



August 30, 2022

Hello Woodlands Families,

There has been a great deal of discussion about the changes in recess for students this school year. This letter will provide you with information about the changes and the rationale behind the changes.

We have made some changes in the school schedules from last year. Here are just a few:

- Increased the fine arts time for students (Specifically K4/K5, 5/6 and 7/8)
- Increased the fine arts offerings for students, (added: band, instrumental music, choir and theater/drama)
- Identified designated time for social emotional learning for all classrooms (Character Strong lessons, Restorative Practices)
- Added opportunities for some student choice in daily programming
- Students have two specials per day

In making these exciting changes, we had to make some adjustments to our previous schedule. Recess, along with some other areas, had to be adjusted to allow us to provide additional offerings for students. This was not done to increase academic time.

Recess for students K4/K5 and 1/2 is 20 minutes each day. Recess for students 3/4 through 7/8 is 15 minutes each day.

Last year staff shared with us the need for identified time in the schedule to provide students with more social emotional guidance and support. We have built dedicated time in every classroom's schedule for this to occur with a daily morning community building time and a weekly SEL time to work with our character education curriculums Character Strong & Time for Living. The need for this was very apparent after seeing the support students needed to reacclimate themselves to school and to each other.

Additionally, last year we did not have a dedicated time in the schedule for students to receive the leveled support they needed to continue to grow academically and behaviorally. (This was called "RTI time" in past years.) This year, every classroom has dedicated time in their weekly schedule for RTI or MLSS (multi-level systems of support). This time is to support students by giving them specific instruction/guidance or enrichment in areas of need academically and behaviorally. With this in place, we can better differentiate the instruction for our students based on their needs.

We began the conversation about possible recess reduction with staff last spring when we discussed bringing the "Wheel" to our middle school program. We have been sharing the developing schedule with staff all summer. Staff have even participated in some face-to-face sessions in helping to develop the schedule for the year. We are working with classroom staff to build in "Brain Breaks" to provide students additional time for movement and cognitive relief throughout the day. In addition, we have worked to make sure students have at least two specials each day.



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Our goal was to continue to provide the well-rounded learning experience for all students that Woodlands is known for by increasing our “specials” offerings but also building in some additional supports for students that address the specific needs we are seeing in our school community.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to our attention. We know this is a change, but we believe our students will have an opportunity to grow in a number of ways from this adjustment.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to reach out to myself or your principal.

Sincerely,

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