

The Right Height

By V. Janice Smith, Principal, Pleasant Elementary

Amusement parks like Cedar Point and our beloved Huron County Fair use minimum height requirements to restrict the size of riders allowed to ride. Requirements are tied to physical size to ensure safe containment. Age may also be a factor because of the emotional stresses that may be imposed by the ride. A height limit of 52 inches would screen out almost all riders under the age of seven. Once kids are qualified to ride the ride, they need a stable riding position to safely handle the motion and intensity. Most kids want to be tall enough to ride. Being too short for a ride may feel defeating.

We welcomed our kids back to school this week with smiles on their faces! Even if they weren't exactly sure what was to come, the expectation was building as they sat in their seats, wiggled a little, rolled their shoulders back, set their bodies to the proper posture, and were all set. As that first bell rang to kick-off the 2018-19 school year, it felt like the final gear had turned, gravity took over and we were on our way.

Today we face Ohio standards and the Common Core, as well as, a multitude of academic requirements. We are expected to meet the Ohio Department of Education's benchmarks. As educators here in Norwalk and across our state, we make sure students meet the required height requirements of academics. Teachers meet the height requirements by engaging students, creating an environment that is ideal for learning and fostering positive behavior. Secretaries meet the height requirements by welcoming guests, reassuring students, and meeting deadlines. Support staff meets the height requirements by helping the school run smoothly and supporting learning activities. Custodians meet the height requirements by providing for the safety and health of all. Bus drivers meet the height requirements by making the safety of their passengers their top priority. Maintenance personnel meet the height requirements by fixing and maintaining machines and mechanical equipment. Cafeteria workers meet the height requirements by greeting students and making them feel comfortable. Administrators meet the height requirements by organizing, planning, instructing and leading. Our school board meets the requirements by being a champion for education and sharing the vision and goals for the district.

In order to complete our ride, we not only need students and staff, but we need the school community to help us reach the highest point for our highest ride. At Pleasant, we are looking forward to making sure that your child has all of the educational tools to meet this ride and to fulfill the height requirements of Ohio and beyond. Speaking of going beyond, we are so excited to open the Pleasant Lego STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Lab. Our students will be learning coding/programming using educational kits and hands-on simple machines. We will be using Legos to engage in their natural creativity and curiosity. They will learn new skills and perfect old ones.

Together we can fulfill the mission of the Norwalk City School District in providing and maintaining the highest level of education for all students to prepare them for success in life. The late Rita Pierson once said, "Every child deserves a champion; an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best they can possibly be." Let's all get on board and be champions for our kids. At times we are going to need to get off the ride for a moment or two, but we certainly will get back on again.

Let's not forget that learners come in all different heights. But, as we tell our Pleasant kids, check your height – it's Perfect!

Thank you for trusting your child in our care and partnering with our staff members to prepare children for 21stCentury learning. I look forward to the year ahead. Please feel free to contact me at 419-668-4134 with questions, suggestions and/or concerns.