

Woodland Newsletter

March 2022

Message from Principal

Dear Woodland Families,

The month of March can bring us a change of weather patterns, longer days and hope for the Spring season! During this month, there are a few changes to keep in mind. The CDC lifted the mask mandate for all public school vans and buses. As of Monday February 28, 2022, masks are optional on all Weston public school buses for all grades.

Beginning on Monday, March 7th, Woodland will shift to mask optional. Classroom teachers, the school counselor and I have been working with the students to prepare them for this change. We are reinforcing that whether wearing a mask or not, students and staff should be respectful of one another's choices. However, we recognize that some students and families may feel anxious about this change as we move toward a more predictable environment. Please reach out to us if we can be helpful in any way. As a reminder, masks are still required in the school health offices and in the COVID-19 testing areas. We encourage each student and staff member to continue to bring their own preferred mask to school for use in the aforementioned locations.

At a recent School Committee meeting, it was approved to modify the current school calendar for Friday, March 11th. Previously, March 11th was scheduled to be a no school day dedicated for a teacher professional development. With the new schedule, March 11th is an early release day for students with the school hours being 8:00am-11:30am. Please make note of this change on your calendars.

Part of our Responsive School approach, we focus on set of social and emotional competencies—cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, and self-control—and a set of academic competencies in order to be successful in and out of schools. Every month, we highlight on one of these above mentioned competencies with the students. This month, our CARES competency focus will be assertiveness or students' ability to take initiative, stand up for their ideas without hurting or negating others, seek help, succeed at a challenging task, and recognize their individual self as separate from the circumstances or conditions they're in.

As a faculty, we continue our professional development of culturally responsive teaching. During our previous session, we began our work on the pedagogy of listening. In her book, Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain, Zaretta Hammond states "the most powerful way to build rapport is by practicing a pedagogy of listening." When we listen and listen well, we communicate a deep honor for and an authentic interest in student's lives. Hammond shares how we can commit to "listening with grace" with the following points.

- Give one's full attention to the speaker and to what is being said
- Understand the feeling behind the words and be sensitive to the emotions being expressed
- Suspend judgment and listen with compassion
- Honor the speaker's cultural way of communicating

Through our continued conversations, we continue to place a strong emphasis on building trusting relationships with our students.

Sincerely,
Jennifer G. Faber

Dates to Remember



- Early Release Dismissal on **Wednesday, March 2nd at 11:30am.**
- Parent Forum on **Thursday, March 3rd at 9:00am** via Zoom.
- Early Release Dismissal on **Friday March 11th at 11:30am.**