

July 20, 2017

Dear Watauga Families,

Welcome to the opening of what promises to be a wonderful school year! Summer has come and gone in the blink of an eye and it is time for school to begin. The faculty and staff of Watauga Elementary are eager to greet the new and returning families for the 2017-2018 school year. Our school motto, “**Where Everyone Succeeds**”, not only characterizes the values and priorities of our school culture, but also serves as a daily reminder of our responsibility to each student and family. Thank you for entrusting the Watauga faculty and staff with the opportunity to mold, nurture, and educate your child.

It is my extreme pleasure to return as principal of such an exceptional school. Here at Watauga Elementary School, we value our tradition of excellence and are honored to be a National Blue Ribbon School. Faculty, staff, students, and parents/guardians work together to make a strong Watauga family. The involvement and participation of families in the education of their children strengthens each child which in turn strengthens our school. I have an open door policy and welcome communication regarding every aspect of our school.

Watauga welcomes the following new staff member for the 2017-2018 school year, Mrs. Pam Cornett, who is joining our office staff as our new bookkeeper. She brings with her years of experience and a pleasant disposition. A new fifth grade teacher will be joining us this year as well and will be announced soon. Third graders will continue to change classes this school year and will benefit from the strong instructional skills of the teaching team. Watauga will once again have two full-time preschool classrooms this school year and we wish to warmly welcome these students and their families. New this school year, all Washington County elementary schools will begin the school day at **8:20 a.m.**, which is ten minutes earlier than our previous start time. **Students should be in their seats by 8:20 a.m. in order to be considered on time for school.**

I would like to personally encourage each of you to become active members of our Parent Teacher Association (PTA). On our calendar, you will note that the PTA meets on the second Thursday of each month. The PTA is a wonderful way for you to share ideas, support the school community, and assist in the education of all students at Watauga Elementary School. Our PTA provides many resources to the school each year that directly benefit all of our students. Together, we can and do make a difference for our children.

Registration for the 2017-2018 school year, will be held on Thursday, August 3, 2017, from 2: 00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. Registration day allows you to meet your child’s teacher, establish a cafeteria account, and verify bus information. If you are unable to attend registration, please assist us in preparing for the first day, by calling the school office (739-3600). Kindergarten parents are invited to attend a brief orientation program at 11:00 a.m. on registration day. Third grade parents are invited to an informational meeting at 1:00 p.m. on August 3rd to discuss the curriculum and the responsibilities that come with being a third grade student.

Supply lists for each grade level were included in report cards at the end of the year. The lists are available at local stores, on our school website: <http://wes.wcs.k12.va.us/> or from the school office. Headphones, designed for school use, are available to kindergarten students and other newly enrolled students. The cost is \$7.00. The school also has a few used headphones available to students at no cost. Available for \$5.00 are assignment books used in grades 3-5. At registration, you will receive a student handbook to acquaint you and your child with basic school rules and operations. We will be requesting your email address as another way to establish contact between school and home.

During the school year, we receive a number of phone calls asking to change afternoon dismissal plans for students. In the morning before school, please confirm your child's specific plans for the afternoon. If there are any changes in the normal routine, please send a note to the classroom teacher. When requesting a child to go to a different location in the afternoon, the note should include the 911 address. **A 911 address is required on all bus passes.**

Last minute changes are difficult for children and teachers and put undue responsibility on the office staff. **If a change is necessary, please notify the office by 2:00 p.m.** Also, **if you need to pick your child up early from school for an appointment, please do so by 2:30 p.m.** The traffic pattern makes it difficult to accommodate early dismissals after 2:30 p.m.

Please feel free to enjoy lunch with your child. Be mindful that it takes younger students longer to adjust to the school environment and routine. It also takes a bit of time for our cafeteria staff to settle into a routine and make any necessary adjustments to scheduling. In consideration of these issues, please wait until **September 12th** to make your first visit. When joining us for lunch, please call by 9:00 a.m. so you can be included in the lunch count. To encourage healthy eating habits, in consideration of other children, and to follow county policy, we ask that no outside food or drinks be brought to the school cafeteria. **If you have birthday treats for your child's class, please leave them in the office and the teachers will make arrangements for the children to enjoy them in the classroom later in the day. Due to federal guidelines, treats cannot be given out during lunch periods.**

School begins at 8:20 a.m. and all students should be in their classrooms at that time. Please review the school's tardy policy enclosed in the envelope. ALL car riders should enter the building at the front entrance. For safety reasons, students cannot be dropped off in the parking lot and walk to the building without an adult escort. If you find it necessary to come in the school while dropping your child off, please park in a designated parking area on either end of the building. Be sure to avoid parking in front of the building as this creates problems and delays with our traffic flow. Students may not enter the building before 7:30 a.m. when teacher supervision of students begins. Afternoon car rider dismissal begins at 2:55 p.m. Under teacher supervision, students riding in cars are dismissed at the gym side of the building. Please wait in your vehicle until your child comes to you. **In the interest of safety for all students, please do not ask to get your child directly from the classroom or car rider waiting area during the busy afternoon dismissal time.**

Please be aware that traffic to and from Watauga Elementary is becoming increasingly heavy both in the mornings and afternoons. Allow for additional wait time in both the mornings and afternoons. You are encouraged to begin picking up your children **after 3:05 p.m.** to avoid long wait times and traffic congestion in the afternoon. Also, planning your child's morning arrival time with the car rider situation in mind will ensure that your child is on time to school. **Regardless of the length of the car rider line and the amount of time it takes to flow through, it is the responsibility of all parents to make sure their children are on time to school by making necessary arrangements which may include, leaving your home a few minutes earlier in the morning.**

Below is the class assignment for your child. Again, we look we are very much looking forward to a new school year together.

Sincerely,

Dr. Marie Stanley
Principal

(Student)

(Teacher)