

FORT RIVER PARENT NEWSLETTER

SUCCESSFUL LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS

February 5, 2010

Dear Fort River Families,

On Monday February 1st, our Band and Orchestra performed in front of another large audience in our gymnasium. The students put on a wonderful show, under the expert guidance of Sue Dunbar (Band) and Laurie Rabut (Orchestra). In addition, 6th grade student Brie Little made an announcement that their last song was dedicated to Haiti relief, and that a flute case would be passed around for donations – all in all, they raised about \$350 for Haiti relief in about 5 minutes! Many thanks to all for a terrific performance and humanitarian effort! (I also want to thank Liliana Klass and her students – they raised \$712 in two days of a bake sale, all to support the efforts in Haiti!)

Around the building, Lisa Poirier and Teri Magner have worked diligently with the 1st grade children on a mixed media project based on the books “Listen to the Wind” and “Three Cups of Tea.” The students’ work is displayed in the front foyer – the children are quite proud of their work, and the teachers are, too. Many thanks to Lisa and Teri for their efforts, collaboration, and wonderful project!

In the last newsletter, I reported that Christine Holley, an educator/trainer from Teacher’s College, would be visiting Fort River to help us on our way as we work to improve our writing program. Her visit was a great success. Christine was truly “expert” in her knowledge, and she performed demonstration lessons in our K-2 classrooms while being observed by our staff (and some visiting staff from other schools in the district). It was a unique opportunity to not only hear about specific methodology, but also to see it in action and have the opportunity to ask questions about the classroom practice. We are looking forward to Christine’s return in April.

Also in the area of teacher professional development, this past Tuesday Amy Jackendoff opened up her classroom as a “Math Learning Lab” in grade 3. Teachers from all three schools spent time examining best practices & how students learn, observing Amy’s teaching, and then discussing the student responses to instruction. It was an opportunity for the staff to share their own knowledge with each other and continue to improve their instruction. Many thanks to Amy for her excellent teaching and sharing her work so openly with many observers!

MCAS UPDATE

Please note that a detailed MCAS testing schedule is posted on our website.

CODE OF CONDUCT - UPDATE

The opening line of the Fort River Code of Conduct says **“It is important for everyone to be able to learn in a safe and secure environment”**. The Code and the Procedures for Violations of the Code of Conduct are in The Family Handbook and are attached here for your review.

The messages in our classrooms, school-wide assemblies and disciplinary consequences are guided by the Code and our consistent commitment to environments in which all students’ access optimum learning opportunities.

In the past two weeks, I have spoken to all the students and staff about my expectations regarding appropriate behavior and the schools’ anti-bullying practices. Responsible telling and the negative impact of bystander behavior was highlighted. This week the attributes associated with student leadership were presented across the school. The quote by Jim Rohn focused us of the many facets of true leadership. It is on our welcome board outside the main office and follows:

“The challenge of leadership is to be strong, but not rude; be kind but not weak; be bold, but not bully; be thoughtful, but not lazy; be humble, but not timid; be proud, but not arrogant; have humor, but without folly.”

In a school of 450 children, ages 5 to 12, there are many different associations and understandings that such a quote inspires. I thought you might like to hear what two six year olds said just as they reflected on the complexities of getting along with others whose ideas are sometimes in conflict with yours. Sierra said, “When someone really disagrees with me, I just change the subject of what we are talking about!” Her friend Jake added, “I am pretty good at this because I practice with my sister at home. I leave any arguing at home!” Aren’t our youngest voices terrific?

Our consistent educational commitment and sincere caring for each and every child continues in this second half of the school year. The Second Step Program continues as do our explicit and embedded anti-bullying efforts. Student leadership is evident in each of the grades, and we are extending that work as February begins. Thank you for your collaboration and support as we ensure safe and secure learning environments each day.

Have a terrific weekend!

– Ray Sharick

FUTURE DATES

School Committee Meeting...Tuesday, February 9th...7:00pm...High School Library
Parent Council Meeting...Thursday, February 11th...8:45 am...FR Cafeteria
Fort River Jumpathon... Thurs., February 11th & Fri., February 12th *See Below
Winter Recess.....February 15th - 19thNO SCHOOL
School Council Meeting...Thursday, February 25th...5:00-6:30...FR Conference Rm
6th Grade Parent/Guardian Orientation Evening... Wednesday, February 24th...
7:00 -8:30 pm

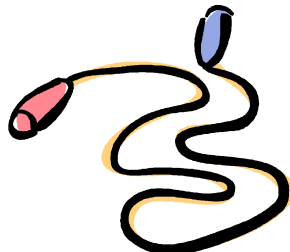
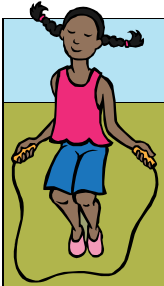
FYI - Spring Chorus Concert Date:

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

FORT RIVER JUMPATHON FEBRUARY 11TH AND 12TH

Fort River is sponsoring a **JUMP ROPE FOR HEART JUMPATHON** on **FEBRUARY 11th & 12th**. All students in grades 1 – 6 will be participating at different times of the day for 45 minutes. **JUMP ROPE FOR HEART** is an event conducted nationwide to educate students about the benefits of aerobic exercise and heart health, while raising funds to support the American Heart Association's fight against heart disease and stroke. We are encouraging children to establish a healthy lifestyle by including physical activity in their daily lives. Risks for later heart disease are often set in childhood but can be reversed by being physically active, not smoking and eating well. Collection envelopes will be sent home the first week in February with more information.

Diana Spaulding
Physical Education Teacher



Nature School Vacation Camps at the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, Amherst.
www.hitchcockcenter.org Call 413-256-6006 to register.

WINTER VACATION CAMP

Young Naturalists, ages 6-8

Nature Explorers, ages 9-11

Monday-Friday, February 15-19, 8:30am-3pm

Members: \$45 per day/Non-members \$55 per day

Pre-registration required; please call 413-256-6006.

Join us for your choice of from one to five days of winter exploration. We'll spend time indoors focused on animal tracks and signs, snow geology, evergreens or winter weeds. And we'll go outside every day to experience both the excitement and peace of nature in winter. Songs, crafts, games, and live animal observations will all be a part of our days.

SPRING VACATION CAMP

Young Naturalists, ages 6-8

Nature Explorers, ages 9-11

Monday-Friday, April 19-23, 8:30am-3pm

Members: \$45 per day/Non-members \$55 per day

Pre-registration required; please call 413-256-6006.

Join us for as many days as you wish and enjoy nature discovery at its finest. We'll go outside every day and experience the changes and excitement of spring (be prepared for varied weather). Songs, crafts, games and live animal observations are all part of the learning experience. Just choose the day(s) you want to participate and pre-register.

Study Island for MCAS preparation

Just a reminder that this web based software is available for students to use. The URL is www.studyisland.com This is a good way for students to practice MCAS type questions at home.

All students in grades 3-6 have a username and password. All students have logged in at school and have their username and password. If they have forgotten them or are having trouble logging in please email Joan Gallinaro and she will retrieve their username and password. She can be contacted at gallinaroj@arps.org

MCAS TEST TAKING TIPS

For Parents and Guardians

- **On time arrivals** at school are essential to best student outcomes on testing days. A late arriving student may be prohibited from taking the test on the scheduled day and have to take it on a scheduled makeup day.

- Be sure your child/ren observe routine and **early bedtimes** for at least 48 hours ahead of testing. Well rested children have more focused energy to devote to the challenges associated with testing!
- Ensure a **healthy breakfast** on testing days.
Protein (rather than sugar cereals) will keep your child's energy and attending focused.
- Support an **"I Can and I will"** test taking attitude.
Students who identify as capable learners and combine that with effective effort are poised to show what they know!

**FORT RIVER
SPRING 2010 MCAS TESTING SCHEDULE**

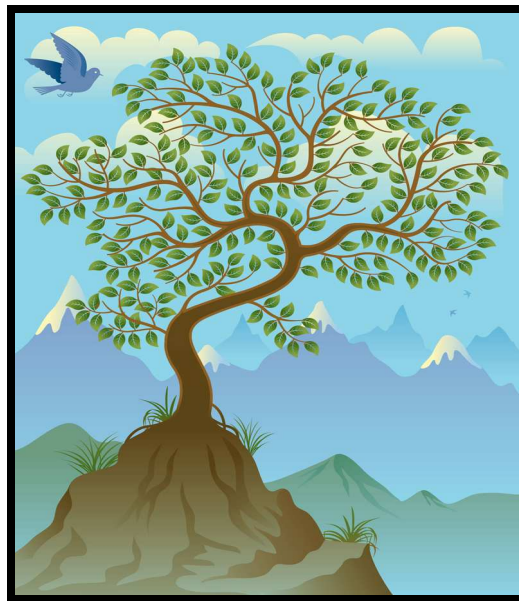
**March 22nd – April 7th
English Language Arts: Grades 3 – 6**

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
22 GR. 3 ELA READING COMPREHENSION	23 GR. 4 ELA COMPOSITION	24 GR. 3 ELA READING COMPREHENSION	25 GR. 5 ELA READING COMPREHENSION	26 GR. 5 ELA READING COMPREHENSION
29 GR. 6 ELA READING COMPREHENSION	30 GR. 6 ELA READING COMPREHENSION	31 GR. 3 & GR. 5 ELA MAKE-UP TESTS	APRIL 1 GR. 4 ELA COMPOSITION MAKE-UP TEST	2 NO SCHOOL
5 GR. 4 ELA READING COMPREHENSION	6 GR. 4 ELA READING COMPREHENSION	7 GR. 4 & GR. 6 ELA MAKE-UP TESTS	8	9

**May 10th – 27th
Math: Grades 3 – 6**

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
10 GRADE 5 MATH	11 GRADE 5 MATH	12 GRADE 5 MATH MAKE- UP TEST	13 GRADE 4 MATH	14 GRADE 4 MATH

17 GRADE 3 MATH	18 GRADE 3 MATH	19 GR. 3 & GR. 4 MATH MAKE- UP TESTS	20 GRADE 6 MATH	21 GRADE 6 MATH
24 GRADE 5 SCIENCE	25 GRADE 5 SCIENCE	26 GR.5 SCIENCE GR.6 MAKE-UP TESTS		



Let's Stay Connected!

Amherst Public Schools

**Parent/Guardian-School Connection: Spring 2010 Meetings for
Parents and Guardians of Elementary School Children with
School Personnel**

*****Childcare provided **Spanish Translation Provided***

*****Other Translation Provided Upon Request***

*****Call Ms. Mildred Martinez 362-1871 with any questions***

***Wednesday, March 3, 2010 6:30-8:00 PM Health and Well Being Fair
for Families of Students in Grades **PreK-2**, Crocker Farm School***

**FUN ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS AND THEIR PARENTS/GUARDIANS
*SNACKS *PRIZES *HANDOUTS *SHARING OF IDEAS*

Friday, March 5, 2010 9:00-10:00 AM

“How can we best support our kids?” Meeting for Parents and Guardians of Students PreK-6, Professional Development Center, Middle School

Thursday, May 13, 2010 7:00-8:00 PM *“Celebrating This Year and Looking Forward to Next Year” Meeting for Parents and Guardians of Students PreK-6, Professional Development Center, Middle School*

FORT RIVER SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT

It is important for everyone to be able to learn in a safe and secure environment.

The basis for Fort River’s Code of Conduct is to treat others the way you would wish to be treated.

We can...

- Treat each other with courtesy and respect and be treated that way in return.**
- Express our own ideas, opinions and feelings and listen respectfully to others.**
- Show respect for school and personal property.**

- **Strive to do our personal best and support the work of others.**
- **Help each other feel welcome and included in the school community.**
- **Accept responsibility for our actions.**

PROCEDURES FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

The goals of these procedures are to help children:

1. Identify the unacceptable behavior and discuss why it is inappropriate.
2. Take responsibility for the behavior.
3. “Give back” to the community the calm and peace that has been disrupted, by making amends and repairs.
4. Discuss alternatives to inappropriate behavior.

Minor Offenses

Each will be dealt with according to the seriousness of the offense, the age of the student, and whether or not the behavior is a one-time or repeated event. Specific consequences are at the discretion of the supervisory adult. Whenever possible the consequences will include a community service/repair component.

Major Offenses

Major Offenses include, but are not limited to:

- Fighting, intentionally hurting or endangering others
- Insubordination to an adult
- Repeated use of foul language
- Intimidation or cruelty, physical or mental

Procedures for Dealing with Major Offenses

1. A supervisory adult writes a very brief description of any major offense observed anywhere on school grounds. This is sent to the Principal or Assistant Principal immediately and is kept on file. The student may be sent to the office at the discretion of the supervisory adult.
2. The Principal or Assistant Principal will contact the supervisory adult and discuss the reported offense. He will speak to the child involved as soon as possible.
3. Consequences for major offenses are as follows:

First Referral

1. Loss of recess for two days or equivalent community service
2. Student writes a description of his or her misbehavior and a plan for changing his or her behavior. If possible the plan will show how the student will “repair” the damage (ex: replace a stolen article, apologize, etc.)

3. The student's plan is taken home by the student for the parent to read, sign, and return to show that it has been seen.

Second Referral

1. Repeat consequences of first referral
2. Principal or Assistant Principal calls parent (s).
3. Classroom teacher and referring adult will be notified that parent (s) have been contacted
4. Student and parents will be reminded of consequences if a third referral should occur

Third Referral

1. Repeat consequences of first referral.
2. Parent(s) will be called in to meet with the Principal and/or Assistant Principal and the student at school.
3. In-school suspension may be administered at the discretion of the principal and/or Assistant Principal.

Notes:

1. **Some misbehaviors are of such a serious nature that it becomes necessary to circumvent the normal procedures. Such behaviors may result in skipping directly to the second or third referral steps. Very serious incidents such as the possession of alcohol, drugs, or weapons or major physical aggression may result in the Principal and/or Assistant Principal taking immediate steps to suspend (internal or external) a student from school.**
2. **The procedures may be somewhat modified for students on the therapeutic teachers' caseloads to conform to therapeutic plans. The relationship between disciplinary procedures and therapeutic ones will be worked out between the classroom teacher, the therapeutic staff and the administrators in case conferences on individual students.**