

FORT RIVER PARENT NEWSLETTER

SUCCESSFUL LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS

January 8, 2010

Dear Fort River Families,

Happy New Year! It feels that it was not long ago that the “Y2K” challenges were upon us – that was *only* 10 years ago! I hope you all had a restful and rejuvenating break from school. We quickly jumped back into routines and the daily work that is rewarding and challenging at the same time. A week of 2010 is behind us already!

We are continuing to work on our budget and staffing plans for next year, as we consider the many different aspects of our schools and the impacts of redistricting. Building-level staffing has not yet been determined, but we hope to have tentative plans in place over the next month or so.

Around the Building ...I’ve had the opportunity to observe instruction in the computer lab. There are many exciting things happening under the guidance of Joan Gallinaro, our Technology Integration Specialist. Joan works diligently each day to co-plan with teachers so that technology can be utilized as a tool for learning. In recent weeks, the second and third graders have had an opportunity to utilize the Smartboard technology to reinforce content knowledge that they are learning in the classroom. One way that this happens is through a “Jeopardy” type game that engages *all* students at their seats to solve the problems, while the students take turns interacting with the Smartboard to select items and answers. It is a powerful and fun way to reinforce skills and content for all learners. I have also had the opportunity to preview some articles from the “Immigration Times,” which is a newspaper that 5th grade teacher Liliana Klass and Joan Gallinaro have been working on with the fifth grade students. As part of the social studies unit on Immigration, the students are writing their pieces and inserting them into *Microsoft Publisher* in order to be able to print the newspaper in its entirety. I’m looking forward to seeing the finished product!

Safety First ... The New Year offers us another opportunity to focus on increasing “safety practices” throughout our school day.

First, if you are a parent/guardian of a kindergartner who rides the bus to and/or from school please remember that drivers will not drop off your child unless they can see you. Typically this is not a problem, but on Wednesdays in winter (early dismissal days) the bus drivers have informed us that a reminder to all families would be helpful. I know you’ll agree that our youngest children require this special vigilance each day.

Second, crosswalks leading to the main school entrance accommodate 400+ children and adults each day. They are marked with bright orange cones. If you utilize parent pickup

lanes, please proceed slowly and watch carefully for pedestrian traffic. Thank you for your cooperation.

-Ray Sharick

Internet Safety Information

Cindy Boyle, a community educator from the Northwest DA's office, was at our school to do a session with our 5th graders on Internet Safety. She held an evening session for parents of all elementary students on January 7th at 6:30 in the Mark's Meadow auditorium. Her focus was Internet safety and cyberbullying. Cindy is currently the Director of Community Education and Outreach at Northwestern District Attorney's Office. Her primary responsibility is providing training to local elementary, middle, and high schools, community agencies, faith based organizations, and law enforcement agencies. Trainings topics include but are not limited to: internet safety, bullying/cyberbullying, suicide prevention and prevention of child sexual abuse. Additional duties include chairing the District Attorney's Youth Advisory Board, cultivating and coordinating relationships with community partners, and assisting in all aspects of planning and presenting conferences.

Included in this newsletter are resources that she shared with the parents that attended. We hope that you will find them useful in our continuing efforts to keep our children safe when they use the Internet.

FUTURE DATES

Parent Council Meeting...Monday, January 11th...Fort River Library...7:00 pm
Chorus Concert...Thursday, January 14th...7:00 pm...Middle School Auditorium
Teacher Curriculum/Workday.....Friday, January 15thNO SCHOOL
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.....Monday, January 18thNO SCHOOL
School Committee Meeting...Tues., Jan. 26th...High School Library...7:00 pm
School Council Meeting...Thurs., Jan. 28th...5:00-6:30...FR Conference Room
REPORT CARDS DISTRIBUTED.....FRIDAY, JANUARY 29TH
Coffee With A Principal...Friday, February 5th...8:30 am...FR Cafeteria

FYI - Spring Chorus Concert Date:

- Thursday, May 6th...7:30 pm...Middle School Auditorium

Cindy Boyle, a community educator from the Northwest DA's office, was at our schools to do a session with our 5th and 6th graders on Internet Safety. She held an evening session for parents of all elementary students on January 7th at 6:30 in the Mark's Meadow auditorium. Her focus with our students was Internet safety and cyberbullying. Cindy is a former Pittsfield police officer and a victim's assistance advocate for Berkshire County. She is currently the Director of Community Education and Outreach at Northwestern District Attorney's Office Northampton, Massachusetts. Her primary responsibility is providing training to local elementary, middle, and high schools, community agencies, faith based organizations, and law enforcement agencies. Trainings topics include but are not limited to: internet safety, bullying/cyberbullying, suicide prevention and prevention of child sexual abuse. Additional duties include chairing the District Attorney's Youth Advisory Board, cultivating and coordinating relationships with community partners, and assisting in all aspects of planning and presenting conferences.

Here are some of the resources that she shared with the parents that attended. We hope that you will find them useful in our continuing efforts to keep our children safe when they use they internet.

Internet Safety & Cyberbullying Online Resources

Cyberbullying and Internet Safety:

www.wiredsafety.org

www.netsmartz.org

www.isafe.org

www.webwisekids.org

www.stopcyberbullying.org

www.cyberbully.org

www.ikeepsafe.org

www.seniornet.org

www.enough.org

www.connectsafely.org

Chat translators:

www.teenangels.org

www.teenchatdecoder.com

www.netlingo.com

Government sites

www.projectsafefchildhood.gov

www.usdoj.gov/kidspage

Parental Control Software Reviews

www.mymobilewatchdog.com

www.theparentsedge.com

www.getnetwise.org

Get your game on...safely!



Have your kids traded family time
for online game time?
Did you know 27% of children ages 12-17
are choosing to **GAME**
with people they **FIRST MET ONLINE?**

Use these **TIPS** to keep your gamer safer:

- View game ratings and prescreen games online before purchasing.
- Check if the console comes with parental control features.
- Set parental controls before children start playing. (Consult the user guide.)
- Set up consoles in a common area for easy supervision.
- Decide if you want to use the console's Internet capabilities.
- Set gaming rules with your children, such as how long and with whom they can play.
- Choose gender-neutral, appropriate screennames
- Decide if you want to allow voice chat. (If so, use voice-masking features.)
- Teach your children not to reveal personal information through voice chat.
- Encourage them not to respond to cyberbullies and to block unwanted contact.

Want more safety resources? Visit www.NetSmartz.org.

NetSmartz.org

GetGameSmart.com

