



Dwight Elementary School

2012 National Blue Ribbon School

1600 Redding Road
Fairfield, CT 06824



Mimi Maniscalco
Principal

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August 13, 2015

Dear Dwight Families,

I hope this finds you well and enjoying the last couple of weeks before you start thinking about and preparing for the 2015-16 school year. This summer was full of fun and travel for my family and me. I began this summer with a trip to Virginia and North Carolina to watch my son and his summer baseball team play in tournaments which included players from all over the United States. It is uplifting to see so many parents, coaches and young men dedicated to wellness, sportsmanship and developing student athletes. We then, brought my twelve year old daughter to Camp Woodstock for a two week session of sleep away camp. I was surprised and relieved to hear how much she enjoyed being unplugged and tuned into nature and face to face conversations with people. Her fondest shares were focused on the time she was able to spend playing, singing and communicating with her peers and counselors. It is the simple things, including unstructured time, that bring out the best in our children and families.

This year, our focus at Dwight will be on developing a school environment which will encourage and allow students to think deeply, ask each other thought-provoking questions, and reflect on where they are in their own learning. Teachers will encourage students to celebrate their accomplishments while also challenging them to grow and wonder. Our staff has received the book **Opening Minds** by Peter H. Johnston, which focuses on the words we choose when working with children. What we say, and how we say it has a direct effect on whether we grow people who have fixed or flexible ideas of who they are and what they have to contribute to our community. In my last letter to you in June, I invited you to read **Opening Minds** as well. This book will truly help you rethink and carefully choose the words you use with your children. In partnership with you, we can make great things happen for all of our Dwight Dragons! We will host a parent book club this fall in the beginning of November so start reading!

As you have probably noticed, our building has been under construction this summer. There are two major projects that are being done concurrently. Our septic system is being replaced as is the majority of our roof. We will also have solar panels installed on our roof which will be beneficial to us and very interesting to our students! Both projects are progressing on schedule so we will be ready for visitation day on September 2.

Dwight will have several new staff members joining us this year. There may be a few additional staff members hired that I will share with you on August 25 when I return from my family vacation. Brooke Ogilvy will serve as one of our special education teachers. She comes to us from New Haven. Joy Aginsky will join Nancy Winstead as one of our speech and language pathologists. Kathleen White will step in for Mrs. Pascone during her maternity leave. Megan Hogan will serve in the clerical position that was vacated by Mrs. Ficalora. We are also thrilled to have new support staff including Danielle Schwartz, Shai Ozery, Christopher Siciliano and Tara Malecky. We worked very hard to secure FANTASTIC new staff members who will join us in our work with students and with you.

Please see below for some important upcoming dates:

*August 25, 2015	Afternoon	Infinite Campus will release class placements! Please log on!
September 2, 2015	11:00 AM	New Families Tour – meet in front office
September 2, 2015	11:15 AM – 12:00 PM	All School Visit Followed by PTA Playground Play Date
September 3, 2015	8:45 AM	First Day of School – Bring your camera
September 3, 2015	9:00 AM	PTA Coffee Hour - APR
September 16, 2015	6:30 PM	Open House

One other date and time of which I'd like to make you aware is September 4 at 2:00 PM. We will be conducting the first of several lock down drills. I believe that it is good practice to make you aware of the first drill so that you can discuss it with your child when he/she comes home from school. It is very important that we regularly practice both fire and lockdown drills. I'd like to thank you in advance for your cooperation and support in keeping our community safe and prepared.

Please regularly check your email, Infinite Campus and the PTA website for information and updates from both the PTA and from me.

Enjoy your precious summer days!

Respectfully submitted,



Mimi Maniscalco

**You can expect communication from your child's teacher after August 21. This communication will include a warm welcome and any materials that the teacher is requesting. School supplies are largely provided by the school so the teacher requests will be minimal.*