

## **Cunniff Elementary School**

This year, the Cunniff Elementary School has 270 students divided into 15 classrooms. In the summer, 15 new professionals were hired at the Cunniff School. These positions are in the following disciplines and grades: art, music, physical education, library/media, ELL (English Language Learner), special educator, two kindergarten, fourth grade, psychologist and social worker. We also have a new school resource officer and two new instructional assistants. Our diverse teaching staff has a great deal of experience and varying backgrounds. They are working effectively together to diversify instruction and to incorporate the latest practices and research into their pedagogical practice.

The Cunniff School began a Pre-Kindergarten program this fall. This program was created for children who turned 4 years old by September 7th. Seventeen students attend this full day tuition based program. The students follow the same calendar and attend all special activities that the K - 5 children attend. The classroom is taught by a certified teacher and 2 highly qualified Instructional Assistants. The students participate in age appropriate activities to develop their pre-reading, early math, fine motor and social skills. Students also engage in hands-on Science and Social Studies activities to help them explore the world around them. The focus of this program is to help 4 year old students develop the academic skills necessary to be successful in Kindergarten as well as the social skills necessary to be successful in life.

During the summer, we took the time to reconfigure our library so that we could better utilize the space for our growing technology interest and instruction. We placed all of the computers together in one learning environment which now allows our teachers to better observe and instruct during the lesson. We also ceiling mounted our LCD projector which provides a better viewing model for both student and adult learners and presentations.

The incorporation of technology at the school continues to be explored in productive and meaningful ways. Students in grades 3-5 are creating PowerPoint presentations. Students in grades 4 and 5 are regularly creating Podcasts which allows students to articulate the learning that they have incorporated into an auditory broadcast that parents and family members can access from the class's website or iTunes. Students as young as kindergarteners record their voices onto the computer and so incorporate their words with their writing and illustrations.

In November, the Cunniff School began its first On-line only newspaper called the Cunniff Kids News. It can be found at the following web address:  
<http://teacherweb.com/MA/WatertownCunniffElementary/Newspaper/H0.stm>

The idea came out of the Cunniff School Council, but is the result of a parent who has helped facilitate this idea coming to reality. Every week approximately 15 students in grades K-5 come together to discuss ideas for future on-line publications. Broken into three sessions, a number of students have the opportunity to take part in this enrichment activity that helps focus on writing, creative ideas, working together and creating a final product.

The Cunniff School continues to provide an environment for students to excel both academically as well as socially. Our multi-disciplinary staff works together in a collaborative effort to provide an optimal learning environment where children are successful, and are empowered in their efforts to grow and learn.