



P.O. BOX 97, HARTLAND, VERMONT 05048

HARTLAND COOPERATIVE NURSERY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

March 2018

"The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you." B.B. King in ExchangeEveryDay

MAKING UP SNOW DAYS

Since our snow day total makes us have less than the 140 school days required by Act 166, we will need to make up 3 of the 5 snow days we have had this school year. Unless we have another snow day our final day of school will be on **Thursday June 7th**. This means that there will be a few more aiding days and one more weekend cleaning that will be available for sign up.

PROGRAM SURVEY

We are required by our STARS participation to give families the opportunity once a year to evaluate our program, and to offer suggestions for improvement. We seek to get at least an 80% completion rate by school families. The online version of the survey was sent to you via email recently. A paper version is available upon request. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey as soon as possible. We value your opinions and input! All responses are anonymous.

Hartland Cooperative Nursery School Board Meeting March 21, 2018, 5:30

Present: Nikki Raney, Meggan Wehmeyer, Heather White, Liz Frederick, Britt Metivier, Harriet Dumas, Jill Rubin, Brittany Preston, Laura Percy, Ben Percy, Tiffany Tucker, Autum Siegler, Cindy Siegler, Amanda James, Matt Dow, David Carty, Jacqueline Carty, Bonnie Reynolds, Heather Vonada

Discuss Outside Fridays

The Board presented a PowerPoint:

Background of Outside Friday: it started in 2015, at the same time as Hartland Elementary School,

Review of current policy, which is in the school handbook:

"On Fridays beginning around the third week of school (details provided closer to the date) Outside Friday will begin. The entire school day will be held outside rain, shine, snow or wind, as long as the temperature including wind chill is above 15 degrees. Outside Fridays will focus on outdoor explorations of the natural areas adjacent to our building, including but not limited to the woods and brook, as well as occasional walks to nearby outdoor 'attractions' (goat farm, HES Outdoor Classrooms) and visits from 'outdoor experts' in nature, art, etc."

How decision was made by the Board to suspend Outside Fridays until the next Board Meeting.

Results of survey

Research conducted by board members presented

Special meeting, which resulted in reinstatement of Outside Fridays until next board meeting and resulted in the following recommended changes to Outside Fridays:

- recommend specific gear to caretakers
- invest in spare wool socks, mittens, Muddy Buddies for the school to have in case students come unprepared.
- teacher checks for appropriate clothing before going outdoors
- teacher discretion (currently already happening)

- highlight outdoor aspect of school on website and before school starts (orientation)
- Scholarships for appropriate winter clothing

Parent input:

Muddy Buddies: previous experience good (different colors for different classrooms)

<20 degrees, no cotton clothing

Several parents expressed that Outside Fridays are of incredible value

- preparation for future schools in area

Several caregivers expressed that they trust that the teachers use good discretion with weather, and know their students well enough to make a judgement regarding time outdoors.

Some caregivers attending agreed that dressing students appropriately to the weather is mostly the responsibility of parents and kids, to keep themselves comfortable; not just the teachers' responsibility

A parent who is involved in academic administration expressed that behavioral issues seem to coincide with less time outdoors, so sees much benefit to OF.

Several parents expressed that Outside Friday was the main reason they enrolled their child in HCNS.

Some parents agreed that enjoying winter weather is an important part of living in Vermont and that it builds resilience and character

Concerns expressed

- 3 hours seems too long for 3- and 4-year olds to be outdoors in the elements
- Caregiver expressed disappointment that her concerns last year were not addressed by the Board
- Why is Outside Friday mandatory when other activities aren't?
 - The teachers present reiterated that it's not necessarily that certain activities aren't mandatory, certain kids aren't developmentally ready for certain things, so are offered alternatives
- staffing-wise wouldn't work if activities weren't mandatory
- Spending 3 hours outdoors seems a risk to health, as exposure to cold depresses the immune system
- If caregivers aren't willing to have their student spend three hours outdoors because of weather, this caretaker thought it was limiting access unfairly to class time for those students.
- Some kids aren't able to express that they're cold

Recommendations for further action from caretakers attending:

- Suggest that incoming caregivers take Outside Friday into account when choosing AM vs. PM classes; weather is often worse in the morning than afternoon.
- Handout sent home with parents to help kids get dressed for outdoor school
 - One parent mentioned a picture card checklist that her other child had used at a different outdoor school
- Part of sign-in on Friday to remind parents to check outdoor gear
- Parents who send their kids to 4 Corners might need a reminder to send two sets of outdoor clothes in case they get cold and wet at either/both places
- Parents willing to donate gear at end of year
- Add to the policy in handbook: "Outdoor time in questionable weather is subject to teachers' discretion."

There was clarification regarding policy regarding the Brook: cold days in the fall, students don't go in

Two letters were given to the board from caregivers who expressed that they are happy with Outside Fridays as they are.

Final Board decisions regarding Outside Fridays:

- 1) Continue Outside Fridays as they are and review the policy at the end of the school year with feedback from end of the year surveys. Any changes made will be outlined in the next academic year's handbook.
- 2) Release money to purchase wool socks, Muddy Buddies, full length gloves, and boots this year.

Approve February minutes

approved

Director's Report

3-year renewal approved through 6/30/21, with requirement that a licensed teacher with early childhood endorsement is always present

The Board okayed the purchase of a Scholastic book for each student at the end of the school year

Deep cleaning was done over Break - a parent offered to do it next year

Safety concerns: The Board decided to lock classrooms once all students have arrived, shades for door windows closed always

Active shooter/lock down drills - Harriet will look into policy for preschools and ask State about it

The Board okayed Val enrolling HCNS in Amazon Smile

HCNS will be making up 3 snow days at this point, which means last day of school would be June 7th

May 8th theater trip to Lebanon Opera House - parents to cover lunch time before 12:30 classes start

- The Board okayed having a few extra adults go

Staff decision regarding next year:

- Harriet and Bonnie will be here; Michelle will not be returning; Tiffany will be returning if she doesn't receive a better job offer
- Contracts are usually signed in June

Substitute teachers: Stacey Mello's fingerprinting done and cleared, Corinna Brown fingerprinting done

Fun Run will be May 19th

- Nikki will order shirts from Custom Ink

The Board okayed doing VINS curriculum next year, as well.

Operations Report

The Board discussed concentrating on/celebrating the "overachieving" caregivers, rather than spending as much time as Personnel and Operations have on trying to get reluctant caregivers to participate

- Raffle for top-achieving caregivers at the end of the year?

Other Business

Harriet will check in with John regarding additional storage for Muddy Buddies and other extra equipment being ordered for Outside Fridays.

Discussed ways to make sure that Tiffany's classes have snack, since she doesn't have many caregivers aiding. To be discussed further at the next board meeting.

SONGS AND FINGER PLAYS

Bunny Finger Play

Here is a bunny with ears so funny,
And here is its hole in the ground.
When a noise it hears, it pricks up its ears,
And jumps in its hole in the ground.

Cat in the Hat

(Tune: The Addams Family)

The cat in the hat,
Clap! Clap!
The cat in the hat,
Clap! Clap!
The cat in the hat,
The cat in the hat,
The cat in the hat,
Clap! Clap!
He causes so much fun,
But when the fun is done,
You will be the one,
To send that cat away!
The cat in the hat,
The cat in the hat,

The cat in the hat,
Clap! Clap!

These Two Eyes of Mine

(Tune: This Little Light of Mine)

These two eyes of mine, help me to see.
These two ears of mine, help me to hear.
I smell with my nose and taste with my tongue,
These ten fingers help me to feel.

These two legs of mine, help me to jump.
These two hands of mine, help me to clap.
I stomp with my feet and I spin around,
And I dance, and I dance, and I dance.