

North Canaan Elementary School

Canaan, CT

August 26, 2016

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to the start of the 2016-2017 school year! It has been a busy, active summer at the school. The building hosted several programs and tutoring; in addition, the custodians have been working very hard on general maintenance and special projects. For those of you who have stopped by, you know that it looks terrific and we are ready and eager to begin!

There have been a few staff changes over the summer. First, Laurabeth Davidson has been hired as a fourth grade teacher and Mellisa Melaragno has replaced Katherine Stearns as the fifth and sixth grade math teacher. Marilyn Schneider will serve as seventh and eighth grade science teacher and will also teach a section of middle school math.

This year we will again operate on a trimester system instead of dividing the year into quarters. The trimester contains a little over 13 weeks of study followed by a final grade. Report cards will be distributed after each trimester, school-wide. The school uses PowerSchool as its administrative software and report cards will be printed K-8 through this software. Again this year, the parent portal will be open for you to make changes to demographic information and view grades. The opportunity to follow your child's grades will be especially important if you have a student in grades 5-8. Grading information/student progress will be available 24/7 for students in grades 5-8. Teachers will update their grade books every Monday by 3:00 P.M. Teachers in K-4 assess students in a different way and you may not see grades appearing until the end of the term. However, any grades that are input by a teacher will be visible to parents. You should have a log in and the office can assist you in setting this up. During the open house in September, the computer lab will be open and staff will be on hand to answer questions and assist with getting you set up.

All school notices are also delivered electronically, usually every Wednesday. The School Messenger portion of PowerSchool will be used to advise you of school delays, closings, and any emergencies. Hence, it is important to keep contact information up to date in PowerSchool. This is an important way to communicate with the school community.

The school day begins with homeroom at 8:30 and the instructional day ends at 3:05. ***This year the school will operate on a four day rotation.*** In other words, Monday, August 29 will be day 1, Tuesday, Day 2, etc. If school is canceled, so is the day. The school website has the days outlined on the calendar. The first week will be easy since there are only four days.

Walkers and students who are being picked up will be called shortly after 3:05. Walkers will exit from the main doors and children who are being picked up will be escorted to the sidewalk along Pease Street. Primary students will exit from a kindergarten door with a teacher. Please observe the one way signs on Pease Street at the beginning and ending of the school day. Also note the parking areas. The office is preparing visor tags for you if you pick up your child regularly. We will also need to know if

someone other than you has been designated to pick up your child. This is the same process that was implemented last winter in the interest of safety for everyone. If you need to meet with a staff member, please park, come to the main door, and check in at the main office. For more detail, please see the student handbook which is linked to the school website at nceschool.org.

The first week or so of school our youngest students are walked to their buses and teachers are present to double check that children are boarding the correct bus. This process adds a few minutes so do not be alarmed if the bus is late in the afternoon. After the first week or so of school, boarding will become very efficient.

On Monday we will enjoy an all school picnic for lunch. (It is not necessary to send in money for this; it is free!) Students may wish to use their new lunch totes to pack a snack for Monday. Regular lunches in the cafeteria will begin on Tuesday, August 30. Student lunch prices are \$2.60 and \$.35 for milk. If a student selects the lunch, milk is part of the lunch—there is no extra charge. Student options include the hot lunch with the salad bar or soup and sandwich and the salad bar. Students may select the salad bar as their meal which will have fresh vegetables and protein items. Milk, dessert, etc. also come with the salad bar option. The school also serves breakfast; it is a brown bag option each day that school is in session. Returning, and very popular, are the cafe's morning smoothies. Breakfast is \$2. Our school complies with the all National School Lunch and Breakfast program guidelines, including flavored milks, which are very popular at NCES. Please visit the school website for lunch forms. Please take advantage of this program and know that forms need to be completed every year, as there is no carry over. If you need assistance in completing the forms, Tammy McGuire and Margie Gandolfo are more than happy to help you, and of course, all is confidential. Mrs. McGuire will send out additional information regarding the lunch program.

In this digital age, we understand, appreciate, and make full use of technology as do the children we serve. Many students have cell phones which should be turned off during the school day. This year we will instruct students on a door to door policy, which means off at the door upon arrival and on again at the door for dismissal. Please use the old fashioned method of contacting the office to speak with your son or daughter. There shouldn't be calling or texting during the day and students will not be on phones in classrooms.

The school handbook is available on the website and should be read completely. After reading the handbook, we require you to sign a statement indicating that you have reviewed it. This form should also be returned to the office. ***Please pay particular attention to the attendance/truancy and tardiness policies.*** This will be closely monitored. The policies contain important numbers for allowed absences and tardies and completely define excused and unexcused absences.

Finally, a reminder that busing in Region One is provided by All Star Transportation. All students are assigned to a bus according to the registered home address at the beginning of each school year. When occupancy allows, alternative arrangements may be made (e.g. day care, grandparents' homes, your place of employment, etc). All requests to temporarily change a bus must be submitted to the main office; please do not make arrangements with a bus driver. The office must keep accurate records of bus passengers.

Route 7 is busy and the train tracks make me uneasy. Therefore, we offer busing to everyone in this vicinity. Please review safety rules for crossing streets with your child. If riding a bike, please make sure your child wears a helmet and observes the rules of the road.

If your child is dropped off or picked up, has permission to walk to/from school, or will be attending a program after school, we will need written permission for our files. You may email the office at mainoffice@nceschool.org if you require a change that will need to take place the first day of school. Bus schedules are posted in the *Lakeville Journal*.

All daily dismissal changes should be phoned to the main office (by 2:00 P.M. please) unless it is an emergency. The office handles many last minute changes and dismissal can be hectic. We need to ensure that all children get to the destination according to your wishes and settling this by two o'clock gives staff time to get messages to teachers, etc. Feel free to send a note in the morning with your child; that is the preferred method. Above all, do not leave voice mail on a teacher's phone during the day. Many teachers do not check voice mail until the instructional day has ended and there is no assurance that they will listen beforehand. All last minute requests need to come through the office. Quite simply, it is a safety issue.

In the event that your child needs to leave school early, please let us know either via note or phone call. A note sent to the school that day is helpful for your child as it allows him/her the opportunity gather any school work which may be missed due to the dismissal.

There are a great number of after school opportunities for children from sports to AHA to our homework club, which will run Monday through Thursday each week in the library. It is staffed by a teacher, there is a free snack, and students may listen to music. Internet is also available. It takes place in the library and will begin mid- September. (Times throughout the year: 3:15-4:15). In addition, the computer lab opens at 8:15 if a student needs to work on an assignment that requires the internet.

On behalf of the staff, I extend all good wishes for a wonderful school year, and if I can be of assistance to you at any time during the year, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Rosemary A. Keilty