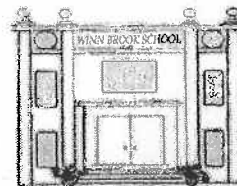


Words from Winn Brook



Principal's Newsletter

Janet Carey, Principal

April 15, 2009



Planning for Next Year

Since student placement is an important, complicated and very time consuming task, we are ready to begin planning for next year's classroom assignments. There are many factors which we take into consideration when creating class lists. We try to balance the classes in terms of gender, academic performance, and special needs. We take into consideration social issues and try to separate children who have a great deal of difficulty working together.

In order to be as thorough as possible, we involve a number of people in the decision making process. Current classroom teachers, specialists, the principal, special education teachers, the school psychologist and the guidance counselor will assist in assigning students for the 2009-2010 school year.

It is not necessary for parents to submit a letter related to placement. We will place each child with a great deal of care and consideration regardless of whether or not we receive a letter from you. If, however, you have information regarding your child's learning style, academic strengths and weaknesses or physical, social or family issues that you wish to share with us, you are welcome to do so. All such information should be submitted in writing and addressed to Janet Carey. Although the placement teams will give careful consideration to the information that you provide, we must consider a variety of factors as we determine the best situation for the grade level as a whole.

Please do not ask that your child is placed with a specific friend unless there is a compelling emotional / psychological rationale. We do not accept requests for specific teachers. If you wish to communicate information regarding more than one child, please send a separate letter for each student. Should you feel that a letter is warranted, it must be submitted by **May 1st**.

You will be notified in mid-July regarding your son's/daughter's class placement. Since the placement process is complex and involves a team of people, changes in placement should not be requested.

Upcoming Events

- ✓ 4/20-4/24 Vacation
- ✓ 5/4 Grade 4 class photo
- ✓ 5/4-5/5 Make a Plate *
- ✓ 5/6 Early Release Day (Wed Schedule)
- ✓ 5/6 Staff Appreciation Luncheon *
- ✓ 5/8 Make a Plate *
- ✓ 5/12 PTA Meeting @ 7:30PM *
- ✓ 5/19-5/20 Math MCAS, grades 3 & 4
- ✓ 5/25 No school, Memorial Day
- ✓ 6/5 See you in September Picnic *
- ✓ 6/9 PTA Meeting @ 9:00AM *
- ✓ 6/22 End of the year concert, 9:20 am in the gym
- ✓ 6/23 Anticipated last day of school, 11:50 dismissal

* PTA sponsored events

The Return of the Phantom

As a staff, we decided that there was room for improvement in the way that students move through the hallways and common spaces. In an effort to clearly communicate expectations to the children, the Winn Brook Walk was created. There are four simple components. Students must walk:

- in single file
- quietly
- keeping hands to ourselves
- with a normal walk (no jumping, running, etc.)

It was explained to the children that these rules are in place in order to create a respectful and safe atmosphere where everyone can feel comfortable and do their best work. The Phantom of the Hallways has therefore returned to Winn Brook and is acknowledging those classes that are doing an excellent job. Classes that the mysterious Phantom spots demonstrating "the walk" receive a special certificate to post in their classrooms.



Respect

Community

High Expectations



Budget Update

At a recent meeting, the Belmont School Committee passed what is called an Available Funds Budget. Under this budget scenario, the School Department was required to cut roughly three million dollars from the money needed to maintain the current level of staffing and programs. These cuts will have profound effects throughout the school system. Several of the cuts will have a significant impact at the elementary level. First, the reduction of six classroom teaching positions from across the four elementary schools will result in increased class sizes at some grade levels. Teachers at these levels will find it more difficult to provide the individual attention and small-group instruction that are critical to effective classroom practice. This comes at a time when pertinent research highlights the need for on-going assessment and differentiation in order to assist all students in reaching the ambitious goals required by both Commonwealth and federal law. In addition, teachers will be less able to respond to the increasing non-academic needs of both students and families. The second major effect will come as a consequence of the elimination of elementary library aides; the libraries will no longer provide the same level of service to our school communities. Without the aides both the circulations of books and the maintenance of the collection would be negatively affected. Additionally, we anticipate a 20 percent reduction in supplies and the Available Funds Budget would eliminate all textbook purchases. These changes will impede our ability to offer the kind of elementary program we feel our students need.

Many parents have inquired about federal stimulus money. Although Belmont is on the Governor's list of districts slated to receive funding, cuts in state aid for schools could offset any influx of federal money. At this point, little is certain, until the state budget process is finalized in the next couple of months.

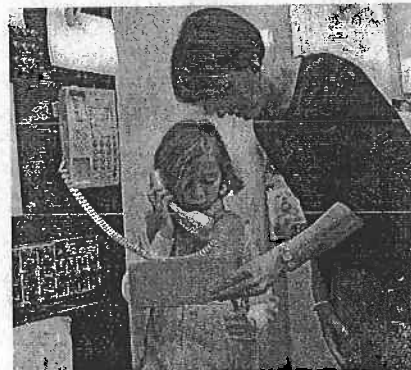
Dogs at School

For a variety of reasons, we are asking that you keep dogs off of school property during busy times of the day. Some people are uncomfortable with dogs and find their presence during arrival and dismissal times to be anxiety provoking. Additionally, outstretched leashes can create safety hazards increasing the likelihood that someone will trip and fall. The crowds, noise, and confusion may also make your pet uneasy. Please be respectful of the diversity within our school community and help to ensure that everyone feels safe and comfortable.



Principal for a Day

First grader and raffle winner, Brooke DeLorey, took the helm as Principal on March 30th. Ms. DeLorey (seen below) took charge of all announcements for the day, toured the building to be sure that everyone was in class, and chatted with students as she gave out birthday pencils. After checking weather conditions, she determined that indoor recess was warranted. Ms. DeLorey did a wonderful job running our school. Her message to Winn Brook families follows.



"I'm the Principal. My name is Brooke DeLorey. I am having a great day. I know that you will have a great day too. The kids were so quiet in the morning."

Brooke DeLorey

What a Success!

The FBE recently held its Spring Reception and Live Auction which raised close to \$94,000! It was a terrific event which was well attended by Winn Brook families. We are grateful to everyone who supported our schools through the Foundation for Belmont Education. Congratulations to the talented event coordinators (including our own Ginny D'arbeloff) and the many volunteers who did an outstanding job organizing a very successful and memorable evening.

Staff Raffle Raises Funds and Builds Community

We thank all of the families who participated in the recent PTA sponsored staff raffle. Staff members and raffle winners have enjoyed a wide variety of activities together ranging from bowling, cookie decorating, crafts, sports and games in the gym, and a Red Sox Opening Day celebration.

