

Woodland

NCA Accredited

October 2009



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.

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 13th, 7:00pm, on your calendar for the next PTO meeting.**

A reminder that Parent/Teacher conferences are November 18th and 19th. 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 December 9-11th.

Be looking for more 5th grade camp information soon!

NO SCHOOL NOVEMBER 6TH

There is no school for students on Friday, November 6th. This is the teachers' day to work on records and report cards.

WALK FOR WOODLAND

We are gearing up for our 2nd Annual "Walk for Woodland". This healthy, fun-filled event helps raise money needed to offset the costs of many programs at Woodland.

- o Field Trips
- o Accelerated Reader
- o PTO-sponsored assemblies and speakers
- o Teacher Appreciation

This will be a primary fundraiser this year, and we will not be doing any catalog/product sales. Most importantly, this is a fun, one day event that will get our children moving! Look for a letter to come home soon with more details about the Walk.

Thank you for all of your past and future support of Woodland Elementary and PTO.

Sincerely,
The Walk for Woodland Committee

If you have questions or would like to volunteer to help the day of the event, please contact Kellie Garcia (324-0466 or k.garcia@thplastics.com).

NEWSLETTERS

This year we will no longer be sending the newsletter home. It will be posted on the internet at www.portageps.org/schools/elementary/wod.

If you do not have internet access please let us know and we will send one home to you.

CONFERENCES DATES

Wednesday, November 18:

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

Thursday, November 19:

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

Both these days are full days of school for students.

TWO HOUSEHOLD FAMILIES AND CONFERENCING

Living in a two-household family (shared custody) presents its own share of challenges and learning experiences for students (transporting items from one house to the other, informing both parents of events, etc.). Divorced parents who share legal custody of children have a right to be kept informed of their children's progress and involved in their education, including conferencing with teachers. To insure both parents hear the same information and to serve as positive role models of cooperation for their children, the staff of Woodland Elementary will conference with parents who share legal custody TOGETHER. Only in extreme situations will separate conferences be held for two-household families. Please note: Joint legal custody is assumed unless the school is provided with a court order restricting legal custody of a parent(s).

SCHOOL HOURS

School hours are 8:35-3:42. Kindergarten and Young 5s hours are as follows: AM - 8:35-11:44; PM – 12:40-3:42.

Students may enter the building at 8:35 when the bell rings. **They may not enter the building before that time.** Students should not be at school until 8:30. I've noticed some students already waiting at the doors at 8:15. There is no supervision of students waiting outside.

Students eating breakfast may enter at 8:20.

FROM THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION DEPT:

PPS annual one mile fun run will be coming up in mid-October. Ask your child for details.

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.

MEAP ASSESSMENT

Third, fourth and fifth grade students throughout Michigan will participate in the MEAP (Michigan Educational Assessment Program) tests October 13-29. 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 reading and math along with the fourth grade students who will also take tests in reading, writing and math. Fifth graders will test in math, reading, 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. 13: Reading

Thursday, Oct 15: Reading

Tuesday, Oct. 20: Math

Wednesday, Oct. 21:: writing (4th grade), science (5th grade)

Oct. 22-29: make up any subject as needed. There is no testing after the 29th.

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

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!

PICTURE RETAKES



Schoolpicture.com picture retakes will be Tuesday, November 10. If you are interested in a retake, please remember to return the entire package on November 10. Thank you.

FYI:

Please read the following information so you understand the procedures that are in place to insure a safe and orderly school environment. We appreciate your cooperation and support.

CYCLE/SCOOTER PERMITS GRADES 1-5

Students in grades 1-5 who wish to ride their bikes or scooters to school either on a regular basis or on an occasional basis must have a PERMIT on file at Woodland. Our goal is to see that students operate their bike/scooters in a safe manner. Forms may be picked up in the office and are to be taken home for parent signature.

All bike/scooter riders must have a permit on file no later than Friday, October 16. If you had a permit last year, it will be necessary to get a new one this year. You may also request a permit at any time during the school year. Students not following safety rules may lose permission to ride their bikes/scooters to school.

REMINDER: ALL EXTERIOR DOORS ARE LOCKED

All exterior doors are locked during the day except the doors outside the school office. We ask all visitors to stop by the office, so that we may help direct them to their destination and provide the necessary guest badge.

SAFETY DRILLS

We are required by law to conduct at least six fire drills, two severe weather drills, and two disaster drills during the school year. We will begin doing fire drills next week. We will also be doing a general and emergency lockdown drill on October 16th.

AFTER SCHOOL

Unless we have a note from a parent/guardian, students will be sent to their “usual” after school place. Too many times we end up with students in the office long after the buses and other students have left because they “thought” someone was picking them up.

STUDENT ABSENCES

If your child will not be in school or will be tardy, please call the school before 9:00 am (answering machine is on when the office is closed). If your child is marked absent and we have not heard from

you, we will make every effort to reach you to confirm the absence.

STUDENTS ON MEDICATION

If sometime during the school year it becomes necessary for your child to receive medication (both over-the-counter and prescription) during the school day, the following must be made available to the school before we are allowed to administer that medication:

- a) Signed permission slip from parent
- b) Statement from physician stating name of medication, dosage, times to be given and any special instructions
- c) Medication must be given to the school with the druggist’s label stating specific instructions

REMOVING CHILDREN FROM SCHOOL

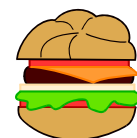
If you find it necessary to remove your child from school during regular school hours, please come to the school office and sign your child out. We will call your child to the office. **Please do not go directly to your child’s classroom even though you feel the teacher knows you. You will be sent back to the office.** This practice is for the safety of all children and will be strictly enforced.

If someone other than the parent(s) or guardian will be picking up your child at school, please notify the office. Your attention to this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Please be sure to sign your child back in to school if s/he returns the same day.

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH

Meal prices are the same as last year.



Elementary Breakfast - \$1.20

Elementary Lunch - \$1.80

Individual milk - 45¢ per carton.

Parents who choose to prepay for breakfasts and lunches can do so by **placing the money or check in an envelope marked with:**

- Child’s name
- Teacher
- Grade
- Number of lunches or milk tickets purchased
- Amount of check/cash enclosed

The envelope is then placed into a manila envelope located in each class. It works best if students can pay on Mondays since that is the day the cashier collects the money. On other days, she collects the money while the students are in the lunch lines and this causes delays in getting the students through the line.

When a student's account is getting low, the cashier will notify the parent by giving the student a note to bring home. Our cafeteria cashier can be reached by phone at 323-6691.

HAVING LUNCH WITH YOUR CHILD

If you are going to have lunch at school with your child, please wait for him/her in the hallway outside the cafeteria. Coming to the classroom can get your child, as well as other children, off task as they are getting ready for lunch.

If you are taking your child out for lunch, please do so during the scheduled lunch and recess time. Taking them early and/or bringing them back late takes away from class instruction time. Parents are asked to not accompany their child on the playground during recess. This is the students' time to socially interact with their peers. We appreciate your cooperation with this.

SCHOOL VISITS

We want to extend a continuous "WELCOME" to parents to visit the school and observe their children. However, we ask that you not ask for the teacher's time and attention when they are responsible for and needed by twenty-some children (this includes when children are entering the classroom in the A.M. and dismissed in the P.M.). Teachers get caught in the dilemma of either being impolite to you or ignoring their students. It is very important that they use this time to attend to the needs of their students and help monitor hall traffic. After dismissal is a more relaxing time to talk – either in person or on the phone. To ensure that our students are safe and the educational process is not disrupted, the following procedures will be followed:

1. Classroom visits need to be arranged with the teacher 24 hours in advance.
2. All individuals who are scheduled to make a classroom visit must stop by the office to:
 - a. Register with the office staff

- b. Be cleared of any possible restraining or other court orders
 - c. Receive a nametag
3. Time is for observation only, not teacher consultation. If you wish to meet with the teacher, please schedule a conference outside of instructional time.
4. During classroom visitation, parents are not to videotape or otherwise record classroom activities without the permission of the principal.

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/she misses more than the day's lessons. Class discussions can be just as valuable.

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 teacher if assignments can be sent home. Keeping up with schoolwork will make things easier when he/she returns.

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

DIBELS

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skill is a district wide test administered three times a year. DIBELS is used as just one snapshot of your child's reading. Listed below are the skills your child will be tested on:

K/1 – letter naming, initial sounds, hearing sounds in words and blending sounds together

PARKING LOT UPDATES

I want to thank all of you for the way you have “adapted” to the parking lot procedures. Just a couple reminders:

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 4th grade side.
2. The 4th grade doors are locked; 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 4th and 3rd graders who use that route. Thank you for your cooperation signing out at the end of the day; this helps us to get to know our new families and match faces to names and students.

Please 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 October 16, 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 30. 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.

Visitors will be “signing in” in the front lobby and sign their children out (if they choose so) in the classrooms.

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.

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.

SAFE AND ORDERLY MANUAL

Did you know that the district's Safe and Orderly Manual is on the web page? To access:

- ❖ Go to www.portageps.org
- ❖ Click on Parents and Visitors
- ❖ Scroll down and it's on the left

PTO NEWS

Woodland School has a Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) that joins parents and teachers in an effort to strengthen, enrich and support our school. PTO sponsors many activities and services for Woodland teachers and families. PTO receives funds from membership dues and fundraisers.

You can join PTO by paying your \$5.00 membership dues.

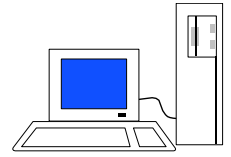
PTO meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm in the Woodland Activity Room. The next meeting is October 13.

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





Media Center News



Volume XVI Number 2

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Students will now have a chance to challenge themselves with different puzzles, mind teasers, and manipulatives that are found at the **Challenge Chair**. Only one student may be at the chair, but many of the puzzles are on paper and can be picked up to be worked on outside of the Media Center. There are Numbrix puzzles, Sudoku puzzles, and others on a regular basis. Coming soon will be the Roma cube – unlike any cube you have seen. Chess Club will start after December.

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 9th and will run through the 13th. This will be before the fall Parent Teacher Conferences. **We will also have used books for 25¢ each and other items for sale during conferences this year. 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 4th graders to go along with the Paddle to the Sea book they are reading. Students could also find out more about Johnny Appleseed by reviewing the static display that is up.

The computer monitor that will be 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, Woodland Book Olympics, is going very well; students are exploring the different genre of the books they are reading. 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!