

**Baldwinville
Elementary
School**

Principal's Newsletter

**Important
Dates
for
MARCH**



**March 20th -
27th:**
MCAS Gr 3 & 4

March 28th :
1/2 day of School
Dismissal at 12:05

****The First Day
of School for
2012-2013 will
be August 27th**

Dear Families,

A New Spin on MCAS Testing

MCAS can be a very stressful time for students. This year we put a new spin on MCAS to foster a more positive and encouraging perspective. This is a time for our students to shine across the state of Massachusetts by giving their best effort. Teachers in grades 3 and 4 had students create champion rings which are a collection of index cards with positive affirmations.

Teachers gave each student a card with a positive statement and parents were also asked to participate by sending in cards of encouragement for their child. At the start of each MCAS test day students read over their champion ring cards. These cards filled their hearts and minds with positive affirmations and words of encouragement.

Students in Mrs. Waskiewicz's class created a bulletin board display for all third and fourth grades to inspire and cheer on all third and fourth graders' efforts during MCAS. If you visit our web page you can see a picture of the bulletin board.

Teachers reported seeing more smiles and great work effort during testing sessions and less signs of stress. We will continue to support our students with rigorous academics and best instructional practices along with a positive spin on MCAS to reap great results!

The next round of MCAS testing for students in Grade 3 and 4 will be coming up in May. This will be in the area of Math. The scheduled weeks are:

** May 7-11

** May 14-18

We collected a total of **\$1,064.00** in Box Tops!! The students did a great job collecting! Thank you to Lori Pervier, Kristine Johnson, Jeanette Cormier and Dana Sheehan-Quinones who helped out clipping the Box Tops for us!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Cackett

Principal

“Around the Town” will be our reading theme over the next few weeks. We will listen to stories about neighborhoods and the people who live there, and explore how they are similar to and different from our own. We will learn more about important reading concepts such as real and make-believe, dialogue, and cause and effect.

Children will learn and review the letters q, u, e, v, c, and y. They will practice blending words with short vowel e, such as vet, jet, and hen. We will identify and write each letter, and listen for the sound it stands for at the beginning, the middle, or 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 together; have fun with the classroom homework ideas and the activities in the “Classroom Connection”. These activities are sent home with your child before we begin each theme.

Please continue to have your child write stories at home. Encourage your children to help you write your shopping list. Have the children stretch out the sounds they hear in the words. They are all wonderful authors and illustrators and we are very proud of their writing skills.

In math class we are studying Topic 12-Larger Numbers and Topic 13 Money. The math skills taught in class can be practiced and reviewed on the website: <http://pearsonsuccessnet.com/>

First Grade News

First grade is welcoming spring with the study of bees and bears. We will be working on reading words with the letter y saying long i, long vowel o, more contractions, and learning how to add endings such as ed and ing. In Writer's Workshop we are beginning a unit on writing non-fiction All Abouts. In math, we have just completed Topic 16, learning many different strategies of adding to 18. Now we are working on Topic 17, learning new strategies for subtracting to 18. Please be sure your child practices his/her math facts at home for speed and automaticity. In Reader's Workshop we have been working on a nonfiction unit. We have been learning how reading nonfiction is different from reading fiction, and different strategies to help us understand and become stronger at reading nonfiction stories or articles. Encourage your child to read often and try to include nonfiction within their daily habit of reading. Happy spring to all!

Second Grade News

Let's start off, with a big “Hooray” for the first book reports. Our next book report will be due after April vacation. This project will involve a more detailed summary of the story. You may want to start thinking about a book that you'd like to read soon. Please choose a book that is different from the series that was used for the first book report. A letter and directions will be included in your child's homework folder in the coming weeks.

In Math, our classes are working on Topic 18 - Triple Digit Subtracting and Adding. Both classes will be working on Time and Measurement. It is very helpful for you to have an analog clock at your house, to help your child learn this skill. We tell time in 5 minute intervals, as well as use the terms “quarter past, half past, and quarter of.” Review from home really helps the children to master the skill a lot faster!!! Our next unit will be Fractions.

We are running VERY low on our supply of tissues. It would be helpful if you could send in a box with your child.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Miller & Mrs. Emma

COUNSELOR CONNECTION

Dear Families,

During the month of February, I visited the second grade classes to teach the Bullyproofing curriculum, which at this level emphasizes the importance of kindness and caring in the school community (and everywhere!). As part of the theme of the "Caring Majority," the entire school celebrated Random Acts of Kindness Week from February 13-17. I asked teachers to submit to me students who had said or done something kind here at school so that they could be recognized. Each time a student's name and kind act was given to me, a heart was put up on the cafeteria wall under a sign which read "Kindness Connects Us All – Pass It On!" We have a wonderful display of hearts!

In Kindergarten, I am continuing to visit classrooms each week to teach the Second Step Program. This month the students have been learning about emotion management and problem solving. Students are practicing ways to calm down and what to do when they are angry. These are valuable skills!

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me with your questions and concerns.

Lorrie Hjorth, School Counselor

Physical Education

During the month of March students will be working on Project Adventure Games, Dance Unit, and Outward Bound. In the Project Adventure Unit children will be assigned a task and through problem solving steps and discussion, they will be learning to solve that task by practicing teamwork, respect, good sportsmanship, and problem solving techniques. Our Dance Unit will consist of lessons in Folk Dance, Square Dance, and Modern Dance. Children will learn the basic steps and put these steps to music and dance. Outward Bound group challenges has games such as Marshmallow River and the Grand Canyon, where obstacles will be set-up in the Gymnasium and the class must work together to solve obstacles!

MUSIC NEWS

All grades are preparing for the musical, "Frog and Toad" that will take place just before April vacation. Thank you to a generous grant from the Templeton Cultural Council we are able to attend this musical production produced by Theatre at the Mount in Gardner. Each grade has been reading and reviewing the stories in the books and watching the Claymation movies. This unit will culminate with the field trip to see the musical. This is an enriching experience for the students to experience literature in three different styles and formats.

In addition, the 4th grade students are preparing for their recorder concert in May. Be on the lookout for notices that will go home in April. 2nd and 3rd grade students have been introduced to broken quarter and eighth notes in compound meter. 1st grade students were introduced to quarter notes and eighth notes in simple meter. Kindergarten is continuing their practice in developing a singing voice.

As always, thank you for the opportunity to work with your children.

All people by the age 30 should be tuneful, beautiful, and artistic.

Third Grade News

The third grade welcomes the warm weather with much enthusiasm and new learning. The past month has been busy as third grade students have worked diligently to prepare for the upcoming MCAS test.

In reading, we have been learning important tips and strategies for answering comprehension questions and responding in writing to open response questions. Students are learning ways to locate important details and text features within a story and respond appropriately in writing using the details to support their written response.

In math, we are continuing to work on multiplication and beginning to introduce some concepts for division. Students have currently learned multiplication patterns for all numbers 0 - 10. Now that concepts have been taught, students will be held accountable for learning these facts and completing weekly multiplication tests. It is essential that students practice these facts at home so that they can learn them with fast recall.

In writer's workshop, we have been exploring the genre of poetry. We will be starting a unit of nonfiction writing later this month. During this unit, students will learn how to use research to write nonfiction pieces.

Along with our poetry units, we have been exploring topics of personification, alliterations and limericks during our fun with language class. It is important for our students to write as well as know how to read these different styles of writing.

In social studies, students have been learning about the colonial days with a focus on the life of the Puritans. We will move forward this month into the time of the American Revolution and the birth of the United States of America.

During science students have been studying animal habitats. They have been learning about different animals and how they are able to adapt and survive in their own natural environment.

Mrs. LeBlanc, Mrs. Ethier & Mrs. Carruth

Fourth Grade News

We have so much going on in Fourth Grade! We are working diligently at becoming authors. We have written many personal narratives. Some of the important traits that we are trying to incorporate into our stories are conversation, show don't tell, and similes/ metaphors. We will soon be working in a whole different genre: nonfiction!

We have been reading and discussing the different strategies that we use when reading nonfiction. Did you know that you don't have to read nonfiction cover to cover? We have all learned many things!

In math, we are working with geometry and identifying different shapes by their characteristics. We are also cutting those shapes into congruent pieces so that we can show fractions of a whole. Fractions can also occur when I have a group of something. One pencil in a package of twelve is $1/12$ of the package.

In Social Studies, we are continuing our journey across North America. In Science, we are working with magnets and electricity.

We have MCAS testing coming up the week of March 19th, schedules have been sent home. Please encourage your child to do their best work. Children will parrot your ideas about MCAS – even the negative thoughts – and we all are trying our hardest to do our best work. Positive thoughts!

We have an opportunity to visit with an author, Kevin Kurtz, on Tuesday, April 10th. Permission slips have gone home. This is an after school activity and we hope that many of our students will be joining us.

If you haven't already created a yearbook page with your child, please do so and get it to us as soon as possible. They can be emailed directly to Mrs. Johnson, too!

Sincerely,

The Fourth Grade Team

Notes from the Nurse



Did you know that March is National Nutrition Month? This month we should concentrate on improving our children's and our own diets. Many young people in the United States make poor eating choices that put them at risk for health problems. Establishing healthy eating habits at a young age is critical because changing poor eating habits in adulthood is difficult. Introduce your child to ChooseMyPlate.gov. This new "Food Pyramid" consists of five food groups- grains, vegetables, fruits, milk, and protein. Your child needs to learn to make daily choices from each of these groups. Here are a few important tips for families from ChooseMyPlate.gov:

Balance calories.

Avoid oversized portions.

Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.

Switch to fat-free or low-fat milk

Make half your grains whole grains.

Drink water instead of sugary drinks

For more information visit ChooseMyPlate.gov

The Narragansett Regional School District has a Wellness Policy in place. If you would like to learn more about it, please go to www.nrsd.org and click on District Office. Scroll down to Documents and Forms then Policies and Procedures then scroll down to Wellness Policy.



Thank you for all your generosity for the JDRF Fundraiser! We raised a total of \$359.00 from all the elementary schools!!

Art Happenings

Throughout March and April, First graders will be introduced to a series of lessons that emphasize subjects in art. Recently we completed a landscape in which we explored spatial relationships, establishing a foreground, middleground and background in compositions of our neighborhood. Our next lesson will be a self-portrait. Proportion and placement of facial details will be emphasized.

Symmetry is the word in Third Grade as we create paper sculpture designs of a kaleidoscope star. Students were given the opportunity to select a color scheme from the Primary, Secondary, Warm, Cool, Analogous or Complementary colors. Creating a pattern of colors, they will develop a symmetrical design of a star.

Fourth Graders are exploring the technique of relief printmaking. We are using glue to form a raised outline of our designs. We will be using brayers, printer's ink and a variety of papers to print our designs. Recently Second Graders were introduced to the artwork of French Master artist Henri Matisse as we created collages using tissue paper, watercolors and cut paper shapes to develop a design influenced by his still life "Goldfish". Soon we will be creating imaginary creatures based on the techniques of children's illustrator and author Eric Carle. Art history and Appreciation is a very vital part of the visual art curriculum. Kindergartners recently completed a collage based on the Blue Period of Pablo Picasso. We learned that Picasso used color to express his feelings. Our next artist is Vincent Van Gogh. We will be creating our own version of his famous painting "A Starry Night."