



Mary R. Fisher Elementary School  
785 Riverside Dr.  
N. Grosvenordale, CT 06255

860.923.9142 <http://mrfes.thompsonk12.org> 860.923.2062

Noveline Beltram, Principal

William McDonald, Assistant Principal

Dear Mary R. Fisher Families,

It is always a privilege and pleasure to welcome our new and returning students and families! On behalf of myself, Assistant Principal Mr. McDonald, and the MRFES staff, we are excited to greet our students on the Opening Day, August 28<sup>th</sup> at 8:15AM. It should be noted, too, that Opening Day will then be followed by our Open House on September 4<sup>th</sup> (see Important Dates and Events inside!).

The philosopher Heraclitus was quoted “Big results require big ambitions.” For MRFES, it begins with vision, planning, analyzing, reflection, time, communication, and teaching. The combined result is a caring and devoted learning community that we have at MRFES. We model learning to our students by embracing new ideas, programs, and methods of teaching to address the changing needs of our students, all the while preparing them for middle school and beyond. For instance, teachers will be learning a new information system that encompasses every facet of communication and data. Expect to see new and improved communications between MRFES and parents!

As your principal, I will continue to promote a healthy school climate. By laying a foundation in early childhood, we will be embarking on a two-year training program enabling the staff to implement a new scientifically researched based program, Tools of The Mind. As quoted by a teacher implementing the program, *“In a Tools of the Mind classroom, children are learning more than the basic academic skills that we have been focused on for so many years. Self-regulation, working memory, dramatic play, and cooperative learning are at the forefront.”* To that end, in April our early childhood staff, again, attained national re-accreditation through the National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). This accreditation demonstrates the skills and dedication of this staff needed to naturally incorporate Tools of The Mind into both academic and purposeful play. In education today, Mindfulness and School Climate are of national focus to ensure each student feels safe and healthy in mind and body. For example, a certified social worker working with students throughout the day, flexible seating in the classrooms, morning Shri Yoga, Mary R. Fisher Movers, a new Walking Club, Universal breakfast and lunch (new this year), healthy celebrations, an anti-bullying assembly, and Weekend Warrior food program are all positive supports for a student’s safe and healthy mind and body. We will continue with our Tiger Code and Positive Behavior Intervention (PBIS) to provide incentives and recognition for children demonstrating “respectful, responsible, and safe” behaviors. Moreover, this will be our second year rolling out RULER: recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and regulating our emotions. A program developed at Yale

Center of Emotional Intelligence dovetails with PBIS and will again promote a healthy school climate throughout the district.

Each school year, classroom teachers, special education teachers, reading specialists, and paraprofessionals all work together as a seamless team to individualize learning and instruction. We strive to utilize all resources within our core reading program, *Wonders*, to support a rich, rigorous, and robust English Language Arts (ELA) program. Teaching the *Foundations* program in prek-2 grades supports the areas of phonics, spelling, letter formation, and cursive writing. Again, ‘big results require big ambitions’ and math will be a new district wide focus to ensure we are addressing the future career needs of our students. This year parents will learn about what ‘Portrait of a Graduate’ means so we prepare appropriately at each grade level to become ‘college and career ready.’

It is hard to believe I was 12 years old when I watched Neil Armstrong speak those famous words from a place that was only a dream, the Moon! Those ‘big results’ of getting to the Moon did require ‘big ambitions’, and a strong understanding of science. At MRFES all grades teach science and especially with our new Foss science kits in grades 3 & 4 units include: Motion & Matter, Water & Climate, Environments, Energy, and Soils, Rocks, and Landforms. Science, technology, engineering, the arts, and math (STEAM) continue to be developed at MRFES. From June 24 -28<sup>th</sup>, we hosted our fourth STEM camp, Camp Invention. It was a wonderful experience for the near 60 students in attendance and both the Thompson Villager and Hartford Courant published articles about our week of inventing! Year 5 Camp Invention dates and modules will be released in January 2020 and perhaps this will be the year to consider attending.

Many years ago, Mary R. Fisher laid the groundwork for a strong sense of community and belief that strong community relations are essential to high academic achievement! We need you to take an *active* part in our learning community by attending all school events, as it is also important to your child. One of those opportunities is to join the growing number of parents in our PTO as it continues to support curriculum-based field trips, the PAWS for reading program, and a variety of fun family events. Ideas become a reality with our dedicated PTO. September 9<sup>th</sup> from 6-7PM in the Family Resource Room kicks off the year, all are invited!

If I could ask parents for one thing regarding the support of teaching and learning it would be **attendance**. Won’t you all join us in *ensuring* that from early childhood – upper elementary we will increase *hourly* attendance this year? Each hour of learning is too valuable to your child!

The elementary years are critical times of development for students and families alike and we will continue to strive for excellence by questioning how we can do it better. The continued conscientious work from our staff is what sets this elementary school apart from all others! As a lifelong educator, yes, my 41<sup>th</sup> year in Thompson, demonstrates as your principal, my firm commitment to students and the families. Again, welcome back and I invite you to join us on the wonderful journey ahead in 2019-2020! Let us pursue the *true* meaning of **TEAM: Together Everyone Achieves More!**

Warmest Regards,

*Noveline Beltram*