

Principal's Message

Dear Wildcat Families,

January is here! I can't believe that it is really that time of year. 2017 seems to have flown by and we are in 2018.

We have had a great fall. The weather has been beautiful, our students have made great gains in their learning, and our teachers are bar none! We had a wonderful turn out to our first Exhibition Night with nearly 700 visitors. As we transition from fall to winter, there are some important things to remember. As the weather gets colder, please remember that germs are everywhere. Please encourage your children to wash their hands often and thoroughly. One way that I have used with kids is to have them sing the alphabet song or the happy birthday song the entire time they are washing. Remind them to use soap and water and that the number one way to spread germs is through touching things.

Another thing to remember is to dress for the weather. It can get pretty cold in Connecticut during the winter. Coats and hats and boots and gloves provide much more comfort and warmth than hoodies and flip flops. Our students go outside for recess until the thermometer reaches 32 degrees. There is so much good that comes from fresh air. Students go outside for recess as long as the weather, temperature and air quality permit.

One more reminder is that the first bell rings at 8:30 and the tardy bells rings at 8:40. Please have your children to school on time every day. Every tardy, absence or check in/out is a disruption to learning. Poor attendance habits that are started in elementary school become very hard to change in later grades. Teachers begin teaching promptly at 8:45a.m. And students who arrive late miss out on valuable instruction, even if they are only five minutes late. In November we had 130 tardies and 239 absences. That is a lot of missed instruction.

Thank you for your help and support as we work to make sure students get the best education possible. It is a joint effort, one that we cannot do without the help of our parents. Thank you again! Have a great month!

Sincerely,
Mrs. Shandra Scott-Brown

Grade Level News

Pre-Kindergarten News

Literacy: We have begun our Jan Brett author study by reading some of our favorites: *The Hat*, *The Mitten*, and *The Three Snow Bears*. We are retelling the stories with the use of pictures and props, acting out main events or sharing information learned from the text.

Parent Tip: Encourage your child to retell stories at home by telling you what happened in the beginning of the book, middle and end. You can also ask them about the characters, setting, and vocabulary in the book.

Math: We have started our unit on shapes. We are studying both 2-Dimensional and 3-Dimensional shapes. Students are learning how to describe shapes; for example, a triangle has 3 sides and 3 corners.

Parent Tip: Look for shapes in your home environment. For example, the clock is shaped like a circle because it is round. Encourage your child to describe them, name them and draw them.

Museum: We are starting our unit on Forces of Motion. We will investigate how an object's speed and direction can be varied. We will be making predictions and conducting simple experiments to change the direction, speed, and distance that objects move.

Parent Tip: Build ramps at home with simple objects around the house and discuss what your child thinks will happen.

Social/Emotional: We are focusing on putting on our winter gear for recess, for example, flipping our jackets on, zipping our coat, and putting on hats, scarves, boots and mittens.

Parent Tip: Please send your child to school with boots, hats, mittens/gloves, and snow pants. We will continue to go outside as much as possible. Please practice zipping and buttoning at home.

~ Mrs. Aiken, Mrs. Barone, Ms. Cleary, Ms. Cyr, Mrs. LeBorious and Mrs. Tyler

Kindergarten News

Literacy: The kindergarten students have been practicing making inferences. This is using your background knowledge to make a "guess" about what might be happening or what might happen next. Students have made inferences while reading picture books, poetry, and wordless picture books.

Parent Tip: When reading to your child at home, ask your child to infer and provide evidence about what is going to happen next.

Math: Kindergarten students have been discussing partners of numbers to ten. For example, the partners of 6 are 5 and 1, 4 and 2, and 3 and 3. In the next few weeks, we will be learning about teen numbers and how to make them using a group of ten and “extras.”

Parent Tip: Practice acting out math stories with your child. For example, there were 4 cookies on the plate. Mommy ate one. How many are left?

Museum: Kindergarten students will be learning about the impact of weather on living things. We will be discussing how animals adapt, migrate, or hibernate for the winter. We will be creating artifacts, such as 3D habitats to accompany this unit.

Parent Tip: Observe the trees, plants, and animals in your backyard and discuss how they have changed since summer.

~ *Mrs. Beach, Mrs. DellaBianca and Ms. Stone*

1st Grade News

Reading: We are learning about non-fiction text features. Have your child identify various parts of a non-fiction book like Table of Contents, bold-faced words, headings, captions, and the glossary.

Parent Tip: To increase sight word accuracy and fluency, incorporate movement with sight words by twisting and jumping for each letter. Look for words while driving in the car or shopping at the grocery store. Make it a game to see who can read and move to the most words!

Writing: We are learning about the structure of non-fiction writing. Students are learning how to write with purpose to teach their audience about a topic.

Parent Tip: To increase writing stamina, have your child keep a journal and write daily entries. Encourage them to tap out sounds, use appropriate spacing, and use punctuation at the end of a sentence.

Math: We are learning to solve equations that have unknown number partners in addition and subtraction. Students are using pictures, circle drawings, and math mountains in order to solve problems in multiple ways. They also learned how to manipulate equations horizontally and vertically.

Parent Tip: Have your children practice fluency facts each night to develop automaticity! Create math stories with unknown number partners while driving; for example, “I see two cars in the parking lot. Then some more come. Now there are ten cars. What is the missing number partner?”

~*Mrs. Liebler, Ms. Maffucci and Mrs. Smith*

2nd Grade News

Grade 2 students collaborated on a comprehensive exhibition about the life cycle of a seed and the vital role of plant parts. Students became “plant scientists” by planting and cultivating their own seeds and documenting their observations over several weeks. They also created 2-dimensional flowers with detailed labels for each of the flower’s parts and comic strips to highlight their learning about seed dispersal.

Looking ahead, grade 2 students will explore the states of matter through a series of hands-on learning centers and experiments, as well as study the nutritional needs of humans. They also will continue to build reading comprehension skills through targeted small group instruction and Foundations, learn about 2D & 3D shapes, and continue to build social and emotional skills through the Second Step program.

Parent Tip: Please make sure your child reads for at least 20 minutes daily. Make math fun for your child; show them a dime and either 10 pennies or 2 nickels, then ask which group has the most cents; tell them you have 55 cents, then ask them what combination of coins could be used to make 55 cents.

~ Ms. Doiley, Mr. Esposito and Ms. Hanlan

3rd Grade News

Math: In math, we are beginning our third unit. In this unit, students build fractions from unit fractions and explore fractions as parts of a whole. They find equivalent fractions and compare fractions with either the same denominator or the same numerator. They use their understanding of fraction concepts to solve real world problems.

Family Tip: Read these articles about fractions and how you can help your child understand fractions at home:

1. https://www.education.com/magazine/article/fractions_beyond_the_pie/
2. <http://www.pbs.org/parents/adventures-in-learning/2015/09/fun-fractions-everywhere/>
3. <http://blog.mindresearch.org/blog/parents-4-pitfalls-to-avoid-when-your-kids-are-learning-fractions>

Reading: Third graders have been digging deep into text and finding strong evidence to support ideas. Students have been engaged in an author’s study of Patricia Polacco learning how moments can be turned into memoirs. We’ve been inferring detectives determining character traits and themes of these stories. During your next trip to the library, check out one of Polacco’s beautiful books!

Parent Tip: Pause while reading with students and ask questions about what you’re reading. Can you make a prediction? Why do you think the character chose to do what they did? Imagine a different ending for the story. Reading should be interactive!

Writing: Third graders have just finished our unit on informational writing. Students focused on organization in their writing by working through each step of the writing process. In grammar, we are learning about all of the different components that make up a complete sentence. We are getting ready to start our next unit on narrative memoirs.

Family Tip: Print out a paper keyboard and have kids tap out trick words on them to build familiarity. It's a kinesthetic way to internalize the keyboard.

~ Ms. Frazier, Mrs. Palmer and Ms. Rookwood

4th Grade News

Reading: In reading class, we are finishing our unit on how characters are complicated. We will be starting a small project on drama and a larger unit on non-fiction texts with a focus on magnetism and electricity, our current museum unit.

Parent Tip: Show your child how nonfiction text is part of our everyday lives. For example, newspaper, sports magazines, directions, etc.

Math: In math, we have just wrapped up unit two, Multiplication with Whole Numbers, and are finishing a mini unit on converting Customary Units of Measure. We are starting unit 3, Division with Whole Numbers. Please be sure to check out the video on Class Dojo to become familiar with long division using the area model.

Parent Tip: We use measurement in our everyday lives. Ask your child questions that relate to converting customary units of measure. (i.e., football practice was an hour and a half long, how many minutes is that?)

Writing: Fourth grade students have finished writing personal narratives about small events that have taken place in their lives. We are currently working on writing letters to authors who have inspired us to change or think about the world differently. Research has shown that children gain greater understanding of what they have read when they are given frequent opportunities to respond to what they've read, especially through writing. Children who read write better; children who write read more.

Parent Tip: This holiday season give your child the gift of writing; give them a journal.

Museum: In museum studies we have started our next unit, Magnetism and Electricity. Students will explore the relationship between electricity and magnetism by conducting several experiments. They will be using the

scientific method to ask questions, make hypotheses, plan and carry out experiments, observe and record data, draw conclusions and share their results.

Parent Tip: Discuss with your child what your life would be like without electricity.

~ Ms. Gray, Mrs. Khan and Ms. Mitchell

5th Grade

Reading: Students have been working on identifying the main idea of passages and supporting their responses with evidence from the text. We are currently in a non-fiction research unit.

Parent Tip: Read a variety of non-fiction text at home such as instructions on food packages, directions for games, and newspaper articles (just to name a few).

Math: Fifth grade mathematicians are diving into multiplying and dividing fractions and decimals. These two units are a lot of fun, but can be tricky if we are not fluent with our basic facts! Mastering these facts will make these new concepts much easier for your student!

Parent Tip: If you have access at home, have your students log onto Ten Marks or Red Bird. www.mrnussbaum.com is a great site with different math games to practice basic facts as well as concepts we are working on in school.

Writing: The year is flying by and our 5th graders are growing as writers! Once we completed writing personal narratives, we began our unit on research-based information writing. After studying the text features that are part of this genre, we moved on to studying structure. The next step is to begin flexing our researching and writing muscles so that we can write articles of our own. Ideas are sprouting up, being explored, researched and refined. In the very near future, we will publish our first articles about topics of personal interest to students. Later in December we will turn our researching minds over to the study of sound and light. Expect to see papers and projects about these science topics in the beginning of January.

Parent Tip: Support your child's independence; instead of simply answering your young scholar's questions, how about suggesting that they research them? Fifth graders are using kid-friendly search engines such as Kiddle (<https://www.kiddle.co>) to find their own answers and loving the feeling of accomplishment! Try it at home too.

Museum: Fifth grade scientists are so proud of all their hard work from our last exhibition and cannot wait to begin working on our brain/senses unit to build up to our last science unit: light and sound. These units allow us to do a lot of exciting projects and go on expeditions to deepen our learning and understanding!

Parent Tip: Have your students do a sense walk outside or around your home. Tell them to silently notice what is around them. What do they see? Hear? Smell?

~Mrs. Getek, Mrs. Lewis, and Mrs. Pietrowicz

CURRICULUM CORNER

Communicating with Children Using Math Language

Talking about mathematics with your child—whatever his or her age—helps strengthen his or her mathematical reasoning and understanding. Some ways to keep the talk engaged and focused while you support your child include:

Revoice—Repeat what you heard your child say, then ask for clarification (e.g., “So you are saying it’s an odd number?”)

Repeat/Restate—Ask your child to restate your reasoning (e.g. “Can you repeat what I said in your own words?”)

Reason—Ask your child to apply his or her own reasoning to someone else’s reasoning (e.g. “Do you agree or disagree? Tell me why.”)

Adding On—Prompt your child to participate further (e.g., “What more would you like to add to that?”)

Think Time—Wait several seconds (try five) to give your child time to think (e.g., “Take some time to think.”). You may be surprised by how hard it is to stay silent in that time!

~Ms. Simonek, Instructional Math Coach

Museum News

Visiting museums with your children can be fun and educational. Take your child to a museum and let them engage you in the objects and artwork with their knowledge of the Visual Thinking Strategies, or just go to explore and have fun. Below is a link with several museums, science centers and other great places to visit with your children. All the information you will need can be found in the link. You can also call to find out free programs for kids that many museums offer. Have fun exploring!!!

<http://www.visitconnecticut.com/state/museums-and-galleries/>

~Ms. Mirto, Museum Theme Coach

R.E.A.C.H. Before & Aftercare Program

The students are really enjoying the new Mad Science and Lutz Museum classes we added this month. We learned about mammals, birds and reptiles. Everyone got to pet Penelope the Ferret, a hen, and a Ball Python. This was a fun, interactive way to learn about animals and their habitats. To see more of these animals you can visit the LUTZ Museum in Manchester, CT over the holiday.

On December 19, 2017 families were invited to our Hartford Stage production of “Sawubona! A Reader’s Theater adaption of The Mother of Monsters” Thank you to all that were able to come see our 2nd-5th grade students perform their first drama presentation!

Museum Academy 5th grade students have an amazing opportunity to enroll in the STARBASE 2.0 STEM afterschool program. This program is **FREE** to all **5th grade** students to learn about robotics, aviation and much more. The program will be held on Fridays starting January 12 from 3-4:20 PM. We hope you take advantage of this amazing program.

~Ms. Mason, R.E.A.C.H Program Coordinator

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

If your child suffers from winter nosebleeds, try using a cold air humidifier in the child's room at night. Saline nose drops or petrolatum jelly may help keep nasal tissues moist. If bleeding is severe or recurrent, consult your pediatrician.

Cold weather does not cause colds or flu. But the viruses that cause colds and flu tend to be more common in the winter, when children are in school and are in closer contact with each other. Frequent hand washing and teaching your child to sneeze or cough into the bend of her elbow may help reduce the spread of colds and flu.

Children 6 months of age and up should get the influenza vaccine to reduce their risk of catching the flu. It's not too late to get the vaccine! Around 80% of all influenza illness generally occurs in January, February, and March.

Winter Sports and Activities

Set reasonable limits on outdoor play to prevent hypothermia and frostbite and make sure kids have a place to go warm up when they get cold. When weather is severe, have children come inside periodically to warm up.

~ Ms. Joyner, RN, School Nurse

Related Arts News

Physical Education

The year has been flying by and we are settling into our beautiful new gym. Upper grades have completed their “Fitness Assessments” and have begun working on setting goals to improve throughout the year. The younger grades have been diving into a lot of the new equipment we now have and how to safely use it and share with classmates.

Now that the weather is colder and students are wearing boots, please make sure that they are prepared on PE days by packing an extra pair of sneakers. Also make sure that children are dressed in appropriate layers so that they can continue to get outside for recess.

Parent Tip: Even though it is colder and getting darker early try to get outside whenever you can. Sunlight exposure is directly responsible for the production of serotonin and melatonin in the brain, both of which help in mood regulation and healthy sleep patterns. Activities such as hiking, ice skating, skiing/snowboarding, walking, or just playing in the snow are great ways to be active outdoors during the next few months. Check out activities in your community as well.

Healthy Eating Habits for Kids this New Year

1. Invite everyone to sit together for meals. Kids will see you as a good role model for both eating and social behavior.
2. Encourage choice. Have a picky eater in your family? Make a decision about what you are going to serve and stick to it. You can't make different meals for everybody. Once they see you mean it, they will learn to try new things. Routinely offering a variety of foods will allow your child to get the nutrition they need.
3. Keep trying. Kids need to be exposed 10-20 times for new foods. If at first you don't succeed, try a couple weeks later with the same item.
4. Let kids pick the veggies every now and then and let them help you make it. Then she or he is more likely to try it.
5. Think in twos. Try pairing new foods with other foods your kids like. If your kids are never served a green vegetable, chances are they won't like them as adults either.

~Mr. Vaccarelli, Physical Education Teacher

Library/ Media

Library classes will be circulating books in grades 1-5 in January! Classes will also be learning all about Digital Citizenship and how to use the internet safely. We'll also be working on computer science coding skills in preparation for our annual family code night. Mark your calendars ... the 4th annual Pizza and Code Night is scheduled for Thursday February 22, 2018. Save the Date!

~Mrs. Miller, Library/Media Specialist

Art Corner

Bravo! Museum Academy art students did an amazing job preparing their bird feathers for the magnificent Feather Lines and Designs exhibition! And I hope you also got the chance to visit some of the other mini exhibits created by 1st and 2nd grade art students. Now that exhibition is done, we're moving onto our next element of art, shape and form.

SOMETHING NEW! ~ Museum Academy art students and families are going to have a chance to be able to view their student's art work in an online gallery by *Artsonia*! Keep your eye open for a permission slip to grant access for me to upload your child's work. As soon as permission has been granted, you will be able to go online and see your child's art as it gets submitted throughout the whole school year. If you have any questions, there is a helpline on the bottom of the slip or you can call/email me anytime.

Parent Tip: Lower Grades: Ask your child to sing the color song. This song teaches the correct color order of the color wheel. Maybe they can teach it to you.

Upper Grades: You can't mix colors to make primary colors, but you can mix primary colors to make secondary colors. Try adding a dab of blue and red paint inside a small zip lock bag and squish to make a new color! See if you guessed correctly.

~Mrs. Hill, Art Teacher

Instrumental Music

First-year wind (students who use air to play their instruments) and string players are increasing the amount of notes they play. First-year percussionists have been working on reading music notation in various meters. Second-year violinists have been reviewing reading music notation and correct bow usage. Second-year winds and percussion have had two ensemble rehearsals in which they all play together. We have been working on watching the conductor for speed and volume changes, and balance—the concept of adjusting your sound to allow all instruments to be heard equally.

Parent Tip: Instrumental students should be practicing five days per week at home. Most children need encouragement to practice. Try setting practice goals such as playing the new song ten times per day and the review songs three times per day, or set a timer for 15 minutes of practice, or practice the tricky part of a particular song until that small part is better.

~ *Ms. D'Angelo, Instrumental Music*

Music

During the month of December preschool musicians have been learning songs and rhymes about toys like “The Jack-in-the-Box,” “Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear;” and “Sam the Robot.” Kindergarten musicians are learning a traditional Israeli dance, Cherkessiya and also a movement activity to Dance of the Reed Pipes from *The Nutcracker Suite*.

Museum Academy musicians in grades 1-5 are learning about *The Nutcracker* written by Peter Tchaikovsky. Our musicians are reading the story of *The Nutcracker* and exploring instrument sounds, melodic themes, dynamics, and musical forms through activities associated with the music and storyline. Fourth and fifth grade students are using the parachute, ribbons, scarves, instruments, and bucket drums to exhibit the form of the music.

Parent Tip: Download some of the music from *The Nutcracker* and listen to it together. Make up a dance or find some instruments to play along. Trepak (The Russian Dance) is a favorite!

~ *Mrs. Kansler, Music Teacher*

PBIS/Positive Behavior Intervention System

Happy winter, Parents and Families! Students are constantly showing acts of respect, responsibility and safety throughout the building and in our classrooms. Students are earning PAWS cards for our monthly raffles and to use in the school store. Last month students worked toward kickball, extra recess, no homework coupons, and snacks. Our Students of the Month have been taking selfies with staff members so take a look at our selfie wall next time you're here. Keep up the good work Wildcats!

Parent Tip: Ask your student how many PAWS cards they have and encourage them to show acts of respect, responsibility, and safety to earn even more.

~ *Ms. Frazier and Mr. Potter, PBIS Coaches*

Museum Cafe

Please check your child's lunch account to see if there is enough money for them to buy school lunch. Also, please make sure to pay any outstanding lunch balances.

Family Tip: Please check the school website for lunch menus. To check your child's account go to www.mymealtime.com; if you have any questions please feel free to contact the school cafeteria via email at mptmealtime@crec.org or by calling at 860-231-7800

~ Cafeteria Staff

COMING UP NEXT!

January Events

January 18, 2018

PTO Meeting (6:00pm-7:00pm) Dinner and Childcare Provided
Topic: Museum Academy Auction Planning

January 23, 2018

Family Literacy Night (6:00pm-7:30pm)

January 24, 2018

5th Grade Middle School Visit 9:00am-10:30am (MLC) Students in the 5th grade will have an opportunity to visit the middle school during school hours. Permission slips must be signed.

January 29, 2018

5th Grade Middle School Visit 9:00am-10:30am (Two Rivers Middle School) Students in the 5th grade will have an opportunity to visit the middle school during school hours. Permission slips must be signed.

February Events

February 6, 2018

5th Grade Family Information Night (5:30pm-6:30pm) Families will be informed about the 5th Grade end of the year activities as well as an opportunity to discuss middle school options.

February 9, 2018

“Parents Night Out” 5th Grade Fundraiser (5:30pm-8:30pm) Enjoy an evening to yourselves while we watch the kiddos at school. Special activities have been planned for the children. Students who are enrolled in our school are the only ones allowed to participate. Dancing, arts and craft, computer gaming, painting and short movie in the gymnasium. *Fee schedule- \$20.00 for the first Museum Academy student and \$15 for each additional Museum Academy student. More Information and Registration Form to follow.*

February 22, 2018

4th Annual Pizza and CODE Night. Please bring in laptops and ipads. Think pads will be provided on a first come first served basis. **SAVE THE DATE!** If you have any questions please email Mrs. Miller at smiller@crec.org

Museum Academy “NEWS-eum” Observer is the newsletter of the CREC Museum Academy Magnet School.

CREC Museum Academy Magnet School

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If you have any questions or comments,

please direct them to Mr. Rodriguez, Family/Community Liaison, at Irodriguez@crec.org



@CRECMuseumAcad