



RUSSELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

JANUARY 2017

***A message from Mrs. Hamilton***

A belated welcome back and Happy New Year from all of us here at Russell Elementary School! We hope that you and your families enjoyed some special times together over the holiday break. It was great to see all the children as they returned.

*You all should have received a call from Superintendent Czaporowski yesterday regarding work being done for the next year's school budget and an upcoming meeting of the School Committee's Finance Sub Committee. At that meeting, several possible cost saving options will be discussed, including the redistricting of students. As you are aware, moving the Juniper Park community to Russell Elementary was done as a short term solution and it is the intention of the school department and the city to have our students return to Westfield as soon as possible. Please know that we are committed to doing what is best for our children. I encourage you to attend the meeting of the subcommittee this coming Tuesday, January 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:00PM. The meeting will take place at the Tiger's Pride Restaurant located on the lower campus of the Westfield Technical Academy.*

**As we begin the New Year it is important to share a few friendly reminders:**

- ❖ We try to have the children have time to play outside everyday whenever possible. I wish everyone had had a chance to see our delighted students rolling and sliding down the snowy hill, making snow angels and digging tunnels this past Friday. Children must wear snow pants, boots, mittens and hats in order to play on the field. Please label clothing as much as possible.
- ❖ Please send a note in with your child if they will be going home in a way different than usual. This is a safety issue as well as important for smooth dismissals.
- ❖ Help your child be organized, our little ones especially, benefit from reminders to bring their blue folder to and from school each day. This folder contains homework, important notices and notes.
- ❖ We continue to work on our HOOT initiative. Ask your child how he or she gives a HOOT at school.

***The importance of regular school attendance***

Encouraging regular school attendance is one of the most powerful ways you can prepare your child for success—both in school and in life. When you make school attendance a priority, you help your child get better grades, develop healthy life habits, and have a better chance of graduating from high school. Research shows that missing 10 percent of the school year or about 18 days, negatively affects a student's academic performance. When kids are absent for an average of just two days of school per month—even when the absences are excused— can have a negative impact. These absences can affect kids as early as Kindergarten. For example, young elementary school students who miss an average of just two school days per month often have difficulty keeping up with their peers academically and tend to fall behind in reading.

Of course we understand that illness happens and there are times when children should stay home. Please be sure to call the school at (413) 642-7132 to report absences.

### Important Dates

- Friday, 1/13 is a half day for students. They will be dismissed at 12:00
- Monday 1/16 No School Martin Luther King Day
- Tuesday 1/17 Finance Sub Committee Meeting
- Friday 1/20 Family Movie Night by PTC
- Wednesday 2/1 PTC meeting at 7:00PM
- Thursday 2/2 City-Wide 5<sup>th</sup> grade Spelling Bee at WSU 6PM



### “How Was School Today?”

How many times have you asked your child, “How was school today and been frustrated by the lack of response? Here are some questions you might try instead. With slight wording modifications, these questions can work with children of all ages:

- ❖ Think about something you learned and did in school today. What’s something you’d like to learn more about?
- ❖ Tell me about something about your day that was exciting?
- ❖ What’s a question you have about something you learned about today?
- ❖ Were there any moments when you felt proud of yourself today?
- ❖ What was challenging for you today?
- ❖ What are you looking forward to tomorrow?

*How* and *when* you ask these questions makes a big difference in the information you receive from your kids. First, you don’t want to ask all of these questions on the same day. Try asking one or two and in a while you will figure out which types of questions get the most enthusiastic answers. Ask at a time when you are really able to listen! Share stories from your own days in schools, favorite memories, projects, teachers, frustrations you felt when you were their age.