

Dear Charter Oak Families,

Every year our schools receive data regarding home languages spoken in our schools. And every year this information makes me very proud to be part of a community that celebrates diversity in the way West Hartford does.

In a district of approximately 10,000 students, about 2,000 of them live in a home with a home language other than English. This year there are 67 different languages represented in the West Hartford School system and the five largest groups are Spanish, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Portuguese and Nepali.

In our school the number of students in a home with a dominant language other than English is 121. Our three top groups are Spanish, Portuguese, and Vietnamese. But our school is also home to students with families who speak Mandarin, Nepali, Arabic, Russian, Punjabi, Polish, Gujarati, Hindi, German, Telugu, Japanese, Turkish, Amharic, Lao, Filipino, Dari, and Persian. There is so much to celebrate and so much to be proud of a school and a district that is home to people from literally all over the world!

Yes, we start this holiday season with plenty to recognize, celebrate, and be thankful for.

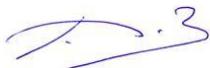
For that reason I would like to invite you to follow online our school assembly this Friday, December 16th, at which we will have our formal Dedication of the Building Ceremony. All students will gather in the auditorium and the courtyard so we can express gratitude for our new home to those who made it possible. Our PTO Board and people who served on the building committee will represent families at the event, but anyone who wishes to watch can do so via live streaming. The ceremony will start at 9:00 a.m. in the following link in our webpage to follow the event live:

<http://charteroak.whps.org/page.cfm?p=1483>.

These final weeks of the year we also need to give special attention to food. Please remember that all classrooms are peanut/nut free. Any food sent in for your child's snack or for a teacher-approved classroom celebration or learning activity MUST be peanut/nut free. In addition to this, and in the interest of providing a healthy environment for our children (as our Elementary Handbook states) we are encouraging only healthy choices in the foods and beverages that children consume while in school. If you are sending in food for your child's snack, lunch or special occasion, please keep this policy in mind and check with your child's teacher, our nurse, or any of us to determine appropriate options.

Also, the weather is already starting to get cold. Make sure that your children are appropriately dressed to spend time outdoors during recess. Warm clothes, gloves, hats, and boots are required during winter months. Also, with temperatures going down it is extremely important that students are not dropped at school before the time doors open, at 8:20 for everybody and at 8:05 for students eating breakfast in the cafeteria. Only students with pre-arranged and supervised activities can enter the building before those times.

Have a wonderful holiday season with your families and loved ones and a restful vacation!



Juan Melián
Principal

