



Dwight Elementary School

2012 National Blue Ribbon School

**1600 Redding Road
Fairfield, CT 06824**



Mimi Maniscalco
Principal

Phone: (203) 255-8312
Fax: (203) 255-8201

November 7, 2014

Dear Dwight Community,

When we look out our windows, we can see that fall is here in full color. Being from Miami, Florida, I used to view fall as a somber time when the skies prematurely darkened, leaves fell from trees leaving bare branches, and cold winds chilled my bones. Thankfully, I have a friend, with whom I taught for years, who introduced me to the splendor of fall. Now, when fall comes, I get into the celebratory spirit of the season by reading and reflecting upon my favorite Emily Dickenson fall poem.

*The morns are meeker than they were,
The nuts are getting brown;
The berry's cheek is plumper,
The rose is out of town.*

*The maple wears a gayer scarf,
The field a scarlet gown.
Lest I should be old-fashioned,
I'll put a trinket on.*

This fall, our Dwight community has been celebrating the fall season in many productive fun ways. First, our Dwight-A-Thon was fantastic. Not only did we reach our monetary goal, but also had great fun doing it. The weather cooperated providing a cool crisp day in which to exercise and celebrate. This year, students raised money through either walking or running, and also gave back to Mr. Gelsi through providing sports equipment that he requested for the recess bags.

Second, we officially have a student government led by our own Mrs. Carelli. Students met together and agreed that this year they will work to both serve the Dwight community and the community at large. Their first project is collecting canned foods and coats for the Bridgeport Rescue Mission. Our student government has a goal to collect 200 coats. So please rustle through your closets to see if you have a coat you could spare.

Third, we are in the process of assembling a school newspaper staff. One of our fifth grade students expressed an interest in starting a newspaper for Dwight, so I have agreed to be the faculty advisor for that initiative. This year, students are beginning to take on leadership opportunities to create an environment that is responsive to their hopes and dreams.

Finally, our elementary schools are involved in professional development centered on effective questioning and feedback. Our staff is excited about the work and is focusing on the specific feedback they give to students. I'd like to challenge you to support us in the work we are doing here by thinking about the questions and feedback you give to your children each day. A couple of fun suggestions you might want to try.

Ask your child:

“What the best question you asked today and why?”

“What was the best question that someone asked you today and why?”

After a sporting event or after observing something your child has created, ask:

“How were you able to score that goal with such good goalie blocking?”

“Which pitch did you throw when you struck out the batter?”

“How come you chose to paint scarlet leaves instead of golden?”

These are thought provoking questions that can lead to reflection and higher order of thinking. They are more specific than our typical questions like, “How was school?” or feedback that often consists of, “Good job” or “I’m proud of you.”

Thank you for your continued support of the work we do here at Dwight. We are appreciative of the children you sent to us each day.

Enjoy the fall season!

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mimi Maniscalco". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mimi Maniscalco