



RUSSELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

BACK TO SCHOOL NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2016

A message from Mrs. Hamilton

Welcome back to a new school year at Russell Elementary School! It was wonderful to greet all of the children as they arrived on Thursday morning! And what a difference a year makes! It's hard to believe that it was just last year that we began our adventure in our new school. We are looking forward to another terrific year in this beautiful setting. Mr. Burns and Mr. Barrows did an outstanding job during the summer making our school sparkle and the teachers spent many hours preparing their classrooms for the arrival of their students.

As I said at this time last year, there are sure to be a few bumps in the road and new challenges as we start a new school year. Please be patient and communicate with me and your child's teacher as concerns arise. I highly value home school collaboration, it is vital for the success of each student and the school community at large.

All of the staff and I look forward to a wonderful year – a year filled with meaningful and engaging work in our classrooms, along with some fun and special times in our school community.

My door is open ~ you can reach my by phone at (413) 642-7130 or email a.hamilton@schoolsofwestfield.org

Important Reminders

All students should be in their classrooms ready to learn by 9:00AM – The doors open at 8:45. Dismissal is at 3:00PM. During our first two days I am happy to report that all buses had the children here by 8:55!

I want to remind everyone to take caution when traveling to Russell Elementary School. We are in a small residential neighborhood and our presence here has significantly increased traffic in the area. Please be mindful of the 20MPH limit.

The parking area here at Russell is small. When all spaces are filled please park along the edge of the back area near the dumpsters. There is no parking in the fire lanes.

As we did last year, at arrival and dismissal times, cars dropping off and picking up students will bear right through the parking lot and swing around to the front entrance to drop off/pick up children. Buses enter the school yard staying to the left and circling around to the cafeteria area where children enter the building. There are staff members in both areas supervising and directing.

- When dropping your child off at school, move safely and promptly through the drop off zone
- Be patient and attentive to staff directions
- Please do not get out of your vehicle at the drop off area. If you need to come into the building, please park in designated areas.
- When picking your child up at the end of the day, you will follow a similar pattern, going through the parking lot and waiting in line for your child. Please do NOT go around vehicles that are still loading their children.

We encourage all families to take advantage of our school buses. We work closely with the transportation department and drivers to ensure that the children have a safe and comfortable ride to and from school. Please take time to talk with your child about how they can give a HOOT on the bus:

- Always follow the drivers directions
- Remain in your seat and keep aisles clear at all times – if the driver assigns seats, you must stay in your assigned seat
- Always keep arms, legs and heads inside the bus
- Keep conversations at a reasonable level
- There is no eating or drinking on the bus

Anytime there is a change in how your child is coming to or from school we MUST have a note describing the change.

*Please be patient, especially in the first couple of weeks while the transportation department coordinates all runs. Bear in mind that they are responsible for transporting more than 3,500 students every day from the high schools, middle schools and elementary schools! It takes time to iron out the kinks in these early weeks.

Staff News: I am so pleased to welcome back our great instructional team and equally pleased to welcome some new members to our staff!

Ms. Sandy Murphy is our School Adjustment Counselor as well as the lead teacher

Mrs. Jean McMahon is our Music teacher. She will be here on Mondays and Thursdays. Chorus will be held during the school day this year on Monday afternoons. The chorus sign up will be coming home shortly with our fourth and fifth grade students

Mrs. Jamie Rochon is our Art teacher. She will be here on Mondays and Wednesdays

Mr. James Whitbeck will be leading our band this year and will be opening the opportunity to 4th and 5th graders – stay tuned for more information

Mrs. Candy McGovern is our Literacy Assistant

Mrs. Carolyn Jarvis, Miss Cheyenne Russell, and Mrs. Jennifer Zaleski are paraprofessionals providing support in classrooms

Important reminders from the office:

It is crucial that emergency cards be filled out completely! We must have at least two additional contact names and numbers in case of emergencies. Anytime contact information changes please be sure to send those changes to the office as soon as possible.

*Remember to call Mrs. Millar's line to report absences 642-7132

News from the Cafeteria

Menus are sent home monthly and are also posted on the District website: www.schoolsofwestfield.org Please be sure to fill out the free/reduced lunch form and return it to school as soon as possible. Whenever you send money in for your child's lunch please be sure to label the envelope or baggie with your child's name and teacher's name so the correct accounted can be credited.

Important Dates to Know:

- ❖ *September 8 ~ First Full Day for our Kindergarten Friends!*
- ❖ *September 14 ~ PTC meeting 6:30 in the Art and Music Room- Everyone is welcome!*
- ❖ *September 28 ~ Open House 6:00 – 7:30PM*

Reminders about appropriate dress for active learning inside and outdoors:

We are very fortunate to have beautiful grounds here at Russell Elementary School and our intention is to have children learning and playing outside every day.

- Sneakers and other closed toe shoes are best and safest for outdoor play. Flip-flops are not safe for running and playing on the playscape. Sandals with a strap securing the heel are acceptable.
- Dressing with layers is helpful when mornings are cool and temperatures rise during the day.
- Label coats, jackets and sweaters with your child's name...it's amazing how quickly lost and found items accumulate!

Communication, communication, communication....

Especially during the first weeks of school, your children will be bringing home many forms and letters in their backpacks. Please make a point to check daily. Timely return of forms is greatly appreciated.

Get Involved!

Stay tuned for ways you can get involved in your child's school!

We are looking forward to a wonderful new school year!

