

Principal's Letter

Sunday, September 8

Dear Cunniff Families,

I hope that students have been sharing exciting and important details about their first four days of school. This is a time when teachers are establishing routines, setting expectations, and making the connection between attitude towards school and academic success. As students learn how to care for materials and move through components of the school day, they are feeling a sense of ownership for their classrooms and for the school. Coupled with the Responsive Classroom curriculum, teachers are also articulating the core values for Cunniff. These are: *Care about yourself*. *Care about others*. *Care about the school*. Students will see these values displayed on banners throughout the school.

Our Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students have completed the staggered start schedule and are now heading into their first full week of school. They too have been practicing classroom, cafeteria, and school-wide routines that will enable them to gain confidence and enjoy each school day while meeting with success.

We have two new classroom teachers at Cunniff. In my last correspondence with families, we were in the midst of conducting interviews for these positions. Ms. Erica Lauria is teaching grade two. She received both her Bachelor of Education and Master of Education degree from Boston College. She taught second grade at St. Stephen's in Watertown for the past three years. Ms. Tehseen Mody is teaching grade three. She holds a Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a Master of Art Education from Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tennessee. Ms. Mody has taught English Language Arts at Kipp Academy in Lynn for the past two years.

On Friday our reading specialists (Mrs. McCarthy, Mrs. Rono, and Mrs. Rabbitt) held a school-wide book giveaway for students. All students received an ice treat for participating in our summer reading program and turning in their summer reading logs. This treat was funded by our PTO. Thank you to Jackie Airasian and Tina Brisson for making this possible.

During the weeks ahead, teaching teams for grades 1-5 will begin the process of conducting formal and informal assessments. This includes benchmark testing to determine instructional reading levels and administering the i-Ready Diagnostic in Mathematics (domains tested: Number and Operations – Measurement and Data – Algebra and Algebraic Thinking – Geometry) and Reading (domains tested: Foundational Skills–Phonological Awareness, Phonics, High-Frequency Words, Vocabulary).

All third and fourth graders will be going to an instrument demonstration assembly on Tuesday morning (September 10) at 8:35. This will take place in the cafetorium. Parents and guardians of students in third and fourth grade are also welcome to attend to learn more about the instrument program. Chorus for students in grades 4 and 5 begins on Wednesday, September 11. Students

should arrive by 7:50 since chorus practice starts promptly at 8:00 and ends at 8:40. The group will convene in the music room.

As we head into mid-September, please mark your calendars with Back to School Night scheduled for Thursday, September 19 from 6:00 - 8:00 pm. We will begin in the cafetorium at 6:00 PM for a welcome message from the Principal and PTO. In order to accommodate parents/guardians with more than one student at Cunniff, there will be two opportunities to hear about each grade level and classroom. The sessions will take place from 6:20 - 7:00 and 7:20 - 8:00. Additional details regarding the format will be provided later in the week.

A reminder that Wednesday, September 25 is an early-release day with a 12:15 dismissal. Lunch will be served and there is Extended Day. Teachers will be participating in professional development.

As always, the faculty and I value your partnership and appreciate your efforts in getting students to school so that they are ready to start the school day promptly at 8:15. Teachers are on duty at 8:05 and this indicates that students can then enter the building as they arrive.

Enjoy this beautiful day!

Kind regards,
Mena Ciarlone, Principal

