

October 14th, 2014

Dear Fuller Families

I hope you all enjoyed time with family and friends over the three-day weekend! I have been thinking about the importance of your involvement in your child's education, and came across an interesting article from a weekly memo I receive entitled **Marshall Memo**. Kim Marshall is a highly regarded local educator and was a principal in the Boston Public Schools from many years. He is now a national speaker and consultant and I have had the privilege of meeting him at a workshop for administrators.

The **Marshall Memo** is a summary of many articles that Kim has read and reviewed; there is always something that relates to Fuller's goals. One of our school goals this year will focus on community and family engagement. Through collaboration with the School Council and PTO, I am confident that we will make progress toward this goal. One of the ways I am hoping to engage Fuller families is to share ideas and articles with you that capture the essence of what we are striving for, **Personalized Learning for Every Student**. Below is a summary (full content can be found in the link at the end of the article) of an article that Kim Marshall shared in his memo; the content is highly relevant to what Fuller is focusing on with growth mindset and deeper learning.

#### **Four Student Misconceptions about Studying and Learning**

In this article in *Faculty Focus*, Maryellen Weimer (Penn State University) draws on the work of Stephen Chew to highlight four common beliefs that undermine college students' efforts to learn [also true for many K-12 students]:

- *Misconception #1: Learning is fast.* "Students think that learning can happen a lot faster than it does," says Weimer. "They think they can get what they need out of a chapter with one quick read through (electronic devices at the ready, snacks in hand, and ears flooded with music)." Student need to be taught how to interact with materials in ways that make learning sink in.

- *Misconception #2: Knowledge is composed of isolated facts.* When students use flash cards with only one term or concept per card, they memorize definitions but often fail to grasp higher-level concepts. Teachers should use test questions that ask students to relate definitions, use them to construct arguments, and apply them to new situations, and then work with students to modify their study techniques.

- *Misconception #3: Doing well academically is a matter of inborn talent.* "All of us have had students who tell us with great assurance that they can't write, can't do math, are horrible at science, or have no artistic ability," says Weimer. Students who think this way don't try as hard in weak areas and give up when they encounter difficulty. Teachers' feedback is very important to getting these students to shift from a "fixed" to a "growth" mindset and to see that effort and strategy are the key variables in achievement.

• *Misconception #4: Look Ma, I'm multi-tasking.* The evidence is clear that the brain can't simultaneously handle more than one cognitively demanding task, says Weimer. People who think they are successfully multitasking are in fact missing important information – and they don't even realize it. Since many students won't take our word for it, a demonstration may be necessary to prove the point.

"Four Student Misconceptions about Learning" by Maryellen Weimer in *Faculty Focus*, Jan. 29, 2014, <http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-professor-blog/four-student-misconceptions-learning/>

Fuller Middle School is yet again setting an example of a school that is responsive to the needs of its students and the community. Fuller, a leader in the district as a STEAM school, now will engage in an initiative to bring yoga and mindfulness strategies into children's academic experiences. The core curriculum standards and STEAM efforts shared by Fuller teachers will provide the structures necessary for planning meaningful lessons. The primary goal is to provide these young people with an "inner tool-kit" that will enable them to manage their emotions, learn more successfully, and have a more positive experience of school, and, moreover, in life.

This initiative is possible through the grant, titled, "Empowering Challenged Children -- Part III: A Program of Yoga and Mindfulness Integrated within the Students' Academic Curriculum," which was written by Open Spirit: A Place of Hope, Health & Harmony, in Saxonville (next to Stapleton School). Rosanne Kates, a former teacher in the Framingham Public Schools, is the Program Director for the grant and the Director of the Nourishing Teachers/Strengthening Classrooms Project. This grant was generously funded by the Massachusetts Woman's Home Missionary Union (MWHMU) for the entire amount requested (\$7500). The MWHMU hopes to see the work at Fuller Middle School become a model for the state. We are excited and grateful about this community partnership and its impact on students.

Thank you for taking the time to read my email and the article. It is great to know that we have a shared vision for our kids' growth and development.

Sincerely,

Sharon

Fuller Dates (MAP testing from October 7 through October 31st)

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|----------------|---|
| Tuesday 10/14  | Term 1 ends   |
| Thursday 10/16 | Early Release Day – Parent Conferences by appointment only<br>*No after school activities |
| Friday 10/17   | Midterm Grades updated in student portal – X2   |

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| Monday 10/20    | 1 <sup>st</sup> School Council meeting 5:30-7:00 in the Fuller Library<br>PTO 7:00-8:00                          |
| Tuesday 10/21   | Midterm Reports go home with students  |
| Thursday 10/30  | Early Release day (dismissal 11:25 am) No after school activities  |
| Tuesday 11/4    | No School – Voting Day (Staff has Professional Development Day)  |
| Thursday 11/6   | Metrowest Adolescent Survey (all students take survey)   |
| Friday 11/7     | Student Portal grades are updated – Parents/guardians access student grades through this portal.                 |
| Wednesday 11/26 | Early Release day (dismissal 11:25 am) No after school activities  |
| Thursday 11/27  | No School - Thanksgiving Recess  |
| Friday 11/28    | No School - Thanksgiving Recess  |
| Monday 12/1     | Trimester 1 ends   |
| Tuesday 12/2    | Picture retakes  |
| Thursday 12/4   | Early Release day (dismissal 11:25 am) No after school activities  |
| Monday 12/8     | Report cards go home with students<br>First Newsletter “Teaching and Learning Matters” – attached to report card |
| Tuesday 12/23   | All School Community Meeting -- “Bandapalooza”   |
| 12/24-1/2/15    | Winter break   |
| Monday 1/5/15   | Happy New Year! Welcome back – School in session   |