

Our Student Leadership group completed their

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER PAWPRINTS "KINDNESS AND ACCEPTANCE"



Principal's Message

November, 2018

Wishing your family a wonderful holiday season!

It is incredibly difficult to believe that we are already in the month of December. The students and teachers have been working hard this year. I thank all of you for taking the time in the next few weeks to meet with your child's classroom teacher and other staff to celebrate the academic and social growth at parent/teacher conferences. If you have not set up a time to meet with your child's teacher(s), please make a point to do so.

In addition to the instruction and learning at PRS, I am proud to share many extra activities that have occurred in November and also share some upcoming events...

We had our Annual Veteran's Day celebration on November 12th. Over 35 Veterans from our community joined us. The celebration was so touching, I'm not sure there was a dry eye in the room.

The PTO hosted a very successful Scholastic Book Fair and a Donuts for Dads as well as its first Paint Night!

PRS hosted its Third Annual STEM Night and invited families to come to school in the evening to engage in STEM engineering activities. The evening was a great success with many coming out to enjoy the family night.

bank. Thank you to all of our families who helped support the collection of nonperishable food items.

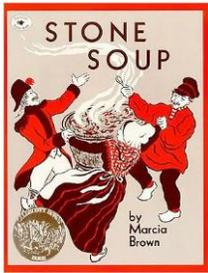
I am so grateful to be a part of this wonderful, caring and involved community! Enjoy the magic of the season! Michelle

Holiday Break: Monday, December 24th, 2018 through Tuesday, January 2nd, 2019.

Fondly,
Michelle Dixon



The Kindergarteners have been very busy this month. In Humanities, we are working on the unit *Myself and My Family: Character and Setting*. The students learned how to identify a character and setting in stories as well as events. In math, they completed the Counting and Comparing Unit and are gearing up for a new unit called "Measurement and Counting".



First Grade

November has been a busy month for Grade 1! In Language Arts, we have continued to study story elements and the lessons characters learn in stories. At the beginning of the month, our literature focused on veterans and their contributions to our country and our lives. We created soldiers which are hanging around the school to show our appreciation to the troops with ties to PRS and to all who have served. After Veteran's Day, we read many versions of the folktale Stone Soup and discussed the lesson of the story; Sharing benefits everyone that contributes. We had a Stone Soup celebration and made our own delicious pot of stone soup (with a stone)!

In Math, we wrapped up our Geometry unit in which students learned to sort shapes by different attributes and to fill pattern blocks with more and fewer. We then began Unit 3 which focuses on solving story problems.

Another exciting development ... we began switching classes each Wednesday. Wacky Wednesday allows us to focus instructional time on Science and Social Studies units that are not integrated within the Humanities curriculum. Students have been studying Light and Sound and Maps and Globes. They really love acting like big kids and visiting new classrooms for their lessons!



Second Grade

Second grade has been very busy learning about the development of characters within a series! They have focused on series such as Mercy Watson, Froggy, Franklin, and many more! With these series, they have examined the characters' traits, their response to major events, and point of view. In writing, they listened to the book titled, Dex The Heart of a Hero, and are now continuing the series by writing their own fictional narrative. They are learning how to add specific details and elaboration to each story element. They will also edit and revise their writing pieces. They are enjoying adding their imagination and creativity to their stories. This has been a fun unit for second grade! Second grade rocks!



Third Grade

Third graders have been busy reading nonfiction books and learning how to research a specific topic by generating questions they have about the topic, closely reading and annotating articles about the topic, and taking notes on books, articles, websites and videos. As part of this unit, students are working in small groups to study different regions of the United States and learn about the Native American tribes that lived in these regions. Additionally, students are doing Native American readers theater in library, learning Native American songs and dances in music, and creating coil pots in art. By the end of the month, they will present their learning to classmates as well as put on a Native American performance for the entire PRS community to celebrate their learning!



Fourth Grade

The students have been very excited during the current Humanities Unit. Through their reading, our

fourth graders have traveled to lands far, far away and into a time long, long ago. Students are reading myths from different cultures and learning about how these traditional tales were passed down orally to teach a lesson, explain an event in nature, or showcase the bravery of a hero on a quest. Students are noticing that the same themes and character traits can be found in many myths from different countries and even in books written in the present day. They are noticing that themes like honesty, compassion, and perseverance will always transcend place and time. Lastly, the students are analyzing the text to determine the point of view that it was written in, and how the text would be different if it was written from another point of view.



Fifth Grade

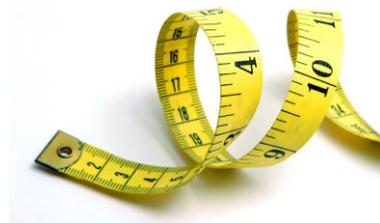
Grade five students are enjoying our new school at PRS. We are having fun learning together building communities. We just finished learning about light and lenses. The students were fascinated with discovering light through a prism. They enjoyed breaking light and making rainbows appear right in our classrooms! It was also fun to experiment and learn about transparent, translucent, and opaque items. The kids loved learning about light and color! We have also been marvelous mathematicians. Students have been learning about volume. They have had a blast measuring different dimensions and learning the formula for volume! We made cubic feet, cubic yards, cubic meters, and cubic inches. Veteran's Day was beautifully honored this year at PRS. We had many Veterans join us in our celebration. Grade five students read and reenacted The Wall, by Eve Bunting. The students did an excellent job. The audience was moved by this emotional performance. The reading in grade five is soaring! Children are keeping the librarian busy as they shop for their favorite books. Student enjoyed Flying Solo, by Ralph Fletcher. It led to many great discussions in the classrooms. We focused on the author's message about integrity and trying your personal best! We hope to see all grade five students continuing to do their personal best!



Physical Education

Lauren Beeler
Physical Education Teacher

This fall we held our Annual 4th Grade Bike Program. Bicycle safety is part of the 4th grade Physical Education curriculum and we teach a week long course. Throughout this week, students learn all the rules of the roads, traffic signs, gears, hand brakes and more on bike knowledge. South Windsor Recreation has purchased a trailer of bikes for us to use and the students actually ride bikes for 45 minutes each day of the program. They also learn how to repair a chain that has fallen off or even change a tire in an off bike portion. For students that do not know how to ride a bike at all we work one on one with them. This program was held at Orchard Hill School using the long bus driveway that they have. This new space allowed for lots of riding time for our students. At the end of the week we took an off campus bike ride around the Rainbow trail neighborhood to see all the new skills the students have learned in action. This program is so important because not only does it teach the skill of riding a bike and fosters lifelong exercise it teaches so many intangibles. We see many students' self-esteem rise, improved confidence, community building and just an overall great all-around experience.



Measurement

Julie Ratajczak
PRS Math Coach/Interventionist

Measurement is such an important concept. It is found all around us in the real world, starting from when we are born the first thing the doctor does is

measure our length and weight. In school it doesn't get as much time and focus as concepts like computation and number sense, but it definitely is a critical one. Kindergarten and grade 1 spend time measuring length with nonstandard units, like cubes and craft sticks. Grade 2 starts using the US Customary and Metric system to measure length. The upper elementary grades also learn about capacity, weight, and time. They focus on which unit is appropriate to use in a given situation and later on how to convert measurements.

There are many fun ways you can support using measurement at home. If your child is in a lower grade ask him/her to find out how long something is, like distance from the coach to the tv or length of their bed, using footsteps or paper plates. For students in upper grades, take your child grocery shopping and have them weight produce and make 1 pound exactly. For all children, have them cook with you and discuss the type of measurements you use and the labels on the containers, like cups, teaspoons, liters, ounces, etc. Measurement are all around us, go on Measurement Hunts and point out where you see them, for example, miles on a highway sign, gallons at a gas station, and days/months on a calendar.

Most importantly have fun with your children and with math!



Family Rituals: Time of Teaching

Gary Walton
School Social Worker

During a recent Lunch Bunch meeting with a group of students, they shared with immense pleasure, pride and excitement the rituals and traditions of their Thanksgiving Celebration. These rituals and traditions include traveling to see relatives who they have not seen since last Thanksgiving, playing games and yes, eating a sumptuous meal and special desserts. As I listened to the students, I felt the

intense connections they have to their families and these traditions. A family tradition or ritual is simply something that a family does together, with some kind of regularity. Not only is it done together, but it provides each member with a sense of belonging to the family. In this article I will talk about three functions of family rituals and traditions. One function that rituals serve in a family is to transmit values and beliefs. Rituals and traditions communicate the things which are important and valued. Besides transmitting values and beliefs, rituals teach practical skills. The skill of carving the turkey, baking the family pies and lighting the menorah can be taught through rituals and traditions.

Another function that rituals serve in the family is to give the family its identity. Families, like individuals, have identities. Individuals have certain beliefs about themselves which are generally recognized and applauded or conversely may be scorned. Some of these beliefs may relate to the family's achievement, career aspirations and wealth. Each of these qualities or characteristics reflects the family identity. Family rituals are, therefore, the vehicles through which the family identity is delineated and transmitted to future generations. They provide family members with a sense of history and rootedness as well as a future perspective.

A final function of rituals and traditions in a family is that they provide support for the sharing of strong emotions. This is an important function of rituals. For example, during mourning, groups of people join with each other to support each other within the loss, share food, wear certain clothes and express certain words of comfort. The experience of mourning is time-limited and the circumstances are well defined, thus creating a feeling of safety and security for the participants.

While children assimilate the rituals and the traditions from participating in them, they are unlikely, however, to get the reasons for them. Consequently, I encourage you to share explicitly with your child the reasons for the rituals in your celebrations this holiday season. Help them to understand the why of the travel and the reasons that everybody gathers at grandma's house for dinner, why you abstain from certain foods or include some in your celebrations, why they get new clothes and the reasons for the practices. When children

understand the reason for the celebration it increases their cooperation in the activities.

Like your family, we have rituals, routines and traditions at Philip R. Smith School. These rituals, routines and traditions are used to create a safe environment so the students can reach their full potential and celebrate their successes.

These rituals help us:

Develop and impart a sense of identity

Provide comfort and security

Help to navigate change

Teach values

Teach practical skills

Solve problems

Generate wonderful memories

I wish for you a Happy and Safe Holiday Season!



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

Visit our Website

<http://www.swindsor.k12.ct.us/Schools/prs/prsmith.html>

Important Dates

Dec. 1	Holiday Workshop
Dec. 5	Conference Day
Dec. 12	Conference Day
Dec. 19	Conference Day
Dec. 21	Early Dismissal
Dec. 24-Jan.1	Winter Vacation
Jan. 2	School Resumes
Jan. 21	MLK, Jr. Day - no school
Feb. 14-18	February Recess - no school

