

# Cunniff School

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Mena S. Ciarlone, C.A.G.S.  
Principal

Dear Cunniff Families,

I hope this letter finds your family enjoying the last full week of the summer break and looking forward to the opening of school. The excitement and preparation, in anticipation of a new school year, is magical at Cunniff as staff and faculty put finishing touches in place. This is a time I look forward to every year. I am reminded that it takes a village to educate a child. This is only the beginning of a joyful year that lies ahead as our partnership unfolds once again.

This week, the faculty and I will participate in three full days (Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday) of professional development. As a District, we are looking forward to Dr. Galdston's Opening Day address. Additionally, Dr. Jon Saphier, founder of Research for Better Teaching, will be the keynote speaker on Tuesday. The theme will be high expectations teaching. On Thursday, Facing History and Ourselves will be presenting. In-between, there will be time for faculty and curriculum meetings, bridging meetings, and time to prepare offices and classrooms. Orientation for new educators will take place tomorrow.

The faculty and I will greet new and returning students and families, outdoors and weather permitting, beginning at 8:05 on Tuesday, September 3rd. Our school day will begin at 8:15 and dismissal will take place at 2:30. Please note that Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students have been assigned appointments for a small group visit on September 3rd. This information can be found on a letter issued earlier in June. Additionally, please see the attached staggered start schedule for PK and K students. Extended Day (Before and/or After School) begins on September 3rd for students in grades 1-5 and on September 5th for PK and Kindergarten students.

This year, we will continue with the practice of allowing students to enter the building beginning at 8:05 AM each day. Teachers will be on duty both inside and outside of Cunniff, during this time. Students can enter the building and go to their cubbies/lockers in preparation to enter the classroom promptly at 8:15. A morning meeting with the classroom teacher will begin shortly thereafter.

Here are the entrance and dismissal locations:

In the event of rain, students will enter through the assigned doors listed below and will wait in the lobby area outside of their classrooms. In December - Kindergarten students will begin entering via the path side door adjacent to the cemetery.

Grades PK and K	Cunniff Courtyard entrance doors
Grade 1	Path side door adjacent to the cemetery
Grade 2	Middle Warren Street door
Grade 3	Cunniff Cove entrance facing Warren Street
Grades 4 and 5	Front Main Entrance door

There are a few staffing changes that I would like to make you aware of regarding the 2019-2020 academic year.

Grade 3 teacher - Ms. DiIeso has transitioned into the position of library media teacher at Cunniff. Ms. DiIeso brings a wealth of creativity, classroom experience, and natural technology integration to this position. The faculty and I are looking forward to collaborating with her.

Mr. Garo Saraydarian will be our music teacher. He has taught in Winchester and Cambridge. He is very excited to teach both general music and band/instrumental lessons. Mr. Saraydarian is originally from California. He has degrees from U.C. Riverside and Berklee College of Music. He worked as a professional trombonist on Celebrity Cruise Lines before discovering he had a passion for teaching. He lives in Arlington with his wife and two children. Mr. Saraydarian is looking forward to meeting students, families, faculty, and staff.

Grade 2 teacher - Ms. Cifrino recently turned in her resignation. She has taken a position in another district and will be working with English Language Learners. We wish her the best.

Interviews for both second and third grade teachers took place during the past week. I am happy to say that we have two candidates that are currently scheduled to meet with Dr. Galdston tomorrow and to continue moving forward via Human Resources. I will announce their names, once this process is complete. I know both candidates are looking forward to setting up their new classrooms, meeting students and families, and becoming part of the Cunniff community.

A candidate is also moving forward who will be a half-time instructional assistant at the Kindergarten level. Each of the two Kindergarten classrooms will have a half time instructional assistant.

Mr. Casey Hoffman recently joined the Cunniff custodial team and will be working alongside Dan Snow covering the afternoon and evening shift. I thank Dan and Casey for their attention to detail in preparing for the first day of school.

In terms of grade structure, the Cunniff will open with the following grade structure in place. We are running a Pre-Kindergarten classroom with a cohort of 15 students. There will be two Kindergarten classrooms and three first grade classrooms each opening with enrollment at or under 21 students. In grades two and three, we will run three sections of grade two with enrollment at or under

21; grade three will have two sections under 24. In grades four and five, we will be opening with two grade four classrooms and three grade five classrooms each with enrollment at 22 or under.

Teachers will be utilizing the Responsive Classroom curriculum as they guide students through each school day. Responsive Classroom is an approach to teaching that integrates social-emotional skills and academic skills thereby creating an environment where students can do their best learning. There are four goals for the first six weeks of school worth noting: Create a climate of warmth, inclusion, and safety; Teach classroom routines and behavior expectations; Help students get to know and care for the classroom and school environment; Establish expectations for academic work. Teachers will begin each day with a morning meeting which incorporates Responsive Classroom elements. Please help your child get to school on time so that s/he can be part of this very important introduction to the school day.

We hope that students have taken some time during the summer months to enjoy a good book to read. In June we asked all students to participate in our summer reading focus with our partners at the Watertown Free Public Library. Please remind students to return their summer reading tracker. Additional copies can be found on the Cunniff School HomePage.

The Cunniff website continues to be a useful resource and will be updated regularly. For information such as the district and school calendar, Handbook, Principal's Newsletters, supply lists and other relevant documents please visit: <https://cunniff.watertown.k12.ma.us/> .

Our Cunniff Back to School Night will take place on Thursday, September 19th from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet grade-level teams and to hear about the exciting school year that lies ahead. Please note that Wednesday, September 25th is an early-release day with a 12:15 dismissal for students. Lunch will be served and there is Extended Day. Teachers will be participating in professional development.

Should you have additional questions, or need information regarding the opening of school, please do not hesitate to contact our Main Office.

The faculty and I look forward to welcoming new and returning students and families on Tuesday, September 3rd!

Kind regards,  
Mena Ciarlone, Cunniff Principal