

NEWS & TIDINGS

WARWICK COMMUNITY SCHOOL

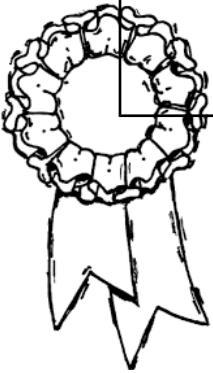
Elizabeth Musgrave, Principal
January 2015

MAKE A DATE: YOU ARE INVITED!

PTO MEETING: 3:15 PM, Feb. 5

SCHOOL VACATION: Feb. 16-20

SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING: 3:15 PM, Feb 26.



PERFECT ATTENDANCE! At the mid-point in our school year, I am again delighted to report that overall school attendance at WCS has been excellent! Congratulations to Anna Picard for PERFECT attendance, and to Micheal Ploof, Luke Picard and Reece Hains, with just one absence.

YOUR SCHOOL COUNCIL

REPRESENTATIVES:

This year's community member is Beth Gilgun.

This year's parent members are:

- Anne Kilroy, mom of Julia (PreK)
- Vera Goulston, mom of Laylah (K), Jerard (2), and Ellianna (3)



One of the most important responsibilities of School Council Members is to bring parent and community suggestions or points of concern to our School Council meetings. Of course, you may bring your concerns directly to the Principal or teachers at any time (and are encouraged to do so), but that may not always be convenient or comfortable. Do not hesitate to contact your representatives if there is anything you wish to have discussed. And, you are always welcome at the meetings. Rep contact info & meeting times are available from Trish in the office.

SOMETIMES LESS IS MORE and that's the case right now at WCS. As a staff, we have made the decision to postpone our Family Math Blast until we all have the breathing room to enjoy it. All of our classroom teachers and most of students in grades 3-6 are participating in after-school PARCC tutoring two days each week. It's important work - and we hold full admiration for those involved!

MA SCHOOLS RANK TOP IN ANOTHER NATIONAL STUDY!

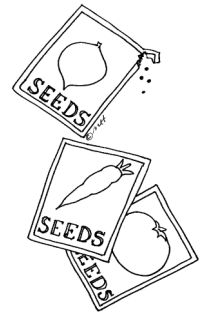
- See the report from Education Week -

COMMON CORE & PARCC: What's all the fuss about? The Common Core Makes up the new curriculum frameworks which Massachusetts and numerous other states have adopted. These frameworks set the expectations for what children should learn in every grade level beginning in Pre-school & Kindergarten. Because student achievement in our state has been top in the nation, MA was instrumental in developing the Common Core curriculum, which is strongly based on our previous state framework. There have, however, been major changes that affect our teaching and learning. In many areas, standards have been raised even higher, with children expected to acquire knowledge and skills earlier.



PARCC is the name of the new tests that evaluates student achievement in grades 3-10 on the Common Core frameworks - the new PARCC stands for Partnership of Assessment for College and Career Readiness. Like MCAS, the PARCC tests happen twice a year in March and May. Unlike MCAS, PARCC has a very different format; it is taken entirely on-line, and emphasizes problem solving, close reading, writing and research skills, evidence and written explanation.

IT'S ALMOST THAT LOVELY TIME AGAIN! Time for garden dreaming! Warwick Community School PTO Fedco seed fundraiser The Warwick Community School's PTO will be running the annual Fedco seed sale next month (Feb). We need your help, because we need to sell 100 packets in order to participate next year. Order forms will go home with students in mid-February, and the community may place orders through students, the town library, or by calling me. I can send you an order form through email. I will place a reminder on the Warwick-L when order forms are ready. Thank you so much, and have fun planning your gardens! **Erika Nygard**



OUR CLASSROOM BUZZ...

KINDERGARTEN and PRE-K: It has been a funny kind of schedule here at school, what with snow and cold days and lots of ice around. The bad news was that we spent much more time inside than we had liked. The good news was that it afforded us opportunity to be studying a bit about snow and ice, freezing, and melting. We will be doing more of this over the next few weeks as well as hoping to do more animal tracking to see what the animals are up to in this winter weather.

In language arts, all children are working on rhyming skills and breaking words down into letter sounds. Preschoolers are working on beginning sounds and Kindergarteners are working on ending and middle sounds. Kindergarten children are working in beginning reading groups and on a program called Raz-Kids in which

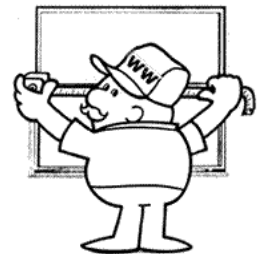
they work at their own reading level to practice reading and comprehension skills. They are also beginning to work on vowel sounds (tricky stuff).

In math we are working on recognizing and naming shapes and their attributes. Kindergarteners are starting to work on teen numbers as being groups of 10 and some more. And as always there are many opportunities for math in everyday classroom life. How many children are absent? How many here? Has there been more sunny or cloudy days lately? How many more pieces of paper do we need in order for everyone to have one? The list is endless!! **Ms. Allison White**

GRADES 1 and 2: First and Second graders have been studying what it feels like to be a non-fiction author. They have been researching an animal of their choice from our area of Western Massachusetts. We have mainly been using books for our research, but we recently had our 5th and 6th grade buddies help us with some internet research as well! Our students have been encouraged to put their research findings in their own words by answering our always familiar who, what, where, when, how, and why questions with their writing. We look forward to sharing our finished products with families and other members of our school community when we are finished!

Our Reader's Workshop unit has coincided nicely with our non-fiction writing. We have been working hard to notice the features of non-fiction writing, such as the table of contents, glossary, section headings, labels and captions of pictures, and the index. Noticing these features in the books we are reading is helping us to use them in our writing. I hope all families have enjoyed the non-fiction book selections that their children have been taking home for home reading.

Second graders are going to be finishing up their measurement unit in math soon. They have been practicing using centimeter rulers to measure the sides of different shapes, as well as the distance all the way around a given shape. To finish up our unit, we will start using meter sticks to measure each member of our class and compare those measurements, as well as get into practice with using other units of measurement such as inches.



The first graders are doing some amazing work with thinking about bigger numbers. Their mental fluency with number within ten and even beyond to twenty has been so impressive for me as a teacher. We will continue on with our current unit for the next few weeks; expanding our thinking of how to combine 10's and 1's in different ways that all promote mental fluency.

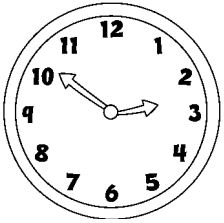
Our continual science units of weather and animal's seasonal adaptations are alive and well in our classroom and we have been dealing with these cold temperatures and noticing the changes in our surroundings! **Ms. Kristyn Gibbs**

GRADES 3 and 4: We came back from the holiday break ready to set new goals for ourselves, review our classroom rules, and begin a fresh, new year. Each of the students is looking forward to reading a new series of books or getting to know someone in our classroom a little better. We are also trying to break old habits.

We shared these resolutions at our first morning meeting after the break. It helped to re-center us and prepare us for a new year of learning.

Our classroom has also welcomed a student teacher from Antioch College this month. Her name is Miss Amanda Chisholm and she will be with us until the beginning of May. Amanda brings with her a background in environmental education and has spent several years working with children in an outdoor setting. We are looking forward to all that she will teach us over the next few months!

The classroom is buzzing about persuasive writing! Students in the third and fourth grade love sharing their opinions with anyone who will listen. This is their very favorite writing unit because they get to convince others to share their opinion. I look forward to reading lots of stories about later bedtimes, no homework, longer recess times, and more! :)



During math we are tackling the tricky concept of elapsed time. We are practicing counting time using a number line and the hands on the clock. Please continue to work on this at home with your children. Simple questions about daily activities can really drive home the concept.

In social studies we have learned about the people of the United States and all of the ethnic groups that make up our melting pot. We shared stories from these cultures, discussed their impact on our country, and discovered the things/words/foods/customs they brought with them that we rely on every day. Today we will begin our study of the Southeast region of the USA.

Anti-bullying has been a large focus of our social skills curriculum this year. Students have been reading stories, role-playing situations, and brainstorming solutions to common bullying issues. They are focusing on becoming allies to the child being bullied and learning to recognize bullying behavior. To celebrate, we will be singing a song about standing up to bullies at the next all school meeting.

Finally, the majority of our students are staying after school for tutoring in preparation for our standardized testing in March and May. The test that we are taking this year is called the PARCC and it replaces our old MCAS testing. The entire test is taken on the computer and it looks very different than the MCAS.

The goal this year is to make students feel comfortable with the test and the computer skills being asked of them. The third and fourth grade are very savvy when it comes to technology, I am really impressed with their ability to manipulate their way through this test. We will be well prepared when the test is upon us!

Ms. Christine Mullen



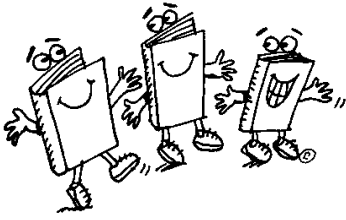
GRADES 5 and 6: The new year brings new units for us in all subject areas. The students have been learning about algebra in our math unit on "Expressions and Equations". We will also be starting our science units on the human body. We will begin with the skeleton and learn about the 206 bones that provide the foundation for the rest of our systems. Students are completing their social studies unit on "World Religions" and we are going to embark on our exploration of the geography and cultures of Europe. We will take at least one field trip to the Mariposa Museum in Peterborough, New Hampshire as we move our studies to different continents around the world.

In English Language Arts, we are switching our focus from fiction to nonfiction topics. We will be learning how to read nonfiction for structure and meaning. We will also be writing nonfiction in the form of compare and contrast and argument (opinion) essays. There are new requirements in the Massachusetts State Frameworks for students to provide strong evidence from our reading texts while writing the essays necessary to respond to discussion topics and open response questions. Finding and using evidence from the text is a major focus for all of our nonfiction writing units.

More than half of the 5th and 6th grade students voluntarily remain after school for an extra hour on Tuesdays and Thursdays to participate in tutoring in preparation for the PARCC tests that will be administered in March and May! These students are not participating because they are behind, but are students who each want to put their best foot forward! The PARCC tests are aligned to the Common Core and are new to us in our district, as we move away from the MCAS. Not only is much content new, but the tests are done entirely on the computer with sophisticated navigation required. There's a lot to learn, and we commend the students who've made the commitment to participate! **Ms. Lynn Hansell**



MUSICAL NOTES: This will be an exciting new year! We have started off the new year exploring rhythm and rhythm instruments in the multi age and 1/2 classrooms. 3/4 continued their study of the recorder, and the 5/6 has composed a pentatonic melody and ostinato called "the Pitter Patter Orchestra" and are planning to bring in their instruments and play it in the coming weeks. We are singing songs and reading books that celebrate African American contribution to American culture and history, and will begin practicing songs from "the Warwick Songbook" to record in the next two months! **Ms. Wallach, Music**



LIBRARY LEARNING! A frigid atmosphere has set in among the stacks of the Library and it's not related to either the weather or the heating system. Books about the Antarctic and Arctic, explorations to the top and bottom of our Earth, blizzards, storms and ice have heaved up off the stacks onto the shelves. We have such a great collection of non-fiction books and biographies so the students have many choices.

As each holiday arrives, we try to supplement the teachers' lessons. With the Martin Luther King Birthday holiday, biographies of King and other Civil Rights activists have been available for the students to take out and for the teachers to use. Also, we have displayed fiction picture and chapter books featuring African and African Americans as the characters.

Our Library Assistants are planning to spice up this dreary time of year by filling the glass display cases and our Library bulletin board with a few of our student's personal collections. These will demonstrate the student's passions and expertise as well as inspire others.

A new type of reference tool has been used in our students' literacy and science studies. The fifth and sixth graders helped Grades 1 & 2 navigate a blog called Naturally Curious with Mary Holland. Mary, a Vermont naturalist, photographer, columnist and author writes a few blog articles each week and posts them on this website:

<http://www.naturallycuriouswithmaryholland.wordpress.com/>

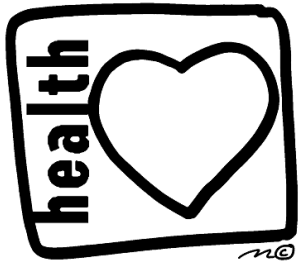
The entries are very timely, illuminating the readers to what is happening NOW in our natural world. The blog has a huge index which facilitated the students' work to find information about their chosen animal, bird or insect. I hope that the students will continue to use this resource and others like it for their school work. Please be sure to check this out! **Laurel Powell, Librarian**



FUN 'N GAMES: Physical Education is full of excitement!

K-2 students have been very busy working cooperatively on group games that include snake pit, go for the dough, stations and hoops. Ask your child how much money he/she collected during go for the dough? 3-6 students are continuing cooperative games and are now moving onto a unit of create-a-game. Students are working together to create a unique game that each given group has created! This gives us many interesting and fun games! It would be helpful if you could remind your child to wear sneakers on Thursday for PE class. **Ms. Sue Scott, PE**

FREE PLAYGROUP for young children birth to age 5 and their parents/caregivers, Wednesday's 9:15 to 11:00 a.m., WCS Gym. Play, fun activities and story time. The playgroup follows the school calendar. Sponsored by the PVRSD CFCE, for more information contact Deb Wood @413-498-2660 or email woodd@pioneervalley.k12.ma.us.



HEALTH NOTES Medication Safety/Substance Abuse Prevention

The opioid crisis has received a lot of attention in our region in recent years. Because of this, Medication Safety/Substance Abuse Prevention information will be a recurring theme in the health office newsletter piece in the months ahead.

What are opioids? The term opioid refers to a drug or chemical that attaches to sites in the brain called opioid receptors. Opioids are used to reduce pain. They are also very addictive. Examples of prescription opioids include: Oxycontin, Percocet, Vicodin, Demerol, Morphine, Methadone, and Dilaudid. Heroin is also an opioid.

How do people start misusing opioids? 70% of the time, a family member or friend gives them a pill. That's how it starts. Sharing any kind of medicine is not a good idea, even if you think it will help your loved one feel better. If your loved one is in pain, send them to their doctor instead.

Illness reminder: Please remember that sick children do not belong at school. In addition, a child who has been medicated for sickness, whether a fever, diarrhea or stomach upset or other symptom is still a sick child.

When a child's health is assessed at school, numerous factors are considered, including the child's age, the child's temperature and other symptoms, how long the symptoms have lasted, and how well the child is able to continue to participate in classroom activities.

Having to stay home with a sick child or having to pick up a sick child for early dismissal from school can be difficult for any family. However, the likelihood is that all parents will face these situations many times during the childhood years. Many parents are not at home during the day and need to have an alternate plan in place ahead of time such as a trusted family member, friend, or babysitter who can be called to help out in this situation. A sick child at school is not in the child's best interest and increases the spread of illness.

Ms. Dempsey, RN



We're having fun while the snow flies!

