

# Woodland

NCA Accredited

October 2008



# Newsletter

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The staff and parents at Woodland school work cooperatively to develop the whole child in an atmosphere of respect and dignity



## PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

Fall is here! September was a busy month of settling in; it went by so quickly. The arrival of fall coincides with all of us getting into a school routine as well as MEAP testing. There are lots of exciting things happening here.

I want to thank all of you who attended our annual Open House. The turnout was wonderful! It so nice to see familiar faces as well as meeting new families. Many thanks go out to the PTO for providing the treats. The Bronson Healthy Heart Fair was informative and fun. Many thanks to their efforts. Thank you, also, to the staff for creating a very welcoming atmosphere.

Our September PTO meeting was very interesting and productive. The staff and I would like to thank all of you who have volunteered to work on PTO committees and/or in the classrooms. We appreciate your willingness to work together with us to create the best learning environment for your child(ren). **Please put Tuesday, October 21st, 7:00pm, on your calendar for the next PTO meeting.**

A reminder that Parent/Teacher conferences are November 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. There is no school on November 26. If you have not scheduled your conference, please stop by the office.

Please don't hesitate to call if we can help in any way!

Sue O'Donnell

## PARENTS OF FIFTH GRADERS

Fifth Graders will be attending Sherman Lake Camp November 10-12.

Be looking for more 5<sup>th</sup> grade camp information soon!

## BUS PASSES

Please remember to send a note in with your child when requesting him/her to ride a different bus. The note should include whose house he will be going to along with **the student's address and bus number**. We appreciate your cooperation with this!

## PICTURE RETAKES

### **November 6<sup>th</sup>.**

This year we went with a new company, Schoolpictures.com. We would be interested in any parent comments regarding quality, service etc.

## NO SCHOOL NOVEMBER 4

There is no school for students on Tuesday, November 4<sup>th</sup>. This is the teachers' day to work on records and report cards. Elections will also be held in our gym that day.

## CONFERENCES DATES

Monday, November 24:

5:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.

Full Day of school for students

Tuesday, November 25:

1:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.

5:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.

½ Day of school for students - dismissal at 11:57.

Mr. Chris Palmer, school counselor, will be available on Tuesday.

## FALL CONFERENCES

As we begin to lay the groundwork for conferences, we ask your cooperation with the following:

We are happy to send a second copy of conference reports and report cards to parents not living in the home. However, it is extremely difficult for us to schedule double conferences. If at all possible, we ask that you arrange to conference jointly or consider alternately attending Fall and Winter Conferences.

## FROM THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION DEPT:

PPS annual one mile fun run will be held Thursday, October 14 at West Middle School at 4:15. Students from all Portage elementary schools are invited to participate. Each student will receive a certificate and a ribbon. Parents and older siblings are welcome to run with the children. If you have any questions call Mr. Getsinger at 323-6630.



## CHANGING WEATHER

Please be sure your child comes to school dressed for any type of weather changes that may occur. All students have a 30-minute recess period each day, barring rain or extreme cold.

## DESTINATION IMAGINATION ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

Brought to us by the E2 staff of Portage Public Schools. Destination Imagination is a unique enrichment program where parent trainers teach students the process of Creative Problem Solving and teamwork in a fun, positive atmosphere.

It is a community-based, non-profit, volunteer driven educational organization.

**When:** Wednesday, October 15, 6:30pm

**Where:** West Middle School Little Theatre

**Who should attend:** Parents/PTO members interested in bringing Destination ImagiNation to their school

**RSVP:** Portage Public School Enrichment Center (323-5090)

## MEAP ASSESSMENT

Third, Fourth and Fifth grade students throughout Michigan will participate in the MEAP (Michigan Educational Assessment Program) tests October 14-30. These tests are generally un-timed. Results are used to determine how well district students are able to meet state objectives. Third grade students will take tests in ELA (reading and writing) and in Math along with the Fourth grade students who will also take tests in ELA and math. Fifth graders will test in math, ELA, and science. Reports of student performance on the MEAP tests will given to parents when the reports arrive. There is a new state format for testing which requires that certain tests be administered on certain days. The schedule is as follows.

Tuesday, Oct. 14: Math

Thursday, Oct 16: ELA part 1

Monday, Oct. 20: make-up math

Tuesday, Oct. 21: ELA part 2

Wednesday, Oct. 22: make-up ELA part 1

Thursday, Oct. 23: Science (5<sup>th</sup> grade)

Monday, Oct. 27: make-up ELA part 2

Tuesday, Oct. 28: make-up Science

Oct. 29-30: make up any subject as needed. There is no testing after the 30<sup>th</sup>.

If you would like more information, please go to the Michigan Department of Education's website. The following link also gives a detailed description of the assessments and procedures.

[http://admps/sites/data/MEAP/MEAP%200809/F08\\_MEAP\\_Coord\\_Briefing\\_248385\\_7.ppt](http://admps/sites/data/MEAP/MEAP%200809/F08_MEAP_Coord_Briefing_248385_7.ppt)

*Brain research tells us that factors critical to students' ability to think includes students being well-rested, eating a nutritional breakfast daily, eat snacks during testing times, and come to school each day ready to think, work hard, and do their personal best!*

MEAP testing is important and we want students to do their very best, however, we must also keep in mind that this is only one measure of a child's abilities. We do not want students to be overly worried about the tests. Our advice will be:

Do your very best but don't get stressed!

## PARKING LOT UPDATES

I want to thank all of you for the way you have "adapted" to the new parking lot procedures. We have gotten many positives about the smoother functioning of the lot. Just a reminder that:

1. If you are dropping off curbside, you may pass the car in front of you if there is a lot of space in front-then slide back into the open space by the curb. We are experiencing a few jam ups on the 4<sup>th</sup> grade side.

2. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade doors are locked now, children must walk in through the front doors to enter the building.

3. Please remember to use the crosswalk if you are parking and escorting your child.

4. Please drive slowly by the crosswalk by the entrance.

The Woodland parking lot is a busy place before and after school. Please remember to watch for children and be courteous to other drivers.

Our Safeties work hard to be good crossing guards, but there are so many cars and they are only children, so please make sure you're keeping an eye out for children, driving slowly, and not passing other cars in the parking lot. Thank you!

**Remember: If you are getting out of your vehicle please park in the lot!**



In an effort to better serve you and to help speed up morning drop off for parents, we are again offering you door-side service. Our wonderful Safety Patrol will open the car door for your child and give you a friendly greeting to brighten your day. What you need to do is to make sure your Woodland student is on the passenger side of the car, so Safeties who will be standing on the sidewalk can easily open the door. This is also a much safer side for your child to exit on. We've been worried about student safety when students get out of vehicles on the driver's side where other traffic may be trying to exit.

## AFTER SCHOOL PICK UP

Please make sure you stay in the lobby and leave a path for the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders who use that route. Do NOT walk down directly down to your child's classroom. We do this for two reasons.

- 1) Safety – We want to know who is in our school. It would be too easy for an intruder to gain entry with many people in the hall.
- 2) Routine – It is distracting to teachers and students trying to finish their daily routines.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

### LOCKDOWN DRILL



On Thursday, November 6th, we will be conducting two lockdown drills at Woodland. All schools in Michigan are required to do this. The first drill will be a general one where the outside doors are locked and classes carry business on as usual. The second will be an emergency drill where teachers lock their doors, and move students to a spot where an intruder would not be likely to see them. I will talk the students through the process and reassure them that it is only practice to be safe if there was someone in our building that we don't want here. The drills should take around 10 minutes to complete.

### HALLOWEEN

The Halloween celebration will be on Friday, October 31. The school parade will begin at 3:00. In accordance with the No Weapons Policy, weapons are not allowed as part of the Halloween costume. As you are beginning to think about costumes, I encourage you to help your child choose a costume that is friendly and fun. One suggestion is dressing as a favorite book character. Being an elementary school, we want this to be a fun activity, not one that scares the younger students. We all appreciate your support with this. Additional information will be in class newsletters, including information about the afternoon kindergarten.



### HOLIDAY PARTIES

As we did last year, our holiday parties are going to be more relaxed and child oriented. The parties will last an hour. The children will play a game or complete a project and then have some special treats and time to sit and talk with each other. The room parents are aware of the party guidelines and will be working with the volunteers to plan these events. Since we want to make this a party for the students, we need the adults in attendance to have a specific job during the party. Volunteers should not bring younger siblings. It's too difficult to supervise younger children and work at the party at the same time. If you are interested in helping please contact the room parent for your child's classroom.

### BIRTHDAY PARTIES

We want to celebrate your child's birthday, however, in some cases, these events are becoming more of a party and

taking away from class instruction. We will take a few minutes to recognize your child's special day, sing Happy Birthday and, if desired, have a special treat. We need these treats to be something easy to eat, such as a cookie, cupcake, or ice cream bar. Please leave the treat in the office, the teacher will be notified, and will come to get the treat at her first availability. Please do not plan something that needs to be served and involves plates, cups, and silverware. The teachers will not be able to give you a specific time they will celebrate. Often times, they will fit it in during a natural break. You may think that it only takes 15-20 minutes to celebrate in class, however, if there are 24 students, that is 8 hours of instruction time that is missed during the year. Parties and/or more involved celebrations need to be held outside of school.

On the same note, please do not have balloon or flower bouquets sent to school. Often these are quite large and become distracting to the children. Taking these home on the bus is a safety issue, especially when it is a large balloon bouquet. Your child will be just as surprised to receive these bouquets at home. We appreciate your help and support with this.

### SCHOOL HOURS AND TARDINESS

Each day we have students who come in late or are signed out early. The elementary school hours are from 8:43 to 3:42 (half day for kindergarten). These are the minutes each day required by the state. It is very important that your child is here during these times. The first few minutes set the tone for the day, as the last few minutes allow for closure of the day. Missing these times on a regular basis is not a habit you want to establish with your child. We already are having too many students come in late and being signed out before dismissal. We will be watching this closely and working with you if we feel this is becoming a problem.

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Michigan School code states that it is the responsibility of parents to see that their children between the ages of six and sixteen be in regular attendance at school. The Portage Schools extend the expectation that all students, regardless of age, should attend 100% of all scheduled instructional days. Students are expected to be in all class sessions to which they are assigned.

When your child is absent from school, he misses more than the day's lessons. Class discussions are valuable and cannot be made up. If your child is truly sick, he/she should stay home, of course. But missing school for any other reason can become a bad habit. **Studies show that kids who have poor attendance in the elementary years are much more likely to drop out of high school later.**

You can show your child how important you think good attendance is. Schedule doctors' appointments, haircuts, shopping and family vacations after school hours.

If your child must stay home due to illness, ask the teachers if assignments can be sent home. Keeping up with schoolwork will make things easier when s/he returns.

This year we will again be using our attendance software. From this letters will be printed and sent when your child is absent for 10, 18, and 27 days. Since parents are responsible for their child's attendance in school, it is important you are aware of the amount of absences.

**Finally, remind your children that going to school is their number one job!**

### **DIBELS – DYNAMIC INDICATORS OF BASIC EARLY LITERACY SKILLS**

Students in kindergarten through fifth grade have been assessed using a set of standardized, individually administered measures of early literacy development. These measures are given be given in September, January, and May. They are one-minute fluency measures used to monitor the development of pre-reading and early reading skills.

The measures were based upon the essential early literacy areas discussed in both the National Reading Panel (2000) and National Reading council (1998) reports to assess student development of phonological awareness, alphabetic understanding and fluency on text. The measures have been thoroughly researched and demonstrated to be reliable and valid indicators of early literacy development. The measures are highly predictive of later reading proficiency. The assessments aid in the early identification of students who may be at risk. These measures are also used to monitor the ongoing progress of students who have not made adequate growth and need adjustments in their instruction or practice.

The results are used in conjunction with other district assessments to evaluate individual student development, as well as providing grade-level feedback of instructional objectives. Reading information will be shared with parents at our fall conferences.

### **PICTURES AND VIDEOS**

From time to time, pictures or short videos of staff and students are taken doing some of the wonderful things that we do at Woodland Elementary. If it is your wish that your child not be a part of photos or videos made at school, please let your child's teacher know. We appreciate your help. If you have any questions, please call Mrs. O'Donnell at 323-6600.

### **VISITORS' BADGES**

Portage Public Schools requires all visitors to wear a nametag that has been made especially for that building. When you visit please wear a nametag after you have signed in, and please return the badge when you sign out.

### **STUDENT DIRECTORY OPT OUT**

Portage Public Schools occasionally provides student directories to organizations such as Parent Teacher Organizations, colleges and libraries offering special programs to school age children, and political action committees. This information may include the student's name, address, telephone number, email address, date of birth, parent/guardian name(s), honors, activities, and awards, grade level, and dates of attendance. Parents wishing to opt a student out of directory listings should contact the main office in writing to request omission. Please note – exercising this right will exclude this information from all external requests for directory information, including P.T.O.'s. It will not impact the inclusion of information in school publications such as yearbooks, school newspapers, extra-curricular programs, etc. If you wish your student's information excluded from these publications as well, please contact the school's main office.

### **FROM THE PTO:**

#### **SALLY FOSTER FUNDRAISER**

Reminder: Sally Foster pick up and School Directory on October 29 in the gym

It is possible to order Sally Foster products online throughout the school year.

#### **D&W FRESH MARKET DAYS:**

Woodland will receive 2 1/2% back based on the total purchases made during October 12 - 18.

Give the cashier the Woodland Code 96451

#### **MEIJER COMMUNITY REWARDS:**

Woodland will receive "double rewards" during the month of October by using your Meijer Community Rewards Card.

Enroll online at [www.meijer.com/rewards](http://www.meijer.com/rewards)

Woodland's code is 137811

#### **TASK FORCE MEETING:**

Our Voice ~ Our Community ~ Our Opportunity

Meeting scheduled October 6th, 6:30-8:00pm

Portage Fire Station #1

7830 Shaver Rd.

#### **TEXAS HOLDEM':**

Wayside on Stadium

October 8-11th

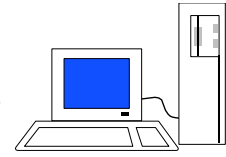
Contact Russ Mitchell at 329-4854

Many thanks to the PTO for all you do for us!!





# Media Center News



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Second graders will be learning how to log on the computers and to take the Accelerated Reader tests for their reading book. These same second graders will learn how to make graphs using Graph Club software. We have also explored Johnny Appleseed during visits to the Media Center.

Numerous people have **donated books** to the Media Center. We all appreciate their thoughtfulness and thank you for these great books.



**Fall Book Fair** will be coming in November on the 26<sup>th</sup> and will run through the 30<sup>th</sup>. This will be after the fall Parent Teacher Conferences. **We will have used books and some other items for sale during conferences this year. Books will be only \$.25 each. You are welcome to stop in and pick up a few.**



Fifth graders have been busy in the computer lab doing a number of activities there. They have taken a STAR reading test, visited research sites on the internet, completed word processing projects, and used software loaded on the computers for them! Ask your fifth graders about the lab.

Highlights for September included a logging display for 4<sup>th</sup> graders to go along with the Paddle to the Sea book they are reading. Students could also find out more about Johnny Appleseed by watching a PowerPoint presentation while waiting to check out their books or reviewing the static display that is up.

The computer monitor that is set up for students to look at while waiting to check books out, allows them to explore topics, expand their knowledge, practice math facts, or see promotions on a variety of books that are available to checkout and read. By watching for new authors, students can then broaden their reading.

The recent reading promotion, READOPOLY is going very well and students are exploring the different genre of the books they are reading. Each class is working as a team to acquire the book rights or property of different titles. The primary students are hearing a story and deciding the genre of that book. Congratulations to all the great readers at Woodland.



**Have a great fall!**



