

Principal's Message

February, 2018

Dear PRS Community,

The weeks following the New Year and the end of February always prove to be extremely busy as the teachers and I take stock through analysis of data and individual meetings so we can look at where we were at the beginning of the school year with students and the progress to date. This provides the reflection necessary to make sure that our students are on track to meet end of the year goals and benchmarks. The upcoming conferences (late March into April) will provide an opportunity to meet and discuss progress and ways you can support at home.

If you have questions that come up prior to conferences, please do not hesitate to reach out for answers!

Smarter Balanced assessments will be administered after the April vacation again this year. We will begin on or about April 17th. SBAC is only for our grade 3-5 students. Testing is approximately 45-60 minutes, four times per week, for two weeks. I will provide more information as we work out all of the scheduling details.

Fifth graders will not take the Science CMT this year. Instead South Windsor is participating in the new NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards) field test which is only for our 5th graders. This is scheduled for May 17th.

Here are some helpful tips to help prepare your child for standardized testing: (1) Get a good night sleep the night before. Limit activities the night before testing. (2) Give your child an energy boosting breakfast. Try to include both protein (eggs, yogurt,

milk) and carbohydrates (fruit, oatmeal, toast). (3)

If your child has testing anxiety, reassure them that we only expect them to do their best because the testing is meant to show what they have learned!

We hope everyone will join us for our Second Annual Cultural Night on March 27th from 6:30-8:00 at PRS.

You probably will not believe this (I know I don't!) but next month's Paw Prints newsletter will likely share about the process for class placement as we start soliciting parent input around April. So be on the lookout for that information.

Mark your calendars...

Friday, March 9th Progress Reports distributed electronically

Wednesday, March 21st Parent/Teacher Conferences begin

Wednesday, March 21st Early Dismissal Wednesday begins. Students dismissed at 12:45.

Friday, March 30th No School

Fondly,
Michelle Dixon, Principal

Philip R. Smith



Elementary School



The Kindergarteners have been very busy this month. In Humanities, they learned about differing citizens in our community. The students learned how to be good citizens in their own classrooms as well as in the school community. Beyond citizenship, the students learned about informational text and the main idea of a book. They learned about the use of "how to" books and practiced writing one. In math, they completed a Geometry Unit and are gearing up for a new unit called "Bunkbeds and Apple Boxes", which focuses on early number sense.



Notes from First Grade

First graders are working on problem solving skills:

- Did I talk to the person I have an issue with?
- Did I use an I statement: I feel _____ when you _____.
- Did the person restate how you were feeling and come up with an action plan to solve the problem?

I heard you say _____. Next time I will _____.

Please reinforce these skills at home!



News from Second Grade

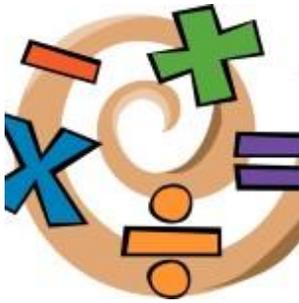
Language Arts this month has been full of LESSONS! Second grade has been reading fables, understanding their special characteristics and learning life lessons. Through the flaws or bad traits of characters, we've learned that we need to be kind, be flexible, be prepared, always work hard, and never judge a book by its cover. We have also learned that we can learn these same lessons through fiction stories, but we usually learn them in a different way. In a fiction story, we often learn great lessons from good character traits that are rewarded in the end. We also continue learning about vowel teams in our word work!

Our second graders have also been working hard in math to learn about place value. We had a very successful food drive, which we used to count items and represent the numbers in many different ways. We also began our Contexts for Learning Math Unit called The T-shirt Factory. Students have been pretending to be employees for a t-shirt company. We have been taking inventory, "selling" shirts (practicing multi-digit subtracting), replenishing our t-shirt supply (practicing multi-digit addition), and working to make complete boxes of t-shirts (practicing change unknown to the nearest 100). This has been a fun and creative way to practice all of our math skills!



Third Grade

What does chocolate have to do with multiplication? Third graders are working in Muffle's Truffles Shop to organize his chocolate truffles into boxes of 10. What happens when Muffles assistant Patricio mistakenly wraps up the truffle boxes without labeling them? Students work to determine the area of the boxes using 5×2 arrays or by determining the dimensions of the wrapped boxes. They discovered three important properties within this unit: The commutative ($8 \times 10 = 10 \times 8$), associative ($5 \times 2 \times 3 = 2 \times 3 \times 5$), and distributive ($12 \times 4 = 10 \times 4 + 2 \times 4$) properties!



Fourth Grade Mathematicians

This month the students have been working hard on several different math concepts. During the first part of the month, we finished up our Geometry Unit. Students had to determine the area and perimeter of polygons, as well as using protractors to measure angles. They also had to identify shapes that had lines of symmetry. The second half of the month focused on our Measurement Conversion Unit. The students had to use strategies to convert grams to kilograms, pounds to ounces, feet to yards, and other conversions to solve real life problems.

Next month, we will be starting our two part unit on fractions and decimals. Students will have to compare different fractions and decimals to determine which is larger, smaller or equivalent. They also have to solve word problems by multiplying a whole number by a fraction. This unit can be challenging for students, so please take any opportunity to point out fractions and decimals you may come across in the real world.

5th Grade

Fifth Grade News

By: Kyra Soucy

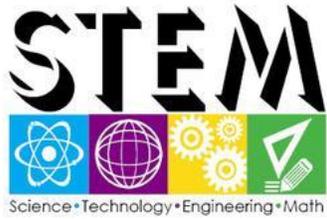
Lighting up our classroom while we learn about light is an amazing opportunity in the Philip R. Smith fifth grade community! Did you know that white light isn't white? White light is all colors, red, orange, yellow, green, blue indigo and violet. We learned about light by making vibrant and colorful posters to hang in the hall. We experimented with prisms and diffraction squares. We loved listening to Bill Nye the Science Guy. We learned how a rainbow forms in the sky, as well as why the sky is blue! Light is helping you read right now.

Human Rights are a set of rules you and many more should follow every day. In fifth grade, we just finished reading books about Human Rights. To name a few, Glory Be, Esperanza Rising, and Gracie's Girl. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was established to make sure people were treated fair and equal.

Komma Konga! Do you know where to put your commas? 1,2,3 comma! 1,2,3 comma! We are *topping* off our fraction unit with decimals! If there's writing in our math notebooks, it's about decimals! A decimal separates the whole numbers from the pieces. We are rounding to the nearest whole, tenth, hundredth and thousandth.

Coming next week, fifth grade will be all about our new subject; Earth and its environment! Our planet, the bodies of water, and best of all, we will learn how humans can help our environment so we can protect the animals and all the wildlife!

Fifth grade continues to make us smile while learning. We love our fifth grade year.



STEM Lab: We Belong Here

On February 10, 5th graders participated in the South Windsor Invention Convention. Students were judged on their invention originality, practicality, effectiveness, inventing process, and the need for their invention. The following students were selected as honored inventors and will be presenting their inventions at the Central Regional Invention Convention: Rachel T. (Visionary Victory), Kayla S. (Cozy Hair), Ethan H. (Tape O Tron), Mike T. (Seat Slider), Andrew K. (Sled-R), Ben A. (Pro-Brush), Jacob T. (The Sound Stopper), Ethan B. (Battery Snatcher), Aarush K. (Snow Sweeper), and Joshua M. (Ankle Flipper 500). Congratulations to ALL of the 5th graders for their persistence and innovative thinking!



Library MakerSpace

Our makerspace provides hands-on, creative ways for students to design, build, invent, learn and share.

One of the favorite building opportunities in the library is Magna-Tiles by Veritech: 3-D geometric magnetic building and design tiles. Students can build anything they can imagine; cubes, pyramids, towers, elaborate shapes, etc. Whether working alone, with a partner or in small groups, fun and discovery is experienced by all.

One of the newest additions to the maker-space is Q-Ba Maze by MindWare: the new generation marble maze. Cubes of three different designs are used in scaffolding, ramps, paths, and much more. The ingenious double exit cubes keep you guessing which

way marbles will go. Critical thinking and planning goes into the marble run variations.

Another new addition is the Hulelino marble run made in Germany. The building blocks are compatible with DUPLO. Builders learn fundamentals of acceleration and gravity teaching themselves how best to use curves, slides, U turns and straights to get the most fun out of their designs.

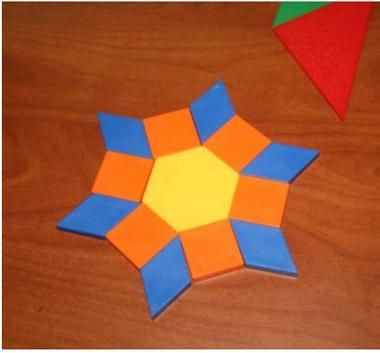
Marbulous marble run by Eduscape has been a long time favorite. Builders use dips, drops, turns and more to create a giant marble run.

K'nex is a favorite building toy of interlocking plastic rods, connectors, blocks, gears, wheels, and other components which can be pieced together to form architectural structures.

Ever popular Legos are used to assemble any objects they can imagine.

Gears Gears Gears! Gizmos by Learning Resources is various size gears and baseplates and perpendicular and angle connectors that change the direction of motion from vertical to horizontal permitting 3-dimensional construction. Students are challenged to make all gears spin with the use of one crank-an engineering feat!

Arts and Crafts: various types of paper, markers, sharpies, crayons and colored pencils, pipe cleaners, pom poms, beads, gems, duct tape, paper bags, yarn, ribbons, and string, wiggly eyes, craft sticks, paper plates, stickers, and origami paper. Students use their imagination to create. Many enjoy the white boards and dry erase markers.



Geometry Fun

By: Julie Ratajczak

Math Coach/Intervention Teacher

Some of our grade levels are working on or have recently finished their *Geometry* unit. There are a lot of fun hands on activities that the students work on while studying *Geometry*. In 4th grade, the students design symmetric pictures with pattern blocks and find the area, while learning about lines of symmetry. In Kindergarten, we are learning about 2 and 3-D shapes. Students are building "flat" shapes on Geoboards, while identifying them and counting sides and vertices. Also they are exploring with Geoblocks to match faces to see which "solid" shapes have similarities and differences.

There are lots of way to help at home. Play "I spy", looking for different shapes. "I spy something that looks like a cone." Also cut out magazine pictures that look symmetric. Then cut it along the line of symmetry. Paste it on a piece of paper and have your child draw the missing half. Another idea is have your child trace all the faces of a 3-D shape by laying it on a piece of paper, then have them name the different shapes. Most importantly have fun together!

Helping our children feel safe in our schools

By: Marisa Fazzino, NCSP

In a time where violence within schools is a highly publicized topic, our children are being faced with questions, confusion, and high emotions. Just as many adults struggle to understand the events that occurred and the prevention that needs to be in place, our children have similar if not more concerns and questions. Our job as adults is to support our children, to reassure them that schools are generally

safe places for children, and to highlight what safety measures are in place to ensure that safety.

But how do we begin a discussion about school safety? Encourage children to discuss their feelings. Not all children talk about their feelings readily, so be patient, and when they do begin to discuss their feelings; be open. Not all children express feelings through discussion. Writing, music, art activities, or play may be outlets one can see children express worry, fear, concern, or confusion. Allow their questions and developmental age to guide the amount of information that you provide to them about school violence. Additionally, the media is filled with information, some developmentally inappropriate to share with children. Monitor their access to television and the news.

The following are points to keep in mind when talking with your child:

- Schools are safe places. The adults at the school, our family, and our community are working together to keep children safe.
- Philip R. Smith is safe because..... (provide specific information to your children in how the school is keeping the students safe).
- Everyone plays a role in school safety. Tell an adult if you see or hear something that makes you uncomfortable, nervous, or frightened.
- Sometimes people make choices that do not respect the safety of others. Those people may be unable to handle their strong feelings, and there are adults that are working very hard to support them and teach them how to handle a strong feeling.
- Safety is very important. When a child has a problem, they can help find a positive solution by talking with a trusted adult, learning how to problem solve, and how to manage strong feelings in a safe way.

Principal	Michelle Dixon
Secretary	Lisa Lovett
Clerk	Carol Scheuing
Nurse	Colleen Heneghan
Main Number	648-5025

Visit our Website:

www.southwindsorschools.org/prs

Important Dates

March 9 - Prog. Reports Delivered Electronically

March 20 - Professional Development Day

No school for Students

March 21 - Early Release Wednesday

Parent Teacher Conferences

March 27 - Family Culture Sharing Night

March 28 - Early Release Wednesday

Parent Teacher Conferences

March 30 - Good Friday - No School

April 4 - Early Release Wednesday

Parent Teacher Conferences

April 9-13 - April Vacation