

# Woodland



# Newsletter

NCA Accredited

December 2008

1401 Woodland, Portage, MI 49024

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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



Dear Families,

The hustle and bustle of the holiday season is upon us! It is a time of sharing and caring. Many thanks go out to all of you who have helped us out in so many ways from working in the classrooms to the many donations, or words of support that have come our way. All are very much appreciated. Thank you PTO for your generosity and fund raising efforts. Following are a few articles of interest. Have a wonderful month!

Sue O'Donnell

## WINTER BREAK

There will be no school from December 22, 2008 to January 2, 2009. School will resume on Monday, January 5, 2009. Remember also, that the semester ends on **January 23. There will be no school for students on that day!**

## PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

We look forward to seeing all parents/guardians and expect 100% participation. During conference sessions, parents are able to get to know their child's teacher, share information together, and together celebrate the hard work the student is doing. We consider these conferences extremely important and we hope you found them to be most informative and helpful regarding the progress of your child/children so far this year. If there are any questions at any time regarding the progress of your child/children, please feel free to either call us or stop in for a personal visit.

## LOST AND FOUND

We have a number of coats, gloves, hats, etc. in our lost and found. Please check it to see if any items are your's. Items not claimed will be donated to PCOC in December.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

- Nov. 24 ~ full day of school
- Nov. 24 ~ conferences 5-8 pm
- Nov. 25 ~ ½ day of school with dismissal at 11:57am
- Nov. 25 ~ conferences 1-4/5-8
- Nov. 26-28 ~ no school
- Dec. 22-Jan. 2 ~ no school
- Jan. 23 ~ no school
- Feb. 26 ~ half day of school with dismissal 11:57am
- Feb. 27 ~ no school
- March 27 ~ no school

HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO OUR WOODLAND FAMILIES! We are thankful for our great school and "our" amazing children. Thank you for sharing them with us!

## POP CAN DRIVE

PTO is continuing the pop can drive through Tuesday, November 25. Proceeds from this drive are used to help fund Woodland's Holiday Gift Giving program. A big thank you goes out to all who have generously donated.



## **PORTAGE HOCKEY CLASSIC**

It's time again for the annual Portage Central vs. Portage Northern Hockey Classic! The big game will be held at Wings Stadium on Monday, December 15 at 6:30 pm. Players will be visiting Woodland on December 11 during lunch times.



## **REQUEST TO STAY INDOORS FOR RECESS**

We believe that except on rare occasions, if a child is well enough to be in school they are well enough to go outside and enjoy recess. In addition, an adult must always be present to supervise a child staying in for recess, which takes away from staff lunch times and office staff duties. Therefore, a note from a physician stating the child is to remain indoors for recess is required for a child to be individually supervised during recess time. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation with this matter

## **MORNING NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL CANCELLATION**

When Portage Public Schools cancels school due to weather conditions or other emergencies, news media is notified by 6:00 a.m. School cancellation information is also available online and via the phone. To access school cancellation information online, visit the Portage Public Schools webpage at [www.portageps.org](http://www.portageps.org), click on the "Parents & Visitors" box and then on the next page look for the school-closing link on the right hand side. This link will take you to the WWMT-TV website that posts school closings. District officials have found linking to the WWMT-TV website is the fastest method for families. *Families may also call the Portage Public Schools "School Closing Hotline" at 323-6800* for updates on school closure information. A message is recorded and updated at the same time news media is notified of closures. **Please note:** Anytime the district cancels classes due to severe weather, all afternoon and evening activities in all Portage Public School buildings are also canceled.

## **DRESS FOR THE WEATHER & LABEL STUDENT OUTERWEAR!**

Winter weather has arrived and students need to dress for it! **Children should be wearing winter jackets, snow pants, boots, hats, and gloves or mittens to school.** PLEASE WRITE STUDENT NAMES INSIDE COATS, GLOVES AND BOOTS. We have many students with look-alike clothing and a multitude of items that end up in Lost and Found. Labeling clothing will assist us in returning lost outerwear to students.

*Note: If the actual temperature (not predicted) at recess time is below zero or -15 degrees wind chill we will have indoor recess.* Please have children come to school dressed with the anticipation of spending a thirty-minute recess outside.



## **Questions and Answers Regarding The Proposed Elementary School Boundaries for 2009**

In anticipation of the opening of a new elementary school on 12th Street in Fall 2009, a committee of parents representing all elementary & middle schools has worked with school officials to develop a viable plan to revise elementary attendance boundaries. In this process, every attempt was made to maintain neighborhood school groups, prevent overcrowding, minimize the numbers of students moved, and minimize student time on buses.

Last spring, two options were presented to the community for review and feedback. The committee working on the boundaries has processed this feedback, and has finalized a recommendation for the Board of Education. This recommendation was shared with the Board on Monday, November 24th, at its regular meeting. The Board will take final action to affirm the plan on December 15th.

In order to provide interested members of community time to review the plan prior to the meeting, the district has posted a summary of the information via Portage Public Schools webpage at: <http://www.portageps.org/information/attendanceareas/default.aspx>

### **Elementary Attendance Area FAQ**

#### **Why is PPS changing the EL Attendance Areas?**

In the fall of 2007, voters approved a bond issue which called for the construction of a new elementary school west of US-131, as well as the decommissioning of one of our older facilities, Waylee Elementary. Updates are required both to establish the attendance area for the new school, and to accommodate the assignment of Waylee neighborhoods to other schools. We will also use this opportunity to address overcrowding presently occurring at some of our other elementary schools.

**How was this plan developed?** In the fall of 2007, the Attendance Area Study Committee (AASC) was established to develop the guidelines for boundary changes, as well as the new boundaries themselves. The AASC is comprised of parent representatives from all PPS elementary and middle schools, along with selected members of the PPS administrative staff. In the spring of 2008, the AASC released two candidate proposals to the public for review and comment. Based on the feedback they received and a review of projected enrollment data, the candidate proposals were adjusted into a single recommendation for the administration and Board of Education to consider.

#### **What are the guiding principles used to make decisions?**

- Maintain neighborhood school groups (neighborhoods attend the same school – EL, MS, & HS)
- Move as few students as possible
- Minimize student time on bus routes
- Avoid social economic status imbalances and ensure boundaries lead to equitable services
- Maintain secondary school enrollments

#### **You mention social economic status in your guiding principles. What exactly does this mean and how was it used?**

As per State and Federal Law, we are required to track and report the number of students participating in our free/reduced lunch program. This percentage is often referred to as the Social Economic Status or SES of the building. The present elementary average is 22%.

As the AASC worked on the boundaries, this data was reviewed to ensure that no imbalances in the SES rates for the elementaries were created. A range of +/- 10% was established. None of the specific changes to the boundaries were made to balance SES; however some ideas were rejected as they would have lead to SES rates outside of the target range.

#### **When will the elementary boundary changes take effect?**

Elementary boundaries will be shifted in the fall of 2009 to coincide with the opening of the 12th Street elementary school.

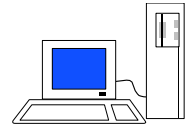
#### **What if I wish my child to remain at his/her current school?**

The district will consider these ‘grandfathering’ requests on a case by case basis, granting those requests where we are able to do so. Once the Board takes final action in December, a mailing will be sent to all families to confirm their assignment for the 09-10 school year, as well as outline the process for grandfathering requests in full detail.

For more information please see the Portage Public School website: [www.portageps.org](http://www.portageps.org).



# Media Center News



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**Cell phones Cell phones Cell phones We can recycle old cell phones!!!!!!  
Send your old phones in and we can earn cash for the Media Center.**

Ask your student in second thru fifth grade about the pigeon hunt!

**Book Fair Update:** Congratulations Woodland! Over \$3,000 in books were purchased at the book fair which qualified us for some nice bonus books from Scholastic. Your support of the book fair is most encouraging and the children have some great books to read over the holidays. With our profits we will order tape players for the classrooms! Thanks again to all our Woodland families. A special thanks to our volunteer parents who helped out. Thanks!

**Book Olympics** was won by the fourth grade by a narrow margin over third grade. Congratulations to all the readers at Woodland for trying and turning in your bookmark.

**A way to help Woodland!** The **Media Center** is collecting **empty printer ink cartridges** to be recycled. **Any cartridge** will work, ink jet or laser. **What to do?** Bring or send the cartridge in to the Media Center and place in the collection box. The Media Center will take care of the rest. What does Woodland get? Woodland earns points or cash towards technology equipment. Best of all it does not cost anything and the rewards are great! Send in those cartridges! **(laser cartridges can be sent in with the original box)**



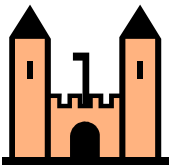
The **Media Center** has **many books** that are **missing** and we need your help in looking around the house for stray books. We are also doing a shelf check. Thank you for your help.

**HINTS to avoid overdue books:** Keep the books from school in a special place so that they can easily be found when needed. Make a note on the calendar which day is book exchange day. Remind your student that it is his responsibility to get the books back to school.

December is dinosaur month. We will be promoting books about dinosaurs and dinosaur stories.



**Chess Club** will start after **winter** break in **January**. Watch for details.



The castle reading loft will be going up in December. Students will be able to come down during the day or during lunch recess to read quietly on the second floor. The students enjoy having a chance to go up and read in the castle while it is up. Woodland has great readers and we like to see them read so many books.

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO EACH OF YOU!**

