

Mary R. Fisher Elementary School

Tiger Times

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thompsonk12.org (860)923-9142

Upcoming Events

February 29

Book Fair, Monday-Friday
8:30-3pm

March 2

Parent Conferences/Pre-K &
Kindergarten Registration
1:15-3pm, and 5-7pm

March 3

Parent Conferences/Pre-K &
Kindergarten Registration
1:15-3pm

March 9

TEA Bedtime Stories, 6-7:30pm

March 14

PTO Meeting, 6pm

March 18

Art Show & Ice Cream Social
6-8pm

March 25

No School – Good Friday



FROM THE PRINCIPAL.....WINTER NEWSLETTER 2016

Dear MRFES Families,

We are now at the midway point of our school year and it is a time of reflection to look at what we have accomplished as well as plan for the remainder of the 2015-16 school year. Projects for the spring include looking at a new K-6 reading program that would provide all the essential elements of a core reading program. In the area of science/technology/engineering/math, known as STEM, is that MRFES will be hosting a new, one week camp from June 27th – July 1st for students currently in grades K-5 call Camp Invention! There will be more information to follow about Camp Invention in the coming months!

STEM continues to be a focus at the elementary school. The implementation of the new math program Bridges in grades K-4 is going very well and you will notice that your student has been learning concepts using a variety of strategies that lend itself to a differentiation in the approach to learning math concepts. Our acquisition of the Mystic Aquarium- Jason Learning Project grant provided grades 3 & 4 a wonderful science learning/field coast study day at Rocky Neck State Park and a guest speaker to both the elementary and middle school on careers in science. Additionally K-4 took part in an “Hour of Code” that was an introduction to computer science designed to expose students to the basics of computer code.

In other news, the students in Preschool and Kindergarten have enjoyed the new renovations to the Early Childhood playground and gross motor room. It was a yearlong project but the “play” in playscape is much more fun and safe! The Cultural Committee did a wonderful job this fall providing both

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student assemblies and family night with award winning children's author Debra Frasier. We are currently looking at possible music assemblies for the spring that will tie in with the art theme: Italy! PTO continues to be a strong partner in our school supporting the latest purchase of interactive whiteboards for grade 1 and we are looking forward to the many upcoming field trips that PTO has funded for your children!

As stated earlier in the year, a positive school climate is a necessity to help students thrive academically and succeed in all areas of life. Success in student learning is connected to the focus of Positive Behavior Intervention and Support Program (PBIS) and we are successfully rolling out our second year in training of both staff and students through a sequential process of learning and leadership.

In closing, I ask that we do all that we can to support your children's learning in attendance, academics, and behavior- we are a team! We'll see you soon at upcoming Parent Conferences March 2nd & 3rd and many upcoming events at MRFES- please check the school website, emails, and flyers in the Friday Folders!

Best Regards,

Ms. Beltram

...From Our Assistant Principal, Mr. Prentiss



MRFES is awesome!

It's hard to believe that we are more than half way done this school year! Our students recently had the opportunity to participate in the 100th day celebration that included designing hats for themselves, bringing in 100 artifacts of their choice and participating in a parade. The enthusiasm of our elementary students is contagious and outstanding! All of the teachers here at MRFES utilize that enthusiasm and foster a love for learning in their classrooms. The tireless work that our teachers put into their planning coupled with their passion to educate and constant positive reinforce have created respectful, responsible, safe and excellent students. This excellence can be seen adorning the hallways and classrooms in the form of exceptional work. The excellence of the students in this wonderful community was also on display in our recent talent show held in the district auditorium. We are all so very proud of what our students have accomplished and how they continue to strive to be the best they can. Please always feel free to contact the main office with any questions regarding upcoming events or activities. We truly relish the partnership between home and school. Stay warm and enjoy the rest of winter! Kind Regards, Mr. Prentiss

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News from the Preschool

The Preschool students had a fun time during the past month exploring "Homes." This theme took the most concrete and familiar experiences of the children and introduced a world of differences. We explored homes from all over the world, and even looked at animal homes. The students painted realistic replicas of their own homes; check them out in the Preschool wing of the building! We also explored winter animals such as penguins and polar bears. We continue to practice colors, shapes, and nursery rhymes throughout the year.

Parent Reminder: For the remainder of the school year, PM Students ONLY will attend on Early Release Days.



News from Kindergarten

The Kindergarten classes are excited to be participating in our reading log program. The children enjoy reading at school and then take these books home to share with their families. They are so proud to be readers!

In Math, students continue to practice counting forward and backward between 0 and 100, starting with any number in the range. They are also working on solving addition problems with a variety of strategies. In the coming weeks, we will continue to focus on addition and introduce subtraction.

The Kindergarten students also celebrated Groundhog Day recently. We began by predicting whether or not Punxsutawney Phil would see his shadow. Throughout the week we read fiction and nonfiction books about groundhogs, created groundhog crafts, played a groundhog sight word game, and experimented with shadows. Most of the children were excited about Punxsutawney Phil's prediction. Let's hope for an early spring!



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Grade 1 News

As 2016 begins, first graders have been quite busy. Some of the topics covered in January include weather and the seasons, as well as the concepts of fairness and equality and the life of Martin Luther King Jr. Math lessons focused on ordering numbers to 120 on a number line, counting forward and backward by 1s, 5s, and 10s and exploring word problems. By the end of first grade, the children will be expected to know all addition and subtraction facts to ten. It is important to provide children with lots of math fact practice at home, to support the work done in school.

Our first graders are proud of their developing reading skills. They have been reading nonfiction texts, which support our science and social studies topics, as well as fiction. At this time of the year, reading comprehension becomes increasingly important. Students are learning to retell the events of a story in order, including key details. We are all looking forward to celebrating the 100th Day of School on February 3rd!



Grade 2 News

Happy New Year from the Second Grade Team! We have a lot to accomplish in the remainder of the year! In the next couple of weeks, students will be administered the DRA2, a reading test to find their new reading level. It will test their fluency, accuracy, and comprehension. Students should be a level 24 at this point in the year. Please continue to read nightly for 15 minutes with your child. We are focusing on retelling the details of a story as well as the author's message in a fictional story. Students should pay close attention to the most important part to determine what the lesson is the author wants them to learn. Students need to provide evidence from the text to support their answers.

In Science, we have begun our matter unit. Students will be learning about the different states of matter, observing matter, how matter can change forms, and making Oobleck! Stay tuned to hear about the exciting times in our Science room!

In Writing, students are learning about how to write paragraphs. We have been practicing writing a topic sentence with supporting details. Capitalization and punctuation continue to be a focus in their daily writing.

In Math, we are getting ready to wrap up our place value unit. We will jump right into our next unit on addition and subtraction strategies with 2 digit numbers. There are many different strategies that we will be teaching that may seem unfamiliar to the traditional algorithm. Please be mindful and patient during this unit. We are happy to assist in helping you as well as your child learn these new strategies. In addition, please continue to practice math facts nightly. Students tend to have a harder time with subtraction, so picking up some flashcards or playing a subtraction bingo game would be extremely beneficial!

In Foundations, students are learning many different phonics rules. We are currently working on r-controlled syllables. In the next few weeks, we will be learning about words that have -er, -ir, and

-ur. These units tend to be difficult, so please practice at home. There are many fun ways to practice spelling at home...play dough, www.spellingcity.com, sand spelling, hangman, etc. A letter was also sent home with trick words that students should know how to spell from Grade 1 as well as this year.

The students are thoroughly enjoying being a part of a PBIS school and earning tickets. They are ecstatic about turning their tickets in for a rewards of their choosing! Our class Dojo has become quite a hit! If you haven't signed up, you still can! It is a great way for us to communicate about behavior and academics. We cannot thank you enough for all of your continued support throughout the year!

Grade Three News

Welcome to the New Year! In math, third grade students have been learning a variety of strategies to add and subtract three-digit numbers. They have learned methods to manipulate numbers in order to use mental math. Students have also been working on telling time to the nearest minute, elapsed time as well as comparing fractions.

In reading, students are launching into outer space! They are sharpening their reading skills, engaging in discussions, and working cooperatively on books about the Moon. They have looked at the Moon through various lenses: as an astronomer, a Native American, an astronaut, and a storyteller. They have compared the similarities and differences in these diverse genres.

Students have also been learning about magnets. They have explored the effects of magnetism on different materials and have made some amazing discoveries about where we can find magnetic materials in everyday items. Did you know that a strong magnet can find iron in your breakfast cereal? Just a reminder to continue to read and practice math facts daily, as well as completing homework on time. Thank you for your continued support!

The Third Grade Team

Mrs. Cox, Mrs. Jewett, Mrs. Sousa, and Mrs. Taft



Grade Four News

The past few months have been very busy for the Fourth Grade! In math, students continue to practice their multiplication and division fluency facts through 12. Students have also been working hard learning about equivalent fractions, and next we will begin comparing, composing and decomposing fractions and mixed numbers!

In writing, Students were introduced to the genre of persuasive/opinion writing. Students learned the essay structure and were provided with graphic organizers to help them develop a thesis statement, reasons, and supporting evidence. We are moving on to learning about writing informational pieces, focusing on the Iditarod – The Last Great Race!

In science, students studied the “Forces that Change the Earth’s Surface.” Student explored weathering, erosion, deposition, landslides, earthquakes and volcanoes. They practiced their note-taking skills by designing foldables which displayed the information. Students also analyzed and compared fiction, including myths, and non-fiction texts that focused on the creation of volcanoes.

In social studies, students have studied the Northeast region, learning many interesting facts about where we live. We are currently studying the West region, focusing on products and natural resources, land and water, climate, culture and landmarks.

The students did a fantastic job on their “Book in a Bag” book reports! For our next book report, students will need to read a biography. More details to come soon!

Sincerely,

Ms. Dion, Mrs. Kinsella, Mrs. Zadora,
and Mrs. Mariotti/Mrs. Deauseault

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Music with Mrs. Rossetti

Recorders invade the Third Grade!

Third graders all received new recorders and neck straps when they returned in January. They have been creating some “sweet sounds” as they learn their first three notes: B, A and G. They’ll be presenting a recorder concert in June for family and friends. Be sure to mark your calendars: June 3, 2015 at 2:20 in the auditorium.

The Mary Fisher Elementary School and the Thompson Middle School teamed up to present Variety Show 2016. This event took place Friday, January 29, 2016 in the TPS auditorium. The show, directed by Mr. Leclerc and Mrs. Rossetti, consisted of twenty-one acts featuring: vocal solos and duets, dancers, combination vocal/instrumental acts and a traditional staff act which is always a fun addition to the show. This year’s acts were especially talented and the students did an amazing job entertaining their enthusiastic audience. Mr. Leclerc and Mrs. Rossetti are very proud of all the performers. It was an exceptional night of music!

Hello from Physical Education!

For the month of January students developed their basketball skills in various activities and games. February begins our jump rope/jumping unit as well as our Jump Rope for Hearts fundraiser with our event February 19 (snow date 2/26). Students received information and registration forms in Friday folders. Students can also pick up the necessary forms from myself in the P.E office. Classes continue to work on their cardiorespiratory endurance during our running challenge and students are close to reaching their goals of running 200 miles as a class. Each class has decided to set a goal of running 500 miles by the end of the year! Please visit our schools webpage and check out the physical education page with seasonal family activities and information on school events.



Warm Regards,
Mrs. Longino



Media Center Mrs. Glode

The Scholastic Book Fair is returning to MRFES! The Book Fair will be at our school February 29 – March 4, 2016. The fair is open during school hours, and during parent teacher conferences. The fair will close at 11:00 am on March 4, 2016.

The theme of the spring book fair is “Feeling Groovy Book Fair: Peace, Love, and Books.” We will continue to have our coloring contest which helps us decorate the Media Center for the book fair. One boy and girl from each grade will be rewarded with a \$5.00 gift card to the book for their coloring efforts.

On February 29, 2016, we encourage students and staff to dress up in 70’s attire to help us kick off the book fair. I anticipate that we will see a lot of tie dye, peace signs, flowers in the hair, and maybe some bell bottoms. Dressing up is optional, and we look forward to the creative costumes. There will be gift card rewards for staff, and one boy and girl from each grade will each receive a \$5.00 gift card to the book fair!

Please contact Lynne Glode at extension 860-923-9142 X 323 if you are interested in volunteering at the book fair or if you have any questions or concerns. We hope to see you at the Book Fair!

In the Art Studio with Signora Connolly

Ciao! Greetings

from the Elementary Art Studio! This year, the students and I have been studying the art, culture, and language of Italy. As you can imagine, we have found quite a lot to inspire our creativity - From opera, to gondolas, pizza, and pasta, mosaics, and Murano glass, we have been very busy creating artwork for our annual **Art Show & Ice Cream Social**, which is fast approaching, on **Friday, March 18th, from 6-8pm.**

Proudly, each grade is introduced to a wide variety of media, which includes ceramics, painting, watercolor, chalk pastel, printmaking, collage, sculpture, portraiture, still-life drawing, and more! In addition, we have all learned how to count to ten in Italian (ask your child to sing the “Italian Counting Song”), practiced our colors, and have learned a few simple Italian phrases.

Thank you to everyone who has donated recyclables, and other great materials to the Art Studio this year – we put every tube, egg carton, water bottle, and beyond, to very good use!

We hope to see you all on March 18th, for our Art Show & Ice Cream Social, where you will be transported to an Italian extravaganza of oversized cones of gelato, gigantic loaves of Italian bread, ceramic gondolas navigating the waterways of Venice, a very tall and leaning Leaning Tower of Piza, look through Galileo’s telescope, see Venetian Masks, Kindergarten Frescos, Stained Glass Lampshades, Pinocchio marionettes, Leonardo da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa*, and enjoy a free ice cream treat sponsored by our PTO!

As always, we thank you for your support of the Arts, and Art Education in Thompson-

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Grazie Mille, Signora Connolly



Computer Lab with Mrs. Andersen

All classes have been very busy. Kindergarten students have learned to use the mouse – click, double click, and drag and drop. They are now working in reading and math programs – Lexia and Symphony Math. See below for how to access these programs from home. Soon, students will be using key seeker (annrymer.com/keyseeker) to find the letters on the keyboard using the correct hand.

First grade students continue to use Symphony Math and Lexia to improve their math and reading skills. They are learning to type in the address bar to find websites that we use. We will be using keyseeker to practice which hand types which letter on the keyboard.

Second grade students also practice math and reading with Symphony Math and Lexia. They also use Dance Mat Typing to learn which fingers type which letters. In second grade, the most important part of keyboarding, though, is using correct posture (sitting up straight, eyes on the screen, feet flat on the floor) and fingering, having the keyboard near the edge of the table with “g” and “h” in front of the bellybutton, fingers curved and wrists slightly up, and elbows by the student’s side.

In third grade, we continue trying to make all the non-typing requirements (see second grade) second nature. Dance Mat Typing continues to be used to learn the keys and correct fingering. Students who still need reading and math improvement also work in Symphony Math and Lexia. Other students go on various websites to learn more about their individual interests.

Fourth graders use Dance Mat Typing as a review and then use Ultrakey, a purchased program, to improve accuracy. Accuracy is also practiced and tested on typeonline.co.uk and on typingtest.com. We’re looking for a 92% accuracy score by mid-May. Symphony Math and Lexia are used to reinforce and improve math and reading skills.

All grade levels, K-4, participated in the “Hour of Code.” This is an international event whose purpose is to interest students in computer science. Games are used to help students program, sequence, think critically, plan, etc. I will be using their curriculum to continue coding with my classes. If you wish to learn more about this, or have your child do some programming at home, go to code.org/teach. There is a lot of information there, but the games are found in the Elementary School tab.

To access Symphony Math, Lexia, and Dance Mat Typing, go to the school website, thompsonk12.org. (To use Dance Mat Typing, you must use the Chrome browser). Hover over “Schools,” click on “Mary Fisher Elementary School,” and click on “Unified Arts” on the left side of the screen. This is the Technology page. Scroll down to the programs. There is no log in for Dance Mat Typing.

Tech Department

Heather Burns, the director of our IT department, has announced that through her department budget, 25 laptops will replace the computers in the laptop cart in the 3rd and 4th grade wing. Those computers were a donation through a company Ms. Beltram had contacted. They are already several years old and the batteries no longer hold a charge. Many of the elementary teachers have outdated computers so the plan is to replace the ES computer lab over the summer and then give the old lab computers to the ES teachers.

Interactive Whiteboards have become an important learning tool for teachers to use in the classroom and through the continued effort and support from PTO, grade one classrooms have completed the installation and basic training. The Mary R. Fisher PTO has been the largest contributor to providing funds to purchase grade 4, 3, and 2 interactive whiteboards with some additional grant monies from International Paper and the tech department budget. We are now looking towards kindergarten for this technology as a learning tool that has the ability to project on various plains- easel, table and floor!

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Reminders from the nurse:

Is your child's emergency information up to date? It is imperative that the school nurse has the correct contact person/s and current phone numbers to reach in case your child is injured or ill. Include the contact information of designated adults or alternate caretakers whom you have entrusted to pick up and care for your child if you are not able to be reached or are unable to leave work.

Change of clothes: Children in the early grades of school often have a need for a change of clothing including pants, shirts, underwear and socks. The nurse's office does not have a supply of clothing to fulfill everyone's needs. Please send a complete change of clothes in a zip lock or plastic bag to be kept in your child's classroom.

Food allergy awareness: There are many students with various food allergies. Please remind your child that they should not be sharing or switching their food with other students. Check with your child's teacher before sending any food into the classroom.

Health/Medication updates: As a reminder, please notify the nurse of any medication your child is on and or any changes with medications. Also it is important for nurse to be informed of any medical changes in your child's health status.

Special Education News

From: Mrs. Parenteau, Mrs. Fairley, and Ms. Duquette

The Special Education Department is off to a great start working with our students and our intervention classes for reading, writing and math. Please remember to read every night and complete homework on time. Reading every night is very beneficial to your child's development. We are looking forward to the rest of the school year and all of the learning that will be taking place. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact us or schedule an appointment for parent-teacher conferences.

PTO

Hello MRFES Families!

Happy New Year! We had a productive fall with new parents attending our meetings and lending a hand, successful fundraisers and a great turnout for the Halloween egg hunt and Breakfast with Santa. In addition, we also were able to assist the school in purchasing interactive white boards for 1st grade. This winter, we will have a few more fundraisers – butter braids and cookie dough (on going), Jeannine (March), Paint Night (March) and Square 1 Art (April). The students have been reading a great deal this year and turning in their PAWs for Reading sheets. We are always looking for more family participation, whether it is attending PTO meetings, assisting with functions behind the scenes or simply bringing forth ideas and suggestions.

Thank you!

MRFES PTO

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