



## What's the Buzz at Cider Mill School (Family Update for 12/18/20)

As we head into our winter holiday break, I want to reiterate the proud remarks about our WPS Teachers that were shared by Debbie Low (Board Chair) in a [Good Morning Wilton](#) article last week. More specifically, I'd like to celebrate the teachers and staff of Cider Mill School. In the last newsletter, I mentioned the concept of **bright spots**. Our teachers are truly a bright spot in all of our lives right now. The dedication and love that our staff have shared with our learners is nothing short of extraordinary. They have participated in a tremendous amount of new learning and worked tirelessly to adapt to a new blended learning environment. This has been done in the midst of a Pandemic that has brought fear, chaos, and uncertainty. It has been inspirational to watch them bring the joy of learning to each of your children, every day. I am truly grateful to be part of the Cider Mill School learning community. I also want to thank our families for their partnership and collaboration. We could not do this without you. We are grateful for your kindness and compassion during this time. Our entire Cider Mill School staff wish each of you a joyful winter holiday and peace for the New Year. As always, please contact us directly with any questions at [falconej@wiltonps.org](mailto:falconej@wiltonps.org), [okeefec@wiltonps.org](mailto:okeefec@wiltonps.org), and [birdl@wiltonps.org](mailto:birdl@wiltonps.org) (Ms. Catalano's name has officially been changed to Bird!). Below are the BookMark hyperlinks that will take you directly to particular sections of the newsletter.

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**Winter Snow People Challenge** - Friday, our students had SO much fun at recess! I had the pleasure of joining a couple of classes at recess and the pure joy and was palpable. More than once, I believe the *Principal* made some of the groups late for lunch because we all go so lost in the moment 😊. A special thanks to all of our recess aides and families at home for sharing photos- check out the updated Padlet at this [Link](#) (password: SNOWFUN2020).

**Whole-School Snowflake Celebration, 12/23/20 (10:50-11:55)** - Cider Mill Administration (Jen Falcone, Lauren Bird, Catherine O'Keefe & Sharon D'Angelo) invites all of our students' and their families to join us for a bit of winter fun. We encourage families to make some hot cocoa ([here's a yummy, healthy-ish recipe](#)) and find a comfy area for the first portion, in which we will read *Snowflake Bentley* the Caldecott Award winning book written by Jaqueline Briggs Martin and illustrated by Mary Azarlan. Understandably, some students may need to be independent during this time, maybe pre-make the hot cocoa the night before so your child just needs to "heat it up". We will then move into a brief movement break (get ready for some silly fun) and then work on a guided drawing



activity. You will each need some white paper, a pencil, marker and colored pencils/crayons. The zoom links will be added to this [Slide Deck](#) which will also be uploaded to each team's Schoology Update Page for December 23, 2020.

**Remote & On-site Transitions** - We need your help! If your child(ren) is not sick, and is not quarantined, and plans to access learning remotely (even for a few days!), *it is imperative that a **classroom teacher is informed before it happens***. Students must clearly be identified as a *remote* or *in-person* learner at all times. This impacts our attendance, state reporting and most of all, our teachers. It is very difficult to appropriately plan for instruction if students switch without prior notice. If your child is switching models, even for a short period of time, please email your teacher, an administrator, and the office staff ([cowicd@wiltonps.org](mailto:cowicd@wiltonps.org), [fallonk@wiltonps.org](mailto:fallonk@wiltonps.org), [strickrotd@wiltonps.org](mailto:strickrotd@wiltonps.org)). Here are a few key points:

- If your child has been remote since the restructuring of classrooms back in October, the district may need up to three weeks to successfully plan for re-entry. Classrooms only have a certain number of desks that can fit per classroom as per the Health Director.
- If your child has spoken with an administrator, and has been appropriately identified as taking a short-term switch to remote learning (e.g. Thanksgiving through January), please notify your teacher and the office 3-days before a return to on-site learning.
- Lastly, if students are remote, teachers may have left labeled materials in the front foyer/vestibule for parents to retrieve. If this is the case, teachers have communicated this with you. Please come pick up any materials before the winter break. All remaining items will be returned to their classrooms and there are many labeled items that remain unclaimed in the foyer (e.g. Photo Packages, LLC books, class instructional materials).

**Student Spotlight: Need a Computer?** - One of our students, Owen Lentner, and his father have formed the [Lentner Junior Engineers program](#). This organization accepts donations from companies/individuals who are updating computer systems. Owen refurbishes them with the goal of keeping them out of landfills and providing affordable technology to those in need. You may contact this email: [solutions@lentner.com](mailto:solutions@lentner.com) if you are interested in a refurbished computer to see if they have a device to meet your needs.

**Recess Updates:** We are very excited to announce that our playscapes and swings have been approved for use at Cider Mill. Students must wear gloves on this equipment, but each class will rotate through the recess play areas and this area is now added into the rotation. We've also been approved to have a soccer ball, basketball, and football for each classroom. We will have these delivered after the new year.

We want our students to enjoy the wonderful snow that fell this week. It is very important that children come to school with **all 5 of these items** so they are able to play in the snow:

- Hat
- Gloves
- Snow pants
- Winter jacket
- Snow boots

Please send these items in with your child(ren) in a bag so that they can go outside and enjoy the snow. ***All students must have appropriate winter wear to go outside for recess.*** This is because we only have one monitor per class. If your child needs these items and does not have them, please contact an administrator who can help support this. Students may go outside without snow pants, but they will not be able to fully play in the snow with their peers. We suggest students wear their boots, hats, gloves and jackets to school. That way they only need to bag their snow pants and sneakers.

**Arrival/Dismissal School Messenger Update NEW!:** Please click on the following link for [Simple SDM Direction from a Fellow Parent](#). We will be starting our new dismissal procedure on January 4, 2021. It is important to read these directions before then. We've been piloting this program with four classes this week and it has been going very well and has sped up our dismissal process. Please ensure to read the directions so dismissal can go as smoothly as possible upon our return from winter break.

We want to remind parents that no one should be driving around a car in front of them, unless directed by a school staff member to do so. We continue to ensure everyone's safety during arrival and dismissal and this rule helps to do so.

**Snow Day Curriculum:** What does learning look like on a remote-learning "snow day"? During an emergency remote learning day for a weather event, we want to maintain continuity of instruction as best we can. On these days, teachers will begin the day with a *morning meeting* to start the day. There will be some direct instruction and small group instruction as well. There will be a mix of both asynchronous and synchronous blended learning opportunities provided for students to provide some flexibility. Teachers are encouraged to integrate creative ways to celebrate the joys of the snow day while continuing with our designed curriculum. Information will be posted on each team's Schoology Update Page. Please email your teacher and [fallonk@wiltonps.org](mailto:fallonk@wiltonps.org) if you have power/internet issues and your child is unable to attend for the day.

**School Photo Retake Days:** Remote student photos are now available for pickup in the main entrance vestibule. They are in a Lifetouch box alphabetical by teacher. Retake days are Jan. 25 (South) and Jan. 26 (North) for on-site and remote students. Details will be announced in our January newsletter. Finally, if you have any questions or concerns regarding your students photos, please contact Lifetouch Technical Support directly at 1-800-598-2466 or [Inssfieldops@lifetouch.com](mailto:Inssfieldops@lifetouch.com).

**Fall Assessments Timeline:** We have completed our fall NWEA MAP assessments. Staff will review the data immediately after the winter break and guardians will be able to access their child(ren)'s results through the PowerSchool Parent Portal in early January. As a reminder, Miller Driscoll completed their NWEA assessments much earlier than Cider Mill and parents will be receiving results in the upcoming days. Cider Mill had additional assessments to administer this fall (IXL Diagnostic and DiBELS) and we tried our best to space them out to avoid test fatigue.

#### THEMES - CIDER MILL FAMILIES REPORT

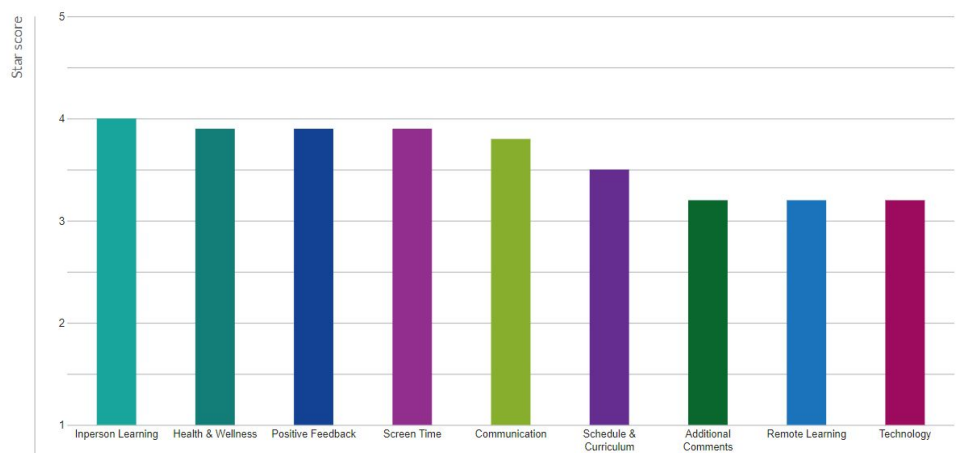
#### Thought Exchange- Key Themes on Family Survey:

In the new year, we will work with our PTA to explore the *Thought Exchange* results from our family survey. Our teachers have reviewed some of the data and we've reflected and taken action in some areas. Here is a graph that depicts major themes that will be discussed in January:

**COVID Update:** The District continually updates it's [COVID-19 Update Page](#) - please click on this site for the most updated

information. We thank families for all of their efforts to quarantine and test appropriately for the Thanksgiving break - it worked! There have been no new cases that required students/staff to quarantine since our return to

RESULTS Family Feedback Themes



on-site learning. If you choose to travel during the winter break, please follow all travel guidelines. For ease, here is the State of Connecticut's travel information:

***Executive Order Regarding Travel:*** Pursuant to Governor Lamont's [Executive Order No. 9I](#), anyone traveling into Connecticut from a state, other than New York, New Jersey, or Rhode Island, with a positive case rate higher than 10 per 100,000 residents, or higher than a 10% test positivity rate over a 7-day rolling average, or from a country for which the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) has issued a Level 3 Travel Health Notice](#), are **directed to self-quarantine for a 14-day period from the time of last contact within the identified state or country.**

**To take advantage of the testing alternative, the traveler must meet the following conditions:**

1. Must have had a test for COVID-19 in the 72 hours prior to arrival in Connecticut or at any time following arrival in Connecticut;
2. The result of such COVID-19 test is negative, and
3. Must provide written proof of such negative test results to the Commissioner via email to [DPH.COVID-Travel@ct.gov](mailto:DPH.COVID-Travel@ct.gov) or via facsimile to (860) 326-0529.

**Up-coming Dates:**

- 12/23 ~ Shortened Day Schedule (11:55 dismissal)
- 12/23 ~ Complete **School Dismissal Manager FastLane Setup**
- 12/24-1/3/21 ~ No School for Students for the Holiday Recess
- 1/4/21 ~ School Resumes
- 1/4/21 ~ **School Dismissal FastLane Pickup Begins**
- 1/18/21 ~ No School - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 1/25/21 ~ Photo Retake Day - South
- 1/26/21 ~ Photo Retake Day - North

Take Care!

*Jen, Catherine, and Lauren*