TITLE I STUDENTS IN ALL ASPECTS OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

By informing parents of SICCS's participation in Title I at an annual meeting at the start of each school year, sponsored by the principal and the Parent Team. Parents are informed about the meeting through letters sent home, on the school website, and by an announcement in the e-mail newsletter.

By taking extra steps to heighten parent awareness of and engagement in Title I programs. These include holding additional meetings, as necessary; and using Title I funds to provide transportation and child care services that make it easier for parents to attend.

By making improvement of Title I programs --- including the school's parental engagement policy --- a frequent topic at regular Parent Team meetings, which are scheduled according to the group's bylaws.

By electing a Parent Team member a non-voting member of the Board of Trustees and encouraging that member's active participation as measured by meeting attendance and participation in board activities, which include addressing Title I/School-Wide Project (SWP) issues.

GIVING PARENTS THE INFORMATION THEY NEED TO MAKE INFORMED ASSESSMENTS AND DECISIONS

Staten Island Community Charter School provides parents with:

Timely information about Title I/SWP programs. The principal and/or guidance counselor updates parents on the services provided to their children, and their planned duration and goals.

The SICCS performance profile, which the school is required to provide under Section 1116(a)(3)

Their child's individual student assessment results, including an interpretation of those results.

A description and explanation of the SICCS curriculum; the forms of assessment we use to measure student progress; and the proficiency levels we expect students to meet.

The opportunity to meet and talk. The principal will be responsive to parents' requests for meetings and will schedule them at the times parents request, if feasible.

HOW PARENTS PARTICIPATE IN PREPARING AND/OR AMENDING THIS POLICY

This draft has been prepared assuming a review by the SICCS Parent Team and the SICCS Board of Trustees.

HOW PARENTS CAN ACCESS AND REVIEW THE POLICY

Staten Island Community Charter School provides parents with easy access to the policy through the SICCS Parent Handbook, which is available in English- and Spanish-language versions and is:

- posted on the SICCS website
- distributed to parents of all entering students upon registration and at orientation

- distributed at Parent Team meetings and at curriculum and parent/teacher conferences
- available to all parents at the school security desk and in the principal's office

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT

The SICCS principal, guidance counselor and teaching staff provide these technical supports to help parents plan and implement effective services:

- Assistance in parent outreach through mail and telephone
- Joint planning of parent activities
- Preparing and translating parent engagement announcement and pamphlets
- Participating as presenters at Parent Team events
- Help in preparing parent information materials such as reading lists, parent guides, and partial-immersion brochures
- Assistance with sound, video and electronic equipment for events
- Individual teacher meetings with parents to provide instructional support (such as with homework)

ANNUAL EVALUATION OF THE POLICY

Staten Island Community Charter School ensures that the parent involvement policy is up-to-date and that it effectively addresses the changing needs of the school community through an annual policy evaluation process.

At least once each school year, the principal and Parent Team meet to evaluate the policy's content and its effectiveness in increasing parent engagement. The principal and parents will identify strategies for increasing parent participation --- and for overcoming barriers to that participation. Revisions will be based on the principal/parent evaluation and will be incorporated into the policy. The principal will be responsible for implementing the policy and the revisions to that policy.

DISCIPLINE

Staten Island Community Charter School wants to ensure that our students learn in a safe, supportive environment.

We've developed a school-wide discipline policy that supports the school's goals while upholding fully the *Citywide Standards of Discipline and Intervention Measures*. The SICCS policy is predicated on our conviction that a safe, supportive environment is one we create together, as individuals, as classes, and as a school community within a larger community.

THE PEACEABLE SCHOOL MODEL

The foundation of the SICCS code of conduct is the Peaceable School model developed through the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP), a whole-school program in social/emotional learning, in which all stakeholders --- students, parents, staff and administration --- participate.

Through training, planning, professional development activities and ongoing workshops, participants support each other in modeling appropriate behaviors and working out solutions together when conflicts arise.

Each day, children enter a Peaceable Classroom where there's a set of shared values and goals, with structures that ensure students participate in decision-making. In this classroom, feelings are expressed and acknowledged; conflict resolution strategies are employed throughout the day; and teachers make clear their expectations and goals.

Our disciplinary efforts are guided by these principles:

- Focus on problem-solving, not blame
- Determine what is best for the student through dialogue, research and compassion
- Work together to find a solution that
 - best meets the needs of the individual student
 - ensures the school fulfills its legal responsibilities as a public institution

COMPLAINT AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

At SICCS, we've developed a complaint and appeals procedure that gives parents and guardians three options for resolving their complaints.

Option 1. Talking it over. At this stage, the people involved --- often, a parent and a teacher --- sit down and try to reach a resolution between themselves.

Option 2. Getting help from the principal. If the two parties have tried Option 1 without success, the parent can lodge a complaint with the principal, who will try to resolve the matter within 24 hours.

Option 3. Requesting a final decision from the board of trustees. If the parent isn't satisfied with the principal's decision, he or she may lodge a complaint with the chairperson of the SICCS Board of Trustees for deliberation and a decision, which will be rendered within one week.

HOMEWORK

The homework assignments your child brings home each day are designed to reinforce material the teacher has covered in class and to lay the foundation for independent study. If your child appears to be struggling with an assignment, please inform the teacher through a written note, telephone call or e-mail.

SICCS expects each child to read independently or with an adult or sibling every day for a period of time appropriate to the child's age or grade level --- and to maintain a log of that independent reading. We encourage parents to read to and with their children. It's an easy, inexpensive activity that all children, even older ones, love.

Each morning, help your child be prepared for a new school day. Being prepared means having a backpack with a full set of learning tools --- such as notebooks, pencils and folders --- ready to be used. Please help your child make sure s/he leaves home with a full set of learning tools, ready to start each new school day.

DRESS CODE

The SICCS school uniform reflects our belief that students should project a neat appearance that shows respect for themselves, their school, and the process of learning. We strive for a school "look" among our students that eliminates conflict and competition over attire and keeps the focus on achievement.

Our school uniform is a short- or long-sleeved collared polo shirt with the SICCS logo positioned on the front of the shirt, on the student's left side, where commercial logos usually appear. For shirt colors, we recommend Light Blue or Yellow. To complete the look, we ask that students wear slacks or skirts, preferably in a Navy or Khaki color.

Jeans are acceptable if there's no alternative, but we prefer slacks and skirts for a neater, more serious appearance. Undershirts or torn articles of clothing are not allowed, nor are shirts with loud, violent or frightening graphics, which can be disturbing to young children. Please support our teachers' efforts to create a calm, supportive environment where children's curiosity and imagination can be encouraged, engaged and developed.

A wardrobe alert for parents of kindergarten and first-grade students: For your child's comfort and peace of mind, please remember to send an extra set of clothing we can keep on hand in case your son or daughter wets or soils him- or herself during the school day. These things happen occasionally, particularly among young children, and should never be cause for embarrassment or shame. The sooner we can get your child

into a fresh set of clothes, the sooner he or she can return to class. You can arrange for pickup of the soiled items through the school office.

SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS

Each class is a community within the larger SICCS community, and we encourage students to share the landmark events in their lives --- most commonly, birthdays. If you'd like to mark your child's birthday or other event by sending a special treat your child can share, please keep these ground rules in mind:

Please arrange the celebration with your child's teacher at least one week in advance of the special day. SICCS wants to honor your child's special day, but we also have a responsibility to keep learning on track for every student in the class. With your cooperation and a little advance planning, we can do both.

Please choose treats that are easy to serve. Your child's celebration will be scheduled for a brief snack period, so treats should be simple to serve and easy to clean up. We've found that cupcakes or cookies work best.

Please don't send items with ingredients our students are allergic to. When making or buying treats for your child to share at SICCS, please avoid common ingredients that many children are allergic to, such as chocolate, peanuts and other nuts, and dairy products. Please check ingredient lists on store-bought items; for allergy-conscious recipe suggestions, please consult one of the many cooking and recipe sites available online.

DELAYED OPENINGS AND EARLY DISMISSALS DUE TO WEATHER CONDITIONS

Staten Island Community Charter School observes procedures of the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) implemented during severely inclement weather.

Delayed openings. If you're unsure whether school will open on a very stormy morning, please consult local TV and radio stations and/or the NYCDOE website at <http://schools.nyc.gov>, which posts an announcement by 6 a.m. from the city schools chancellor.

If a delay in school openings is announced, that means there will be a two-hour time lag in opening. This lag will affect scheduling of Yellow Bus service, which will run on a two-hour-delayed schedule. Children who walk to school will be admitted at 10:15 a.m. Dismissal will take place at the regular time.

Early dismissals. If a weather or other emergency requires early dismissal, school staff will make every effort to reach parents by telephone, e-mail and a 'Latest News' posting on the SICCS website. We ask parents and guardians to make arrangements to pick up their children as soon as possible; or to contact a trusted adult, whose name and contact information should be on file in the school office.

Please keep your contact information up-to-date --- your child's safety may depend on it. When your street address, phone number and or e-mail address change, please inform the school office, so we can record the changes in your contact information. The same applies to any individual you may have designated to care for your child in your absence.

CURRICULUM

SICCS PLAN FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING: RIGHT FROM THE START

At Staten Island Community Charter School, we strive not simply to meet but to exceed New York State Learning Standards.

We base our curricular approach on children's real-world experiences and on who they are as individuals and as members of a family and a community, including their experience of our community's diverse cultures; its institutions, broadly defined; and its traditions and natural surroundings. Moving beyond the classroom into the world brings the curriculum to life.

The concepts and skills developed out of the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP) guide our students' social-emotional development and promote collaboration, communication and community-building, as school, parents and trustees work together to help SICCS achieve its goals for our students.

CURRICULUM NOTES, KINDERGARTEN and GRADES 1 and 2

SICCS bases your child's educational foundation on New York State's new instructional standards, which challenge children to understand concepts at a deeper level.

Our school uses a balanced approach to **Reading**, with daily workshops including shared, guided and independent reading monitored by teachers. Daily **Writing** workshops feature group lessons and independent and group writing activities.

Our hands-on **Math** workshops introduce number skills like counting, adding, subtracting, telling time and using money. Students learn how we apply these skills in real-life situations.

In **Social Studies**, we ask kindergarten students to consider themselves and their families as part of a community. First-graders deepen their understanding of community as a way to bring people together to achieve common goals. In second grade, our students broaden their understanding of community by venturing into a wider world through literature, the Internet, and real-life experiences.

We introduce each of the **Sciences** in an age-appropriate way, supplemented with trips to nearby natural areas such as the Greenbelt, and related museum exhibits.

Our **Arts** teachers offer students age-appropriate experiences in Music, Visual Arts, Theater and Dance to enrich and enliven teaching and learning to stimulate imagination and broaden thinking, expression and experience.

The **Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP)** is the foundation of our school's social/emotional learning program. It reinforces a school culture that values respect, diversity and social responsibility.

Our **Physical Education and Health Program** includes several gym sessions per week; developmentally-appropriate physical activities; and age-appropriate lessons in making healthy choices.

REPORT CARDS

As we enter the 2011-12 school year, SICCS is conducting kindergarten, first- and second-grade classes. Formal, documented assessments, such as report cards and standardized tests, will not be undertaken until the 2012-13 school year, when SICCS will operate its first third-grade class, as mandated by the New York State Regents.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Want to find out what skills your child will be expected to master this year? Or learn how your child will be evaluated? Schedule a parent/teacher conference.

At a conference with your child's teacher you can get answers, share an observation or make a suggestion or criticism. Our teachers think of you as a valued partner in your child's education and look forward to consulting and working with you throughout the school year.

Please call your child's teacher at the special cell phone number she provides, to get information, make an appointment, or just talk. We're always glad to hear from you.

SCHOOL SERVICES

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH

Every student is entitled to a FREE breakfast each morning. Each school day, staff members will greet students who arrive between 7:45 and 8:15 a.m. and escort them to the cafeteria, where they will be served a nutritious breakfast free of charge.

To find out what's being served this month for breakfast and lunch at our school cafeteria, go to the NYC Department of Education School Food page at <http://www.opt-osfns.org/osfns/> Proceed to the 'Menus' box on the right-hand side of the School Food home page, then select the month for which you want menu information.

When you arrive at the monthly menu page, select the 'Satellite Breakfast' and 'Hot Satellite Lunch Menu' options, which will provide the information you're looking for.

Please fill out a school lunch form today! Even if you prepare breakfast for your child at home . . . even if you send your child to school with a homemade lunch . . . even if, in other words, you never take advantage of the free nutritious breakfast and balanced lunch we serve at SICCS each school day . . . we urge you to fill out and return a standard lunch form as soon as possible. You're under no obligation to use school meal services; all we ask you to do is fill out the form. Here's why:

1. Full-price lunch costs \$1.50 per meal; reduced-price lunch costs only 25 cents. If your child qualifies for reduced-price lunch, that's a saving of \$1.25 every school day, \$6.25 every week, or \$325 every year. Even if you use your reduced-price lunch option only as a backup, it's still a smart thing to have. All our meals and nutritionally sound and well balanced.

2. The information SICCS parents provide on these lunch forms is used by the Federal Government to determine the amount and types of support SICCS receives under the Title I program. As a Title I school, we're eligible for programs, services, supplies and equipment that our children need and that we can't afford to fund on our own. So even if the lunch form doesn't apply to your family directly, you'll be doing a service to all our children by filling it out and returning it promptly. We thank you.

Let us know about your child's allergies. Please have your doctor list all allergies on the medical form included in your child's enrollment documents; and be sure to list those allergies on your child's emergency contact card. If your child suffers from severe food allergies, we recommend you send lunch prepared at home.

Healthy snacks only, please. Our mid-morning snack gives the entire class a short but much-needed break. Each day, please send a healthy choice for your child's snack, such

as fruit, crackers, a half-sandwich, plus juice or water; and avoid snacks with high sugar or fat content or ones that require refrigeration in warm weather.

YELLOW BUS SERVICE

SICCS students who live 0.5 miles from our school are entitled to Yellow Bus service provided by the New York City Department of Education's Office of Pupil Transportation. (Special Education students are entitled to door-to-door service on buses with an escort aboard who supervises the children's behavior.) If you believe your child is entitled to either of these Yellow Bus services, please contact the SICCS school office at 347-857-6981.

SICCS TAKES SCHOOL BUS SAFETY VERY SERIOUSLY **A message from our new principal, Dr. Michael Courtney**

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I'm honored that the SICCS Board of Trustees has chosen me as Interim Principal and am eager to meet the challenges and share the rewards that lie ahead for all of us --- most especially, for our children.

One of the responsibilities I take most seriously is providing a safe learning environment for your child. That safe environment includes your child's bus commute to and from school.

THE RULES WE EXPECT YOUR CHILD TO OBEY

To ensure your child's safety, we must maintain order. When riding the bus, SICCS expects every student to follow three simple rules:

- 1. SICCS students must sit two to a seat and must wear their seat belts at all times.*
- 2. Students must not leave their seats while the bus is moving.*
- 3. Students are not allowed to scream, hit, push, kick or spit at another student and/or the bus driver.*

SICCS takes these rules very seriously. And because we know that you're as concerned about your child's safety as we are, we ask that you take these rules seriously, too --- and let your child know that safety always comes first.

WHEN A STUDENT BREAKS THE RULES, THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES

A student who misbehaves on the bus endangers his own life and the life of every other rider. Our students must understand that when their misbehavior is this serious, there

are consequences. And that if they continue to misbehave, the consequences become increasingly harsh:

First incident. *The bus driver will inform SICCS of the infraction. The student(s) involved will receive a warning. Their parents will be informed and asked to speak with their children about the seriousness of their misbehavior.*

Second incident. *The driver will report the incident to the bus company, including the student(s) names, and an incident report will be filed with the school. A meeting will be held at the school, with parents and children present, to discuss and remedy the problem. They will be informed that this second meeting is a final warning. If there is another incident, the student's bus-riding privileges will be suspended for three (3) days.*

Third incident. *With this occurrence, the three-day suspension of the student's bus-riding privileges goes into effect. The child's parents will be required to meet with SICCS staff members before the end of the school day and to escort their child home.*

Fourth incident. *The child's bus transportation privileges will be suspended for an indefinite period. We will schedule a final meeting at which student, parents and school administrators are present. If we determine that outside intervention is required, SICCS will provide assistance.*

PLEASE CALL ME IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED MORE INFORMATION

You can reach me during school hours at 347-857-6981.

*Looking forward to a successful year for your child,
Michael Courtney, Ed.D., Principal*

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Board of Trustees regrets that we are not able to support an after-school program for the 2011-12 year. A limited number of seats are available, however, at a free, highly regarded after-school program run by the Children's Aid Society at Goodhue Center on Prospect Avenue in New Brighton (718-816-4083). Limited bus transportation from SICCS to Goodhue is available; call early to reserve a seat for your child. ###