

# Jennings School

**Tony Vuolo • Principal**

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Dear Families,

In an effort to bring together all aspects of a positive learning environment, the Jennings Leadership Committee, in collaboration with the Jennings School staff, created a school-wide initiative that focuses on building character and a sense of order and consistency within the school community, it is named Jennings Community Club. Using suggestions from school community members including teachers, students, parents and support staff, the leadership committee developed a uniform plan that recognizes proper behavior, creates rules and logical consequences, and allows for the entire school to work collaboratively in solving problems. We believe that this initiative will increase instructional time, build a friendly, supportive school community, and help develop of children's responsible independence. This mindset is supported by Responsive Classroom research. The idea for Club was investigated in response to our School Climate Survey data in 2012 and is included in our School Improvement Plan.

Jennings Community Club is where, about once a month, students will participate in a fun activity class for approximately 30 minutes on a Friday afternoon before dismissal. The classes vary in topic and are taught by various staff members. The mission of Club is to continue to find ways to build community in fostering a safe learning environment for all students and staff.

While Club will assist in gaining adherence to classroom and school rules, the true focus is on building community throughout the school. This will be accomplished at both the primary and intermediate grade levels. Our grade three through five students will be mixed together and placed in activities based upon interests they expressed in a survey. In mixing the grade levels, students are given an opportunity to build connections and friendships with staff and students they may not have otherwise.

The grade one and two students will travel as classes to interact with teachers they may/may not know. This allows the entire primary wing to know all of the students in a more intimate and individualized way and help enhance the sense of community in that wing. At this point in the year we feel our Kindergarten students are not developmentally ready for this and have activities within their classrooms to support this initiative. The school committee will revisit this later in the year.

As mentioned earlier, the "Club" concept is directly linked to our Responsive Classroom philosophy. Although we want and expect everyone to have the experience of being part of Club, it will be a privilege. The expectations for inclusion into Club will be clearly explained by the staff. If a student does not meet the expectations they will be subject to the Logical Consequence of "Loss of Privilege". If a student loses this privilege, they will have an alternate activity revolving around character education and parents will be informed.

We anticipate that that Jennings Community Club will build some additional excitement and fun into our school while helping our students and staff create a safe learning environment for all. Our first "Club" will take place on Friday October 25, 2013.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments.

Regards,

Mr. Vuolo