Academic Doctrine

- We will work to our maximum ability, not to our minimum acceptability

- We are to solve problems, not identify them as obstacles to performance

- We will strive to achieve the highest common denominator for excellence not the minimum demonstration of proficiency

- We will set expectations that will maximize our potential, not lower our standards to meet minimum capabilities

- Class attendance is an absolute requisite for successful learning

- All assigned work shall be completed in a timely manner and characterized by quality and integrity

- A grade is something we achieve not receive. If we fail to do the work, we will “achieve” failure...it’s as simple as that.
Teaching is both an Art and a Science. *Good* teachers excel at one of these, great ones excel at both.

The best tools of discipline are a well-planned lesson and the power of your personality.

Teaching in *its* truest sense is basically storytelling...Good teaching is good storytelling, captivating, compelling, comprehensible, and enjoyable to the listener. If you tell a story well, the listener can retell that story to others. That’s the essence of teaching in a nutshell.

In a classroom time is a valuable resource; use it wisely, judiciously and economically. Downtime is deadtime.

It is an important goal of our teaching that our students perform in a manner that makes us proud of them. More importantly *is* that we perform our role in a manner that makes them proud of us.

Expect respect, but first make sure you earn it.

In the realm of education the students and parents are our customers and education the service we provide them. All successful enterprises take great pride in understanding and respecting the needs of their customers and in turn providing them with the ultimate service. We should do the same.

No one knows better the operational needs of a school than those who operate within it every day: the teachers and the students.

A school’s climate is the pathfinder for its success. With a positive one you’re just a building, an innate object. With it, the school is a living breathing dynamic institution occupying a building. It is its soul.

In teaching, the small steps can be equally as valuable as the big ones over the course of time. In many instances, little things do count. They set the tone, solidify a foundation and cultivate a future. Remember that the BIG PICTURE is made up of many little pieces.

Teaching is a vocation as much as it is a profession. As a teacher, the classroom is your domain...own it, cultivate it, and manage it.
In contemplating the beginning of the new school year, our challenge, as always, is to reincarnate our commitment to academic excellence as embodied in our Academic Doctrine. As a school community, parents, teachers, administration and students alike, it is important that we remain devoted and committed to the idea that "Learning is our Mission" and that everything we do in our school life is aligned to that end. This is a comprehensive commitment that not only includes pedagogical/instructional facets but also the philosophical, social, extracurricular, and public service elements that serve to facilitate a climate that is conducive to, and cultivates learning. School Climate, Scholarship, Partnership, and Service are the tenets that provide the foundation for Learning as Our Mission.

- **School Climate:** First and foremost, a school must be a place that is safe, secure, accommodating, and enjoyable. This is most evidently accomplished by providing, implementing and enforcing policies and regulations that ensure a safe and orderly environment. Also, by infusing the curriculum and providing programs that promote character values such as honesty, kindness, understanding, politeness and concern for others. In a subtler vein, it is also achieved by implementing practices that cultivate a sense of pride and friendliness in the school environment. Simple things like morning songs of the day before homeroom, the promotion of school spirit through the prolific exposition of Dragon murals and inspirational messages, and the emphasis on ceremony and tradition in many of our activities, are employed with this purpose in mind. It is important that we create an atmosphere that everyone, staff and students, feel comfortable in and want to come to every day. A place that parents want to send their children. Absent this foundation, "Learning" will struggle and flounder. With it, "Learning" will flourish.

- **Scholarship:** The emphasis on learning must be complemented and provided for by a competent and dedicated staff that envisions what they do more as a vocation than an occupation. That we instill a belief system based on high expectations, a rigorous curriculum and a healthy and honest work ethic that is shared and promoted by all the educational stakeholders; students, parents, staff and administration. A good school climate alone, without the belief and practice in the aforementioned convictions, is just a playground. With it, it is a place where learning prospers ... a place we call School.

- **Service:** A school must not forget that we are service providers to the community, that service, being Education. A "Learning" environment will more likely benefit when that service is provided in a way that is friendly, accommodating, and communicated in an articulate manner. Learning can be hindered when the customer (parents) are frustrated by an environment that impedes their understanding about the progress and assessment of the service they are providing (Education). In essence, Learning is enhanced when the organization informs and communicates to its parents and community about how our service is being provided and how our clients (students) are progressing. This must occur in concert with school climate and scholarship for Learning to thrive.

- **Partnership:** This is the culminating facet for a maximized "Learning" environment. All the stakeholders in a school; students, parents, staff and administration must have a sense of ownership and pride in the institution and its purpose. They must communicate amongst each other in pursuit of our shared and agreed upon goals. Procedures and processes must be in place to facilitate this. Without it, fragmentation and inconsistency thwarts the learning environment. With it, and in sync with the aforementioned beliefs, our "Learning Mission" will be accomplished.

May we remain mindful of and reinvigorate our commitment to these tenets as we embark upon the new school year and continue our tradition of Academic Excellence.
“Good Will” is the single most important investment that an organization can make in its employees, investors, customers, and constituents. In a school organization, that translates into the staff, students, parents, taxpayers, and community at large. All are shareholders in the productive capacity and success of our organization. In this sense, where there is good will amongst these groups, built on trust, fairness, honesty, and transparency, insurmountable problems and challenges are overcome through a climate of optimism and cooperation. There becomes an abiding faith in accomplishment and success within the organization. Good will paves the way for solutions, progress, and prosperity. Absent good will, problems become harder to solve, success harder to define and achieve, and organizational goals more difficult to reach.

In the upcoming 2011-2012 school year, Woodstown-Pilesgrove will be emblematic of a school district that, as a result of a climate of good will, has come back from the economic abyss of 2010. This district was able to come from a $3 million deficit two years ago to being able to return to the taxpayers the maximum amount of additional state aid we received this past June, in the amount of $184,595. We were one of only 20 of the 580 districts throughout the state who did so, and among only three in South Jersey. This was possible because we were able to make sacrifices and consolidate our operations to become more efficient, and we settled on collective bargaining agreements with all three of our represented groups that were fiscally fair and balanced for all parties and provided significant savings to the district. Accordingly, our taxpayers overwhelmingly approved the last two budgets. In the upcoming year, we will be restoring many of the programs and staff eliminated in 2010 and addressing many of our infrastructure needs. In this latter regard, the Board has made a commitment to dedicate an annual portion of our budget to address the much needed facility improvements in order to restore and preserve our beautiful historic building. This investment will prove to be cost efficient in the long run and, equally important, be in keeping with the valued tradition of historic preservation in our community. These feats are a testament to the good will that currently exists amongst all of the constituents in our school community. It has cultivated and perpetuated a spirit of cooperation that produced dividends in our ability to overcome the many challenges the fiscal crisis presented us. In comparison to school districts statewide, we have attained a unique and exceptional status in that we have not only survived, we have prospered.

As we move forward and into the future, I attest that we value and preserve this “Good Will” as one of our greatest assets and resources. For from “Good Will” great dividends come. Let us continue to nurture and cultivate it through the practice of truth, fairness, and transparency in all that we do.