

December 14, 2023

Dear Members of the J. Turner Hood School Community,

We are already fifteen weeks into the school year and have successfully transitioned into Trimester II. As of today, Thursday, December 14, we have completed 67 school days.

It has brought me great joy to be part of a school community that works together to achieve goals. As a school (inclusive of our students) we have been awe-struck at what has been accomplished thus far this year by our Parent's Association and our amazing volunteers. We have many individuals to recognize and thank for the successful opening of Phase I of our playground. We will be hosting an official ribbon cutting in the near future, but it is important to recognize that we have been privileged to witness hard work, volunteerism, and kindness through observing the completion of Phase 1. I am looking forward to the grand opening of this space so I can formally recognize the individuals who have made all of this possible.

Our FUN RUN team achieved significant success, and for that we are incredibly thankful. The success has been shared and I want to thank everyone for their significant efforts to make this event an amazing community experience for all members of our school. It is simply amazing to step back and observe success and thoughtfulness.

The first trimester has been filled with an abundance of activities and Hood School traditions.

- We have completed our winter concert, and we were so blessed to see so many of our students shine.
- Our Veteran's Day recognition was well received by students and families. We loved honoring those who have served for us.
- Our Student Council spirit days have been a hit, and have provided much excitement and joy for our students and staff. It is great to watch our Student Council plan many of those events and take on leadership roles. I have included an attachment that outlines some fun optional activities for next week.
- We have completed our four designated school-wide community meetings, focusing on safe, responsible, respectful, and kind expectations.
- Our STEAM Professional Learning Community hosted a "Maker Day" focused on our community and social emotional learning where they were guided through an activity with students from various classrooms, as a means to promote empathy and kindness through writing letters to four community groups.
- Our students have enjoyed many field trips and school enrichment activities.
- Our Scholastic Book Fair was amazing and we are thankful for the efforts of Mrs. Kathy Danis and all of the volunteers who helped our students enjoy the experience.

STEAM Night- On Thursday, November 16th over 150 students and their families joined us for our 6th annual STEAM Night at the Hood School. STEAM Night is a collaborative event run by 20 Hood School teachers designed to engage our elementary students and their families in hands-on science, technology, engineering, arts, and math activities. These teachers were joined by a group of dedicated and enthusiastic North Reading high school students.

Ms Aleksa has been very busy with our students working on a multitude of social emotional learning skills. These included the Zones of Regulation, dealing with feelings, establishing coping skills, and learning social skills including friendships and boundaries as well as family traditions.

School Accountability-We are proud to report that the state accountability report indicated that the J. Turner Hood School achieved an accountability percentile ranking of 93. We are very proud of this accomplishment. As a school we continue to focus on high achievement across all assessed domains. Our students continue to achieve consistent results in exceeding and meeting expectations as measured by the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). As a school we conducted our annual review of this data as a means to inform our practice, specifically focusing on the state directed accountability guidelines.

Please be reminded of the importance of school attendance. I want to share information relative to chronic absenteeism as a criteria for school accountability and general knowledge about school attendance.

Did you know?

- Children are designated as chronically absent by the State of Massachusetts when the 10% threshold (**18 days**) is reached by the end of the year (180-day school year). This information is submitted to the state annually.

What is chronic absenteeism?

- In Fall of 2018, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education implemented a new accountability system developed to meet the requirements of state law and the federal Every Student Succeeds Act. When this accountability system was implemented focus was placed on some very specific indicators. One of the identified indicators is chronic absenteeism. According to the Massachusetts Department of Education: Chronic absenteeism is defined as "the percentage of students missing 10 percent or more of their days in membership. In a typical 180-day school year, this is the percentage of students who miss 18 or more days."

Student Success:

One of the most important things your child can do to reach the goal of success is also one of the most basic: attend school every day on time! By attending class regularly, your child is more likely to keep up with daily lessons and assignments and take quizzes and tests on time. Research has shown that your child's regular attendance may be the greatest factor influencing his/her academic success.

Please remember to check the J. Turner Hood School calendar linked directly on our website and please follow the J. Turner Hood Twitter account at: <https://twitter.com/jthoodelemen>. This Twitter handle provides followers with frequent updates of "Hound Dog Happenings" and retweets of other professionals within our community's tweets.

As a school, we continue to be committed to building a strong school community. We are in the process of completing our parent-teacher conferences and report cards, which link to our commitment. Our hope is that working together with parents and students will result in high levels of learning for each student.

I want to thank all the parents and staff of our school for their support. Our school is characterized by students who take their learning seriously and work hard, while also enjoying their work.