

Wallingford continues to shine through the dark times covid has brought us due to the people! Whether it's the fresh new attitude of the students that brighten our day, a staff member going above and beyond a job description to help out another Wildcat, or a local community member donating random needs, including extra facemasks, as we all know we could always use more of those, we are thriving off each other! The Wildcat Family is just that, a family that works together for the betterment of our school and community!

Our staff has been dedicated to continuing Morning Meetings each day to start with a social emotional learning activity where bonds are made stronger among students and staff to create a positive learning environment. Our PE teacher, Mr. K., has continued to help improve our school culture by developing a peer mentor program where 5th and 6th grade students are coordinating daily team sports games for the Kindergarten through 2nd grade students during lunch recess. This has led to a reduction in discipline issues on the playground and is helping grow positive relationships and interactions among our younger and older students. Our 6th graders have also become buddies with our Pre-K students where they're delivering lunches and reading books with them each week.

As we all know, covid has not left us alone and we have had almost every grade level quarantine one time or another this year, some, multiple times. It is difficult to maintain continuity in the curriculum when a class is sent home and then only a few students are able to return at a time, but our teachers, para's, and interventionists have been working so hard together to catch students up to speed upon their return. In bringing back double preps for our learning pods, teachers have been able to work together weekly on several areas we're focusing on school wide including Math, EST's, and PLC's. EST's have been a major part of the conversation so specific strategies are discussed to better support students' needs. Even our interventionists have joined these meetings, which has led to them also supporting in-class instruction utilizing best practices and highly effective instructional strategies, and also pulling students out for more individualized, small group instruction. Our teachers have all been utilizing small group instruction, as well, to support students with their specific needs. I am confident that all this teamwork is accelerating student progress and I anticipate seeing positive growth results on future school wide assessments such as STAR 360 in both ELA and Math.

Through popular demand, and also just a great opportunity for students, we are working on bringing back our Winter Sports Program to be able to bring the school to the slopes and possibly ice skating rink. We are mindful and cautious in our planning to make this a safe and healthy experience for our staff and students so we are hoping to have this take place "when" the covid cases are reduced, probably closer to February. This is tentative for now.

Overall, we are facing challenges together and leaning on one another when needed to do what we can so students can continue to thrive socially-emotionally, behaviorally, and academically! We've got this, and we will do it...TOGETHER!

Proud Principal,

Dan Betts