

West Stafford School



FALL 2023
NEWSLETTER

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

11/1	NO SCHOOL Professional Development
11/10	NO SCHOOL , Veterans' Day
11/20	EARLY DISMISSAL , AM PK attends, Parent Teacher Conferences
11/21	EARLY DISMISSAL , PM PK attends, Parent Teacher Conferences
11/22	EARLY DISMISSAL , AM PK attends
11/23	NO SCHOOL , Thanksgiving
11/24	NO SCHOOL , Thanksgiving Break

Early Dismissal Schedule

Full and Part-day PK and K dismiss at 12:00. Refer to dates above for which session attends on specific dates. (AM or PM)



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Check out our website: <http://wss.stafford.k12.ct.us/>

Contact us: (860) 684-3181

A NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear West Stafford School Parents/Guardians:

It has certainly been an exciting and smooth start to the school-year. The past couple of months have been incredibly busy and the progress the students have made in just a few short weeks has been astounding! Students have settled into their new classrooms, routines and getting down to the business of learning and play. The purpose of these newsletters are to provide essential information to parents and also foster a connection between home, school and the classroom. We feel that communication is essential to our partnership. We anticipate a wonderful learning experience for all our students and hope you find this newsletter informative.

The month of October has been very busy for us here at West Stafford School. During the month of October our students participated in educational Fall themed activities. The week of October 8-14 was Fire Prevention Week. The West Stafford Fire Department visited our school, and children had an opportunity to view a fire truck, equipment, talk to firefighters and learn about fire safety. Please check out our school website for photos of Fire Prevention Day. October 20th we had our first Pep Rally of the year to celebrate coming together as one school family. We focused on our core values: Show respect, Take responsibility, Always be safe, and Ready to learn. The purpose of these pep rallies is to build classroom communities and create a positive school climate. The lessons help teach those foundational skills for children to become good citizens. We believe it's important our students focus on these core values each day in a positive, nurturing environment. Friday, October 27th our students participated in a harvest festival. They participated in a Scavenger Hunt, Pumpkin Decorating, and Pumpkin Exploration -where they got their hands gooeey and explored what they saw, felt, smelled and heard inside of a pumpkin! A huge thank you to our PTO for sponsoring this event. And lastly, on October 31st students will participate in a costume parade.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

November is conference time. Please be sure to schedule a Parent-Teacher Conference with your child's teacher. Conferences will be held on November 20 and 21 and there will be an **Early Dismissal**. Teachers will be sending out information on how to sign up. Your child's progress so far this year will be discussed. This is your time to ask questions regarding your child's academic success, classroom routines, and the curriculum. Communication is essential and we strive to connect to our students, parents and families, and community. We will continue to reach out to you by school messenger and or text messages and Seesaw. We also encourage you to visit our school website <http://wss.stafford.k12.ct.us/> for announcements, information, and celebrations.

As always, we wish to express our sincere gratitude toward our entire school community. We would not be the amazing school that we are without the help and support of all of you. Thank you and may you have a safe, healthy, and happy fall season!

Sincerely,

Anna M. Guerriero-Gagnon



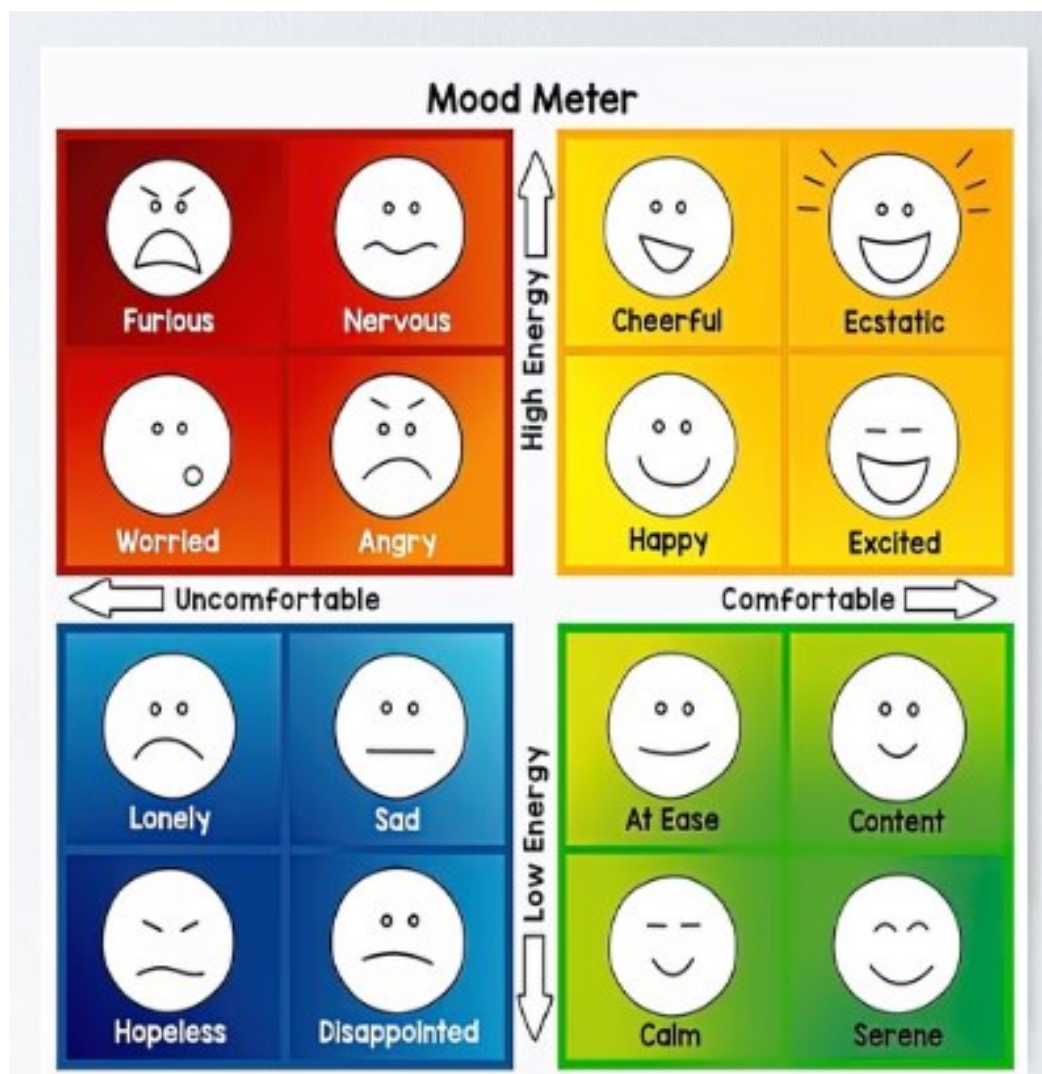
SOCIAL WORK NEWS

Greetings Families,

This school year jump starts the initiation of our new Social Emotional Learning program, RULER, developed by the Center for Emotional Intelligence at Yale University. Students have been learning about the Mood Meter (pictured) to identify their feeling zones. This is a useful tool to help students and adults **R**ecognize how they are feeling. The next step is to **U**nderstand what caused the feeling and to **L**abel it. Then it can be **E**xpressed in a respectful manner and **R**egulation can occur. After that, one can move on with their day having solved the problem effectively, safely, and with full understanding of the situation. Students are learning strategies for helping them shift from an uncomfortable zone to a comfortable zone. Taking deep breaths, talking about the problem, taking space, and asking for a hug are a few ideas they have learned so far. You can use the Mood Meter in your home as a tool to talk about feelings and solve problems as well!

As always, feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have regarding your child.

Best Wishes,
Gina Malloy
School Social Worker
malloyg@stafford.k12.ct.us



PRE-KINDERGARTEN NEWS



Since school has started we have been very busy in Pre-Kindergarten! The Pre-K students have settled in nicely.

We spent a lot of the first month of school getting to know our friends and teachers and learning routines in our school and classroom. The themes that we have talked about so far this year have been “All About Me”, friends, apples, leaves and pumpkins. Some of our favorite activities have been tasting apples, creating Jock-O-Lanterns, and building things with blocks and planks. We have had the opportunity to play outside on our playscape and the blacktop area where we have an outdoor kitchen to play in..

The West Stafford fire department came for a visit and the rain held off long enough that we got to see the fire-truck up close. Thank you to the firefighters that came to teach us about fire safety. Please consider having a fire drill at home so that your child knows what your smoke detector sounds like, they know how to get out safely and where your meeting place is outside.

Please keep having your students work on putting on their coats and zipping! We realize that it takes a little longer for them to do this themselves when you are trying to go somewhere, but this is a life-long skill that they are more than ready to learn!

The students have been assessed on our rote skills. This assessment looks at how well we can count; both aloud and a collection of items, how many letters we can identify, colors, and shapes. We will be assessing these skills each term. Consider practicing these skills at home. You can use letter magnets to identify letters, you can count just about anything, and you can talk about shapes and colors that you see all around. Some upcoming themes we will be learning about include shapes, families, and Thanksgiving. Keep an eye on Seesaw for information about conferences toward the end of November.

Happy Fall!



From Mrs. Beaudoin's Math Desk

Making mistakes is an important part of learning. When you notice your child making a math mistake, use questioning to understand your child's thinking and help them identify their own errors.

Example-"I want to understand how you figured this out" or "Tell me about what you did"

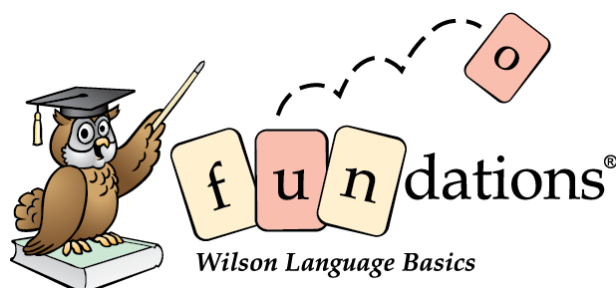
Even when students are correct, it's a great skill to explain one's process. If kids are not making mistakes and having productive struggles, we are limiting their brain growth.

Visit [Math at Home](#) for some thought provoking activities and games. Activities are updated monthly. The resources are free with no login required. Resources are organized by grade level, however if you feel your child is ready for a challenge, you have access to all the elementary grades. These resources align with the Bridges program we use here at school.

KINDERGARTEN NEWS

The kindergarten team is busy implementing our Foundations® word work program. This program incorporates hands-on activities and multisensory teaching strategies to support students' early handwriting, spelling, and phonics skills. Materials and student workbooks have a model on the left **and** right so that right and left-handed children can easily see the letter they are writing. So far, students have learned the letter, sound, and keyword for the letters: a, b, c, d, e, f, g, i, m, n, o, r, s, t, and u. (For example: b, bat, /b/).

An activity that students enjoy participating in during Foundations® is using the dry erase boards. Students get to form each letter using the plane, sky, and grass lines. Sometimes we like to give students a challenge by dictating a sound or keyword and have students try to figure out which letter corresponds! It's been wonderful to see students so engaged learning each letter with our friend Echo the Owl and Baby Echo!



Fall 2023 greetings from the WSS Health Office!

I know it has been a challenge again for all of our families and staff to navigate around the viruses that have been circulating recently. So, hang in there. We appreciate good communication to let us know when your little ones are missing school r/t illness.

I have started our routine hearing and vision screening of Kindergarten students. If your student does not pass the screening, I will inform their teacher and you will receive a referral letter from me to request a follow up with their pediatrician or Eye Dr. for further testing. My goal is to complete all the routine screening by December.

Be well, and as always, please feel free to contact me via email or phone call with any questions or concerns.

Respectfully,
Deneane Bentum BSN, RN
bentumd@stafford.k12.ct.us

860-684-3181 x2

West Stafford School Library

"Where Stories Come Alive"

This Fall, our students have enjoyed listening to stories about Back to School ("All Are Welcome Here" by Alexandra Penfold), checking out and caring for Library books ("Manners With a Library Book" by Amanda Doering Tourville) and the season of Autumn including apple trees ("The Apple Pie Tree" by Zoe Hall), the changing leaves ("Leaf Trouble" and "The Best Gift of All" by Jonathan Emmett), and Halloween ("Shake dem Halloween Bones" by W. Nikola Lisa and "The Little Old Lady Who Not Afraid of Anything" by Linda Williams).

Library Activities:

They've had fun experiencing hands-on activities that align with those themes and showcase their individual creativity, such as: drawing self-portraits and symmetrical apple trees, coloring paper maple leaves for our 3-D Library Tree and having fun with Halloween crafts. Our students have explored various manipulatives offered in the Library, including: Zoobs, Legos, our train table, magnetic tiles, farm animals, construction coins, a color matching game, and floor puzzles. In addition, our Science Center has opened up where our young scientists have investigated Acorns and Pinecones with magnifying glasses, all while honing their literacy and math skills. Our students always have the opportunity to read books in our Book Nook, on the couch and chairs, or on our Library rug.

Checking Out Library Books:

Our students have been excited to start checking out books from the Library. Please reinforce taking care of their library books at home and keeping their library books in a safe place where they won't lose it. Our students have a weekly Library class where they'll have the opportunity to check out books, unless their previously borrowed book has not yet been returned.

Scholastic Book Fair:

Our students and families had the opportunity to shop our Scholastic Book Fair during Library classes and during our school's Open House. Any purchases made benefited our school's Library to buy new books and materials for our students. We appreciate your support for our school!

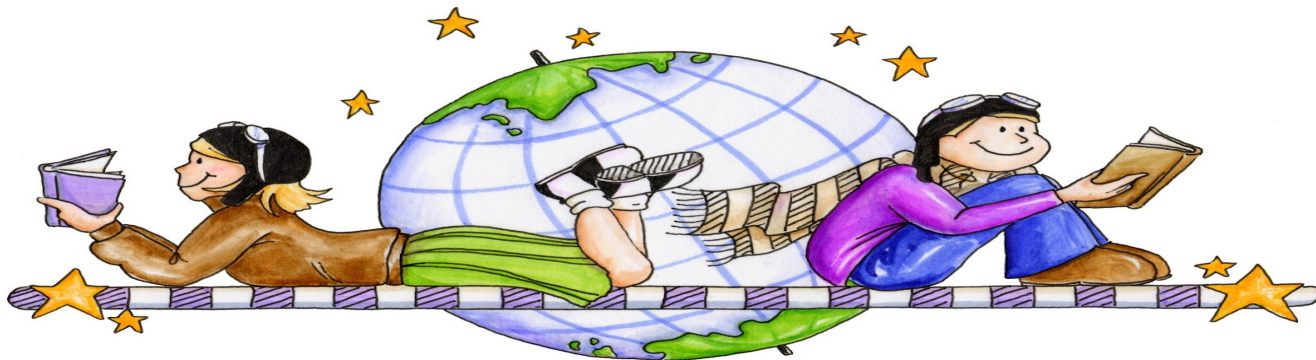
Reading at Home Program:

Our Reading at Home Program has begun and our first school wide goal is to reach 200 hours of reading. Once that goal is reached, our students will enjoy a Dance Party during their Library classes. All students received their first "Star Sheet" encouraging Pre-Kindergarten students to read 10 minutes a day and Kindergarten students to read 15 minutes a day. These times include being read to by an adult or sibling. Please support your child's participation in this school wide initiative. We look forward to many more fun incentives throughout the school year!

If you have any questions regarding the Library, please feel free to email me at: mortonj@stafford.k12.ct.us.

Best Regards,
Mrs. Morton





Happy Fall West Stafford Families! My name is Michelle Hasel and I am excited to join the West Stafford School community as a Reading Teacher. I have been a Reading Teacher in Stafford for the past six years. This year I will be working with students at both West Stafford and Stafford Elementary Schools. I look forward to working in partnerships with you all as we build those all-important early literacy skills.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions that you may have by emailing me at haselm@sstafford.k12.ct.us or by calling the main office (7860) 684-3181.

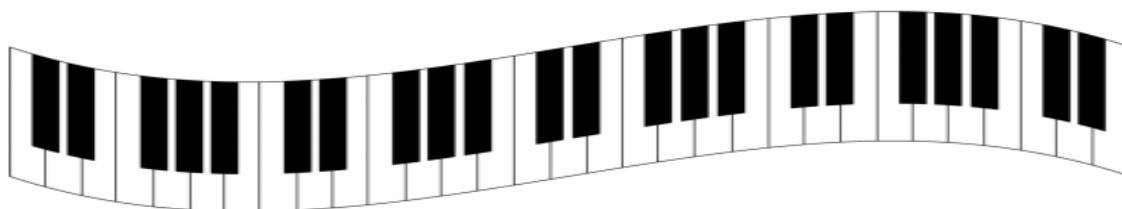
EXCITING NEWS!

The Shining Stars Bookstore is now open! Every Friday students can purchase paperback books specifically selected for young readers, for \$1.00 each. When students are able to choose books they are interested in, they are more apt to be excited about reading. Carve out some time during the weekend to read and talk about the books that your child brings home.



FROM THE MUSIC ROOM...

- # Students in preschool and kindergarten have been hard at work listening, evaluating, and creating music.
- b Students have used various instruments such as egg shakers, rhythm sticks, bean bags, and sand blocks to perform and create music.
- ♩ Students have been evaluating and performing music that is loud, quiet, fast, or slow.
- ♪ Students use scarves and movement to express musical ideas.
- ♩ Students utilize previous knowledge to connect music to their everyday lives while performing various instruments that are different shapes.



Greetings from the Art Room!

I am looking forward to an exciting year of teaching art! Not only will K and PK students explore the elements of art, and art and artists from different cultures, but we will be incorporating science and art. Recently, Kindergarten students discussed honeybees and their life cycle. This included printing, drawing, and painting honeycombs and honeybees. K students will now be learning color theory. PK students have been discovering color mixing by working together to paint magical friendship trees. Be sure to look for them in the halls of West Stafford School! Students will soon be creating several of their very own 3D sculptures. There is a lot to discover in art!



PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH NEWS

Hello West Stafford School!

The beginning of the year has started off! In our PE classes we are working on rules, routines and procedures in the gym. We went over how we move around during warm ups, what the Ready Position looks like when directions are being given, and what STAR Students look like in the school and PE. Students also were taught ways to solve small problems in PE, what to do for emergencies, as well as how to enter and exit the gym.

In addition to all the learning we've done, we have also played a lot of fun games and activities. We've touched on some Spatial Awareness lessons and activities to help students know where their bodies are in relation to the gym, other students and the equipment we're using. Student's have demonstrated a lot of ways that they are able to move their bodies as well, including hopping, skipping, jumping, galloping, jogging, leaping and more.

We are entering the first lessons of our first unit, which is a cooperative games unit. Cooperative games are fun and need good communication skills in order for the students to talk to their peers to solve the problems and the games I have given them. So far the students have been doing an excellent job at talking with each other in order to work together and complete all the challenges. For Kindergarten classes, we had our first health class which consisted of learning what Health is, being safe, eating healthy, exercising, germs, and how to make and treat our friends. These are all topics to be covered throughout the rest of the year in Health.

Just a reminder to please send your children in with sneakers when they have PE! I try to stress to the students that sneakers are needed for safety when coming to PE since we do a lot of moving, so please send your child with sneakers on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays!

If you have any questions please reach out to me @ turleyb@stafford.k12.ct.us. Thank you all so much!

-Mr. Turley



GREETINGS FROM THE STAFFORD FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER AT WEST STAFFORD SCHOOL



The Stafford FRC offers:

After-school child care for pre-k and kindergarten students at WSS
 Learn & Play Groups
 Home Visits
 Parenting Education and Support
 Developmental Screenings
 Family Engagement Activities
 Referrals and Information

Town of Stafford Gift Assistance Program

The Stafford Holiday Gift Assistance Program is a collaborative effort by The Stafford Family Resource Center, Stafford Social Services, The Stafford Childhood Collaborative, The First Selectman's Office and The Stafford Resident Troopers Office "Stuff-a-Cruiser" gift collection.

Eligibility: Applicant must be a Stafford resident and have primary custody of all children on the application and must meet income guidelines.

Requirements: Must provide documentation of ONE of the following: SNAP Benefits, Husky Insurance, Energy Assistance or last for pay stubs.

How to Apply: Contact Jenn Strong at Stafford Social Services, 860-684-7752 or strongj@staffordct.org

DEADLINE TO APPLY IS FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2023

DISTRIBUTION DAY IS FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15TH FROM 9am-7pm BY APPOINTMENT ONLY.

**The Town of Stafford Holiday Gift Assistance program is not affiliated with any other holiday event, program or organization.*

Did you know that the Town of Stafford has a Diaper Bank?

The Stafford Family Resource Center, in collaboration with Stafford Social Services, recently opened a diaper bank. The Diaper Bank is free for Stafford residents and is located in the Stafford Community Center at 3 Buckley Highway, Stafford, CT. We are open on the **FIRST TUESDAY of each month from 11:00-1:00, by appointment.** Call Jenn Strong, Stafford Social Services, at 860-684-7752 or strongj@staffordct.org to make an appointment.

We can accept donations of diapers (various sizes), pull-ups and wipes as well as monetary donations in the form of a check. Contact for more information.

Contact The Stafford Family Resource Center at 860-684-6927