

THE LION'S ROAR



FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR:

Welcome back to High Road School of Hoffman Estates! As we open our doors for the new school year, there is a sense of excitement filling our hallways that is electric. Both our staff and students are thrilled to return to the school community we love, reconnecting with trusted friends, restoring meaningful daily routines, and diving headfirst into a fresh year of growth and achievement. The energy in the building during these first few weeks is always inspiring, and we are ready to make this year our best one yet.

We are particularly eager to introduce several innovative additions to our educational programming designed to support every learner's individual path. This year, we are implementing Let's Go Learn, a dynamic assessment platform that will help us pinpoint exactly where students excel and where they need targeted academic support. Additionally, we are launching the Promoting the Emergence of Advanced Knowledge (PEAK) curriculum across all of our BLOOM Classrooms. PEAK will enhance our ability to teach complex language, cognitive, and social skills, helping our students generalize their learning across all settings and reach new levels of independence.

Looking ahead, we are excited to expand our communications with you! Future newsletters will feature dedicated updates coming directly from the heart of our school community:

- **Student Government:** Hear straight from our Lions and Executives as they share student-led initiatives, advocacy projects, and school event updates.
- **The Sunshine Committee:** Stay tuned for staff and student celebrations, community-building highlights, and cheerful moments around the building.
- **Physical Education:** Get the latest action reports on gym accomplishments, movement goals, and upcoming CAAFL athletic events.

Thank you for your continued partnership and trust in our team. Together, we are going to create a fantastic school year full of progress, learning, and unforgettable memories!

Justine Castro

DIRECTOR, HIGH ROAD SCHOOL OF HOFFMAN ESTATES

ROARING INTO THE SCHOOL YEAR:

As we are transitioning into our new school year, we are happy to report that students in our SPARK, SPRING, and BLOOM classrooms have started their Let's Go Learn assessments and Promoting the Emergence of Advanced Knowledge (PEAK) direct Training and/or Generalization modules as appropriate. Let's Go Learn is our new curriculum that will be used to pinpoint individual reading and math learning gaps through adaptive diagnostic assessments, allowing our teachers to deliver personalized online instruction, write compliant IEP goals, and track ongoing student progress.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:

For the month of August, the High Road of Hoffman Estates staff nominated Student Donald W. for our Student Spotlight. Congratulations, Donald! Your peers and staff at High Road School of Hoffman Estates are so proud of you!

LION PRIDE

Smyle, who was a Lion for over a year before becoming an Executive—the highest level of student government at High Road—sees the role as an opportunity to be a positive role model for classmates. Smyle believes that being a Lion means supporting peers who may be having a difficult time by offering positive advice, encouragement, and affirmation. As an Executive, Smyle also takes on a leadership role in Townhouse and encourages peers to work toward becoming Lions and Executives by setting a positive example.



UPCOMING EVENTS:

- National Doodle Day 9/4
- Labor Day - No school 9/7
- Early Release 9/9 @ 1:30pm
- NFL Dress Up Day 9/9
- Movie/Tv Show Dress Up 9/24
- Flannel Friday every Friday



CLINICAL UPDATE: LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

We are highlighting our collaboration with Walk-On Equine Therapy, a specialized therapeutic riding program designed to support our students' developmental, physical, and emotional growth. Equine-assisted therapy leverages the unique movement and bond of horses in an engaging, non-traditional environment. Core Therapeutic Benefits for Students:

- **Sensory & Physical Integration:** The three-dimensional rhythmic movement of a walking horse mimics the human pelvic movement during gait. This provides deep vestibular and proprioceptive input, helping students improve core strength, balance, posture, and gross motor coordination.
- **Emotional Regulation & Anxiety Reduction:** Interacting with horses promotes the release of oxytocin while lowering cortisol levels. The grounding presence of the therapy animals helps dysregulated students practice co-regulation and emotional self-soothing.
- **Social Communication & Connection:** Grooming, leading, and riding require clear non-verbal cues and verbal commands ("Walk-on," "Whoa"), encouraging receptive and expressive language skills in a non-judgmental atmosphere.
- **Executive Function & Focus:** Following multi-step sequencing tasks—such as grooming routines, tacking, and navigating riding courses—promotes motor planning, sustained attention, and spatial awareness.

LIFE SKILLS AND BEYOND:

Our therapeutic day school's life skills program bridges classroom learning with real-world independence through hands-on, practical experiences. In the kitchen, students work on culinary basics like meal prep, appliance safety, and hygiene while applying functional math and reading skills. Daily living instruction builds autonomy through budgeting, laundry, and personal organization, which students then practice during community outings to local stores and neighborhood events. Central to the program is our daily social skills group, where therapists guide students in practicing peer conversation, interpreting social cues, resolving conflicts, and building lasting friendships in a supportive setting.