**New Bedford High School 230 Hathaway Blvd, Tan House New Bedford, MA 02740 508-997-4511**

September 6, 2011

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s):

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Miss Rebecca A. Corvello and I will be your child’s Biology or Marine Science teacher this school year. I am looking forward to meeting my students and having a fun and productive year! I am aware that you may have many concerns regarding your child’s academic work. With the Biology MCAS exam now set in place for June 2012 for Freshmen, many parents are wondering if their child will be adequately prepared to pass the test. Let me assure you that I, too, am concerned about helping your child succeed. During the upcoming year, in addition to studying biology, we will learn strategies for answering multiple-choice questions and we will practice answering open-ended essay questions.

However, I cannot make your child succeed on my own. Your contribution is crucial. **The single most important thing you can do to help your child succeed is to encourage him or her to do the assigned homework.** Not only is homework an important component of your child’s grade, but it also helps me identify areas where your child may need additional help. Attached to this letter are several critical guidelines that describe the school mission statement, school expectations of students and their responsibilities, school attendance policies, as well as the school expectations of homework. In addition, my classroom policies, procedures, and expectations of my students are also attached, as well as my grading policy. Please take a few minutes to read them carefully. I would appreciate it if you and your child would sign the course contract and have your child return it to me by **Monday, September 12, 2011**.

If you should ever need to contact me concerning your child, please do not hesitate to call me directly at (508) 997-4511, and leave a message with the Tan House Administrative Assistant. (I will return your call as soon as is possible), or you can email me at rcorvello@newbedfordschools.org with any questions or concerns (I will return all e-mails within 24 hours, if possible). If it is an emergency (such as a long-term illness or other event), I can be reached at misscorvello@gmail.com.

There are a couple of **required materials** your child needs to have in a **backpack as soon as possible**:

1. A 3-inch 3 ring binder
2. Loose-leaf 3-hole punched paper for the binder
3. #2 pencil (mechanical pencils are also fine)
4. Blue pen
5. Black pen

**According to school policies, ALL electronic devices (IPods, cell phones, video game devices, radios, mp3 players, CD players, etc.) will NOT be permitted to be out in any classroom, hall, or cafeteria. Please instruct your child to keep them in their locker or better yet, not to bring them to school. Any electronic device out in the school can be subject to disciplinary action per the school handbook.**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

NEW BEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL

The goal of New Bedford High School is to prepare well-read, productive young adults who are effective problem solvers and decision makers. They will be confident lifelong learners able to thrive in a global technological society. To this end, the administration, faculty, and staff provide a safe and secure environment in which all students can learn. Because all students are valued individuals with unique personal and academic needs, the school offers a balance of traditional and innovative programs and strategies to help them develop their strengths and self-esteem. All students benefit from a climate of cultural diversity that increases their appreciation of different peoples. The school staff, parents, and the community share the mission of helping students become responsible and well-rounded citizens.

**EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING**

**The New Bedford High School Student**

**Academic:**

1. reads actively and critically for a variety of purposes.

2. writes effectively.

3. speaks effectively and listens critically.

4. utilizes media effectively.

5. reads and responds to a variety of literature.

6. appreciates a variety of visual and performing arts.

7. communicates in at least one language other than his/her own and understands the culture of native speakers of that language.

8. understands democratic and constitutional principles and is able to utilize historical evidence to formulate positions and demonstrate an understanding of current issues.

9. thinks critically and uses both mathematical and technological knowledge to solve real-life problems.

10. solves problems competently.

11. comprehends theoretically and applies current scientific and technological principles in the real world.

12. understands the importance of practicing and applying the concepts of physical fitness and good health throughout life.

13. is able to utilize technology necessary to succeed in contemporary society.

14. prepares to meet the challenges of the ever changing job market.

**Civic / Social:**

15. takes responsibility for his/her education and demonstrates the ability to be an independent learner.

16. learns about and respects cultural diversity.

17. learns to work cooperatively with others to achieve common objectives.

18. understands and demonstrates a sense of community.

**School Attendance Policy**

In accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, every student attending New Bedford Public Schools is required to maintain an attendance rate of 95%. For New Bedford High School, which operates within a semester plan, the attendance would be divided into semesters with **no more than 5 [five] days of absence allowed for each semester in a course that meets daily, and 2.5 days of absence if the course meets every other day**. When a student is involved in a course that is not divided by semesters (ex. Freshman Academy), then the 10 days of absence would be applied at the end of the school year when the final grade is awarded. If a student should exceed the allotted number of days per semester, credit will not be earned for that academic semester or year, unless a waiver is approved by the Headmaster for medical or mitigating circumstances. If the student should exceed the 95% attendance requirement and a waiver is not obtained, then the student’s report card will indicate no credits earned toward graduation for that semester and the mandatory teacher comment, “exceeds minimum attendance/no credit”, even if the student attained a passing grade for the class.

Written documentation **is required** from a parent or guardian for any and all absences. The note must list the date(s) of absence(s); the student’s full name and clearly state the reason for the absence. This documentation will be given to the homeroom teacher who will keep it on file after supplying the student with a yellow slip, which will be shown to the classroom teachers to acknowledge receipt of a note. Recommended documentation includes, but is not limited to doctor’s notes, dentists’ notes, college visit documentation, etc. These need to be submitted whenever appropriate. It should be noted that a review board will be established to determine the possible waiver for a student who exceeds the attendance requirement, and the above mentioned documentation will be very important in the final decision of the board.

**Miss Corvello’s (Brief) Classroom Policies and Procedures:**

**All students are expected to abide by ALL school rules‼ That means NO HOODED SWEATSHIRTS OR HATS!**

* Arrive to class ON TIME (Tardy slips necessary after the bell rings!) and be prepared for the work at hand—take out your binder and begin answering the question of the day .
* Remain attentive to the task at hand during the entire period.
* Be considerate of the rights and feelings of others—this includes no swearing and no threats.
* Respond promptly to the directions of the teacher.
* There is NO eating or drinking allowed in this room by order of the State. This includes gum.
* I will be in constant contact with you and your parent(s)/guardian(s) to make sure you are reaching the best of your abilities.

I promise to treat ALL of my students with respect and fairness. In return, I expect you to treat me and your fellow students the same way. I will not tolerate violent or disruptive behavior. Disruptive behavior will result in a Priority period, or such actions will result in the student being sent immediately to the office and receive a **zero** for the day. I will not tolerate cheating or plagiarism (copying someone else’s work and calling it your own results in a Conduct Card.) Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a **zero** for that assignment, and will NOT be allowed to make it up. Any student doing another class’s work in my classroom will have it taken away immediately, and that teacher will be notified (and receive a zero). The student will receive at least a Priority period for the first offense, a Conduct Card thereafter.

**SCHOOL HOMEWORK POLICY**

The responsibility of the school district to educate the student is carried out by the teachers through effective classroom instruction and the careful delegation of independent study. It is important for the student to be taught the concepts related to the content area and how to study in school before he/she is given assignments to complete at home. There is, therefore, a progressive increase in the amount of homework expected of students from the elementary grades through high school. Purposeful homework benefits students. Homework should be an extension of the class lesson, be clearly understood by students, be well planned and meaningful. Homework can be evaluated in multiple ways through review, classroom or small group discussion, and/or direct assessment. Completion of homework will count towards students’ cumulative grade for the content area.

The immediate purpose of a specific homework assignment may be to:

1. Strengthen basic skills

2. Extend classroom learning

3. Stimulate and further interests

4. Reinforce independent study skills

5. Develop initiative, responsibility, and self direction/reflection

6. Stimulate use of leisure time that increases understanding and love of learning

7. Acquaint parents with the content/concepts studied in school

Homework assignments shall be planned in accordance with the following principles:

1. If homework is to have value, its purpose and relation to what has been learned in the classroom must be clearly understood by the student.

2. Students should understand not only what to do, but also how to do it.

3. Homework should grow from classroom discussions, problems, projects, and concerns.

4. The student’s age, need for play time, and out of school responsibilities must be considered when deciding upon length of any assignment. The student must bear responsibility for managing his/her time in a way that homework can be completed and submitted on time.

5. Assignments should make use of a variety of skills and prior knowledge.

6. Every homework assignment must be properly corrected and/or evaluated in keeping with the purpose of the assignment. To the extent possible, such corrections/evaluations shall be shared with the students involved in a timely fashion.

7. When a student’s grade or learning expectation are being adversely affected by poor homework performance or noncompletion of assignments, the teacher shall communicate orally, or in writing, in a timely fashion with parents/guardians concerning the problem.

8. All homework assigned will be reflected in the child’s cumulative grade or learning expectation at the end of the term.

The School Committee encourages the administration to assist teachers in planning

homework assignments in keeping with the above guidelines. Additionally:

1. the Committee expects that Principals (or directors/instructional supervisors where appropriate) will monitor the implementation of this homework policy through various approaches such as review of lesson plans, observation of classes, conferences with teachers, examination of student papers and/or other related activities.

2. The Committee expects that each content Director will clearly define the homework policy of his/her department. All such departmental policies must keep with this School Committee homework policy.

3. The Committee expects parents to provide a suitable place for students to do their homework and to monitor their children by questioning them upon the completion of their assignments.

**Average Time**

**9-12 = 600 minutes per week** **\*\*That averages at least 3 hours each week for EACH class!\*\***

Adopted 8/10/09 by the New Bedford School Committee

Attached to this notice you will find a copy of our classroom policies and procedures, an explanation of my grading policy, the laboratory release form (NECESSARY for your student to be able to take place in any in class laboratories using materials such as microscopes, slides, etc.). Please take a few moments to read these pages and ask your child to read them with you. Please sign below indicating that you have received theses documents and understand what is required of your child in my Biology or Marine Science class this year. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. Please put your e-mail address at the bottom of the paper if you prefer to communicate with me about your child electronically. Otherwise, you can feel free to call me at any time. Of course, your student can also ask to be put on this emailing list as well. I know all of us can pull together, and make this a great year, as well as a providing everyone with the chance to succeed!

Sincerely,

 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Teacher’s Signature

I have read the attached documents and the grading policy for Miss Corvello’s Biology/Marine Science class. I understand the rules and consequences for breaking them. I have shown these documents to my parent/guardian.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student’s Signature

I have received the attached documents and the grading policy from my child. I have read these documents and I understand what is expected from my child. I also understand that my child’s failure to comply with the rules will have consequences.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature

**THIS DOCUMENT IS TO BE RETURNED NO LATER THAN: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH, 2011!**

This document is considered a QUIZ GRADE and is an easy 100 points—as long as you and your parent or guardian BOTH sign it and you hand it in by the due date‼!

Parent/Guardian Email (optional):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Email (optional):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_