

**Baldwinville  
Elementary  
School**

# Principal's Newsletter

**Important  
Dates  
for  
FEBRUARY**



**February 6th:**

100th Day of School

**February 10th:**

Report Cards Go Home

**February 20th - 24th:**

February Vacation

**\*\*\* We have a student who utilizes a working dog that will be visiting the school once a week. He is with his trainer at all times.**

Dear Families,

It is our goal that each child will learn, grow and develop every day at Baldwinville Elementary School. Our desire is to provide academic excellence in a warm and supportive school climate. We want each parent to feel that, "My child is having a great year at Baldwinville Elementary School." Strong parental and community support enhances the quality of education at Baldwinville Elementary School.

We appreciate the strong community support provided to Baldwinville Elementary school. **Athol Saving's bank** has been partnering with us for the past two years to provide students with an opportunity to invest in their future with our school banking program. Students are provided with the weekly convenience to bank at school. Bank employees and parents volunteer their time to work with a team of fourth-grade student bank tellers. These student tellers went through the process of filling out a job application and interviewing with bank staff. Once selected, the students were then trained in the importance of accuracy in counting and recording deposits. Athol savings bank provides students with fun incentives for making deposits and building up their savings. Besides the bank's contribution of a small monetary deposit into each child's account, they also provide small prizes reaching milestones on their student deposit recording sheet. We are grateful for their investment in our students.

The **Friends of Baldwinville** have been busy supporting our students in various ways. A parent volunteer along with our art teacher provided the opportunity for the children to make memorable art keepsakes through the Square One Art Fundraiser which raised \$1700. Many parent volunteers participated in the book fair which raised \$700 and provided students the opportunity to purchase books at school. We will be running a spring book fair to provide staff with scholastic dollars to purchase books for our balanced literacy program. Look for the opportunity to volunteer and help out. The combined total of \$2400 from these two events was deposited into our student activity account to support programs and field trips.

At this month's Friends of Baldwinville meeting, plans were set in motion for the father/daughter and mother /son events. This year's father/daughter dance will be held on Saturday, April 28th from 3:00 to 5:30 PM at a cost of \$10 per family regardless of the number of children attending. This is open to students from both Templeton Center School and Baldwinville Elementary. A date for mother/son event has not been set at this time and we are looking into the possibility of visiting the Higgins Armory in Worcester. A flyer with specific details will be sent home closer to the date of the events, please watch for them.

The Friends of Baldwinville also recommended a **Spirit Week be held the week of February 13th.**

**Monday, February 13th** will be pajama day, students and staff may dress in pajamas.

**Tuesday, February 14th** will be wear pink and/or red day to celebrate Valentine's Day.

**Wednesday, February 15th** will be crazy hair or hat day, let your imagination go wild.

**Thursday, February 16th** will be backward or inside out clothing day.

**Friday, February 17th** will be wear blue and white day.

Several parents have also volunteered their time and collecting, cutting and bundling **Box Tops for Education**. We thank those families who are faithfully saving and donating these Box Tops as well as the Kitchen Garden for providing collection boxes where community members are able to drop off their Box Tops for Education to support our school.

As you can see there are several ways for parents to become involved. We appreciate those parents who were able to donate time in the classroom as well as room parents who set up to call parents to support classroom projects and celebrations with donations.

We are still looking for a few more parents to join our **School Site Council**. School Site Council is an important element comprised of interested and capable citizens from the community, school staff and parents who focus on school improvement. These meetings take place once a month and are held in the evening from 6:30 to 7:30 PM.

Please come meet with us, talk with us, attend a Friend's of Baldwinville meeting or volunteer your time and energy. I know that your involvement combined with the efforts of our outstanding faculty will make this school year a rich and rewarding year for your child. Please call me at 978-939-5318 if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions.

Sincerely yours,

Joanna Cackett, Principal

“Bug Surprises” and “Bug Surprises” will be our reading themes over the next few weeks. We will listen to stories about observing and respecting the small creatures who share our world. We will learn more details about the fascinating life cycles of some of them. We will sing and act out much-loved songs such as “Eency Weency Spider.”

Children will learn the letters q, j, z, x, k, o and w. They will practice blending words with short-vowel o, such as pot, top, and not. We will identify and write each letter, and listen for the sound it stands for at the beginning, the middle, and the end of a word.

With each story we read, we focus on skills that will help your child become a better reader. You can participate by reading the take-home books; have fun with the classroom homework ideas and the activities in the “Classroom Connection.” These activities are sent home with your child for each theme.

We have launched our “Writer’s Workshop”. We are writing about the small moments in our lives. Please have the children write stories at home. They are all wonderful authors and illustrators.

Please stress:

Begin your sentence with an uppercase letter.

Stretch your words. Have the children write the letters they hear in each word.

Put space between your words.

Use a period or a question mark at the end of the sentences.

Use at least 5 colors in your illustrations.

In Math class we are studying Topic 9-“Measurement” and Topic 10 Addition. The math skills taught in class can be practiced and reviewed on the website: <http://pearsonsuccessnet.com/> .

**FIRST GRADE MONTHLY NEWS**

First grade has been working very hard. In reading the children have been learning the following skills: long vowel o /ow/ and /oa/ (boat and low), long vowel e /ee, ea/ (feet, bean), and two syllable words ending with /le/ (middle, paddle). We have worked on reading skills such as making and confirming predictions and details.

In Reader’s Workshop we have been learning about how readers meet characters in their books. As we are reading we get to know our characters and we learn their likes and dislikes. We also learn how looking at the words and pictures in the story will help us understand how the character is feeling. We often notice that the character’s feelings can change during the story.

In math we have been working on counting patterns to 100 (Topic 10) and Tens and ones (Topic 11). Please help your child practice these skills at home. Don’t forget to go online to [pearsonsuccess.com](http://pearsonsuccess.com) and practice those skills.

In Writer’s Workshop the children have been working hard on writing small moment stories. Small moment stories are true stories that have happened and they are stories that we will always remember. Some small moments are happy and others are sad. We will be wrapping up our small moment unit soon.

**SECOND GRADE NEWS**

In Reading, Mrs. Emma’s class has just started working on “Buddy” Readers. They will continue to work on comprehension skills during this time as well. Mrs. Miller’s class is working on questioning during Reader’s Workshop.

In Writer’s Workshop, the children are practicing staying on topic with their assignments. They are given writing assignments to complete at home for extra practice. Please remember to guide and reinforce these skills at home.

In Math, we are just beginning topic 5 on money. We will revisit double digit addition and subtraction with money, following this topic . Please be sure to go to <https://www.pearsonsuccessnet.com> to practice basic facts with your child, and to check out upcoming topics.

Our first book project has been assigned. Books for approval are due no later than Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>. Directions for the project will be sent home in homework folders. Book reports/projects are due on: Wednesday, Feb.29<sup>th</sup>. For each day that the report is late, points will be deducted. Please be sure to help your child by proofreading, and guiding them, and not by doing the work for them.

Both classrooms are starting to run low on tissues. Any donations would be greatly appreciated!

## COUNSELOR CONNECTION

Dear Families,

Welcome to 2012! As part of the school guidance program, I will be teaching classroom guidance lessons in the second grade classes during the months of January and February. This curriculum is part of our school-wide bully proofing program. Providing children with an understanding of what bullying is and how to deal with it appropriately is the focus at this level. An emphasis is placed on understanding friendship. This starting point is a good "jumping off" point to teach the language and strategies of bully proofing. The lesson topics include: what

I want in a friend, how to make friends, how to keep friends, what to do if kids are not being friendly, friends get help for friends, and friends and caring acts of kindness. Our lessons will conclude during the week of February 13-19, which is Random Acts of Kindness Week. We will complete our lessons by emphasizing the importance of kindness. To stop bullying we need to shift the power from the bully or bullying group to the "Caring Majority" of students. Our goal is to have a school climate which is a safe, positive, inclusive, and friendly environment where every person deserves to be treated with respect and

kindness.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Lorrie Hjorth, School Counselor, [hjorth@nrsd.org](mailto:hjorth@nrsd.org)

**RECESS REMINDER: Please remember there is no trading of items allowed on the playground. Children are allowed to bring small items outside but if it is something special or of value it should remain at home so it is not lost or damaged. Thank You!**

### Physical Education

In January, the students have been learning and playing with the Parachute, having lots of fun with our Cup Stacking unit, and participated in a challenging Obstacle Course.

As we enter the latter part of January and February, the earlier grades will learn and practice throwing and striking skills through the use of various manipulative such as balloons, beach balls, noodles, and soft balls. Students in grades Three and Four will begin an elementary, fundamental skills Volleyball unit.

Please remind students to bring their sneakers to Physical Education each day!

Thank you.

### MUSIC NEWS

In December The 4<sup>th</sup> grade students performed in their Winter Concert where they demonstrated all the different types of harmony they learned: rounds, partner songs, and ostinatos. The whole school also participated in our annual Christmas play. Each student who wanted a speaking part was given a speaking part. It was a fun time.

We are currently finishing up our second unit where second and third grade students are learning compound meter where the divisions of the beat are in groups of three rather than groups of two. The students have successfully learned to read, sing, play, dictate, decode, and compose using three paired eighth notes and dotted quarters notes. In kindergarten and first grade we continue our work with developing a proper singing voice which is characterized by maintaining a head voice. This voice is a high voice and not a low spoken voice. This is practiced and assessed through echo song, simple songs, and vocal glissandos. The fourth grade students have begun their unit of Recorder study. We use the Recorder Karate method to teach students how to play and read music. For each note and song they learn they earn a different color Karate belt to tie to their recorder. The students have completed the white and yellow belts. We will be hosting a Recorder Concert in May.

Shortly, we will begin our third unit of study where second and third grade students will continue their study of compound meter, however the paired eighth notes will be broken apart to include a quarter and eighth notes and a dotted quarter note in compound meter.

### Physical Therapy News

Activities that involve coordination and visual tracking such as ping pong, bowling, throwing bean bags or balls at a target, and dribbling a ball can activate areas of the brain needed for school work. Playing using these skills can be beneficial for overall school performance. Have fun while activating your brain!

### **Third Grade News**

It is hard to believe we are at the half way point in third grade! We have been very busy.

In Reader's Workshop we have been working on using questioning as a reading comprehension strategy. Good readers ask themselves questions before, during, and after reading. Good questions help readers enhance their understanding, clarify confusion, and look for specific information in the text. We are also making and revising inferences. Drawing an inference means making an educated guess and figuring out something that is not directly stated in the text. It includes drawing conclusions, using pictures to construct meaning, and understanding themes.

In language we are learning about parts of speech- nouns, pronouns, and adjectives. We are reviewing common spelling patterns. Fun with Language is studying nonfiction text features used to aid comprehension. They include charts, pictures, captions, maps, headings and subheadings. We are looking at figurative language such as similes, metaphors, idioms, and hyperbole.

Writer's Workshop finds us continuing to work on the Six plus 1 Traits of writing-ideas, voice, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation. We are concentrating on poetry this month.

One of the ways we are getting ready for MCAS is by looking over tests from the past. In this way the students will be exposed to many types of questions, different genres, and they will become comfortable with the test.

Science is studying animal habitats and adaptations. Social Studies class is learning about Massachusetts history and is going back in time to explore the Wampanoag Native Americans. They will soon be learning about the Puritans

Multiplication is our topic in math. We are learning the multiplication facts and how to use them to solve problems. Please help your child learn their multiplication facts. Five minutes a day really works!

Kathy Carruth, Laura Ethier, Beth LeBlanc

### **Fourth Grade News**

**The year continues to fly by! Thank you for continuing to make sure your 4<sup>th</sup> grader brings boots, mittens, and warm clothing for outside recess.**

**Family Read – A reminder that the game your child is making to go with their book that you have read, is due on Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>. If you have any questions about this project, don't hesitate to ask your child's teacher.**

**Math – In math, we have begun long division. Speed in basic multiplication facts remain critical and strength in these facts contribute greatly to success in 4<sup>th</sup> grade math so if the children have not received a "Proficient" in this area on their report card, they should continue to work on memorizing these facts.**

**Reading – Reading continues to be focused on text features of non-fiction. We are looking at captions, headings, titles, subtitles, sidebars, maps, graphs, etc. Summarizing reading material continues to be practiced. The 4<sup>th</sup> graders also are becoming fluent in answering open response questions using 2-column notes and supporting their answers with important details from the text.**

**Writing – The 4<sup>th</sup> graders continue to work at improving their prompted writing narratives. They are focused on topic choice, organization, rich details, good "Hooks", powerful endings, restating the prompt, and revision/editing skills.**

**Social Studies – We will be finishing up the states and starting to look at Canada.**

**Science – All of the classes are in different units of study.**



### Notes from the Nurse

**February is Children's Dental Health Month.** You are reminded to visit your dentist twice a year, brush and floss regularly and wear mouth guards during contact sports. Eating healthy snacks is also a great way to take care of your teeth and your whole body. Locally, dental services are offered at CHC Family Health ([www.chcfhc.org](http://www.chcfhc.org)) located in the Mary Kane Building, 175 Connors Street in Gardner, 978-410-6100. The hours are 8:30 – 5:00 Mon – Fri. The CHC Dental Service accepts many insurances including MassHealth as well as a sliding fee scale based on federal family income guidelines to uninsured individuals. Please don't let lack of insurance be your reason for not accessing dental care for yourself or your children. Any questions or for more information, please call the nurse.

*Reminder to all: Good hand washing is essential to prevent the spread of germs and helps keep everyone healthier (especially during the winter months when viruses and infections abound).*



Our JDRF Fundraiser is in full swing. As of Feb. 6th we have raised **\$132.00!** Check out our hallway filled with colored sneakers. Your donation of \$1 for a paper sneaker helps find a cure for diabetes. Thank You!

### Art-Talk

In January, Fourth Graders will continue experimenting with value as they create abstract designs which incorporate the stippling, gradation and crosshatching techniques. Snowman collages are next on the agenda for First Grade giving them the opportunity to review color groups. Working with the tissue paper technique, they will be creating a frosty snowy day by using the cool colors for the background of their snowman paintings.

Line and pattern will be emphasized in both Kindergarten and Third Grade. Vertical and horizontal line will be introduced to Kindergarten as they create a simple composition based on the artwork of Dutch artist Piet Mondrian. Three dimensional line will also be explored as they use paper sculpture techniques to create imaginary playgrounds. Wavy, jagged zigzag, dotted and dashed are just a few of the line types the Third Graders will be combining to create patterns as they design a patchwork cat.

And finally, Second Grade will be starting the New Year with a painting lesson using dinosaurs as their subject matter. Tissue paper and watercolor techniques will also be explored as they create a collage based on the painting "Goldfish" by Henri Matisse.

Happy New Year!

Mrs. Cartwright

## Speech/Language Corner

### What constitutes an articulation disorder?

An articulation disorder is any disturbance in the manner in which an individual's sounds are formed that interferes with communication. Children develop their speech sounds from the time they are born until at least eight years of age. Some children follow this developmental pattern, some can speak clearly before expected, and others for a multitude of reasons may not acquire sounds on time. Difficulties with articulation skills can negatively impact a child's ability to express their knowledge, be understood by peers or adults, and ultimately cause issues with gaining literacy skills (reading and writing). The following is a list of when **90% of children** should master each sound in the English language:

By three years:	p, m, h, n, w, and b
By four years:	k, g, d, t, and y
By five years:	f and v
By six years:	ing and l
By seven years:	s, z, sh, ch, and j
By eight years:	r, voice th (that), unvoiced th(thumb), and blends (bl, pl, br, scw, etc.)

Other factors that influence the decision of whether a child has a disorder/delay include the child's overall intelligibility (clarity), the influence of patterns on this clarity, the impact of the articulation issue on his/her academics, and the child's awareness or frustration level regarding the speech sound errors.

### **Here are a few fun and easy ways to practice speech sounds with your child:**

- As you walk up and down the stairs in your home, have your child imitate a syllable (eg. see, so, say).
- At bath time, have your child imitate a syllable, word, or sentence for each of his/her toes and fingers.
- When in the car, every time that you are stopped at a light, ask your child to say some silly syllables with target sounds until the light turns green.
- When shopping at the grocery store, clothes store, etc. tell your child to be a "sound detective" and try to find items that begin with target sounds.
- While reading a story or looking at a book, find things that start with a target sound and practice saying the words.

## Occupational Therapy News

In today's fast paced school day it is very important that children have good hand dexterity skills. This is the ability to manipulate small items quickly and accurately. Here is one fun way to work on dexterity with children.

### **Penny Flip Chart**

Place 10 pennies in a vertical row on a paper, trace each penny then remove them from the paper, leaving a vertical row of 10 circles on the paper.

Child places 1 penny "heads up" onto each circle, using the tips of the index finger and thumb. Do not allow child to slide pennies. Student turns pennies over as quickly as possible. Use a timer and have children try to beat their time. This can be done with both dominant and non-dominant hand.

\*To grade this task for older students, use two vertical rows of 10 pennies and have the children do it with both hands at the same time. Students should always be encouraged to work in a left to right direction.

*Teach your children how to play cards (Rummy, cribbage etc). Not only does this work on dexterity but bilateral hand skills, visual perception, problem solving and math! Have fun.*

