

WEDGWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2nd MARKING PERIOD NEWSLETTER

2008-09



THE MUSTANG

PRINCIPAL'S NEWS

As we reach the halfway point in the year, I want to thank you for your continued support of our school's programs and procedures. For the safety of our students please remember the following points:

1. Remember that any **visitors to the school need to first go to the main office**. Please do not go to the classrooms or walk through the building without signing in first.
2. Also, remember to **let us know of any changes to your child's emergency card**. Anyone who is not listed on the emergency card will not be permitted to take your child from school.
3. Finally, **if there is a change in the way your child goes home; please write a note to inform the teacher**. If we do not receive a note, we need to send your child home his/her normal way. Thanks for your help with these important safety issues.

*Don't forget! Bring your old batteries to the library.
(No plastic bags please.)*

When sending in lunch money with your child, please put it in an envelope with their name and pin number on it.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 2/12 – Family Literacy – Library – 6:15 pm
- 2/13-2/16 – School Closed
Presidents' Weekend
- 2/17 – Report Cards Issued
- 2/18 – Class Pictures
- 2/19 – Family Literacy – Library – 6:15 pm
- 2/20 – 100th day
- 2/26 – Family Literacy – Library – 6:15 pm
- 2/27 – MS Readathon Begins
Assembly Grades T1 and 1
- 3/2 – Read Across America Day
Book Swap Grades 3-5
- 3/3 – Market Day Orders Due
Book Swap Grades T1-2
- 3/9 – Progress Reports
- 3/9 – Gr. 5 – CBAC
Freedom Train
- 3/9 – Market Day Pick Up – 5:30-6:30
- 3/11 – Family Night
- 3/25 – Band & Orchestra Concert
- 3/27 – Reading for MS Readathon Ends
- 3/31 – Chestnut Ridge Gr. 5
Parent Orientation
- 3/31 – Market day Orders Due
- 4/1 – Chorus and Handbell Concert
- 4/2 – District Art Night – WTHS 7-9 pm
- 4/6 – Market Day Pick Up 5:30-6:30
- 4/9-13 – School Closed – Spring Break
- 4/16 – MS Readathon Envelopes Due
Back to Wedgwood
- 4/23-24 – Early Dismissal – 1:40 pm
Lunch Served; Parent Conferences

FIRST GRADE NEWS



Have you heard the number 100 lately? First graders are using that number a lot as the 100th day of school approaches. If we have counted accurately, this celebration will be on February 20 barring any more snow days. We plan to celebrate in hundreds of ways; more about that in the next newsletter.

December's emphasis on holidays from around the world continues our multicultural studies throughout the year. The first graders will be learning about each other's heritage from parents who will visit the classrooms and from other activities planned by the teacher.

Woodsey Owl visited our school to discuss recycling and pollution. We all have recycle bins in our classroom and the children are encouraged to use them when doing projects.

The children are excited about being able to read chapter books. We are doing longer, more complex stories! Visiting the public library will allow the children to check out a variety of books and increase their interest in reading. Daily help at home with practicing vowel sounds and reading gives them confidence and skill mastery.

The children are also working on money, time, addition and subtraction facts, and they need continual practice at home. The awareness of the value of money is increasing as we continue to count money. Daily practice counting money will be most welcome as we try to master this skill. We are now working with the penny, nickel, and dime. We should recognize each of these coins as well as their value and be able to count amounts of money made up of these coins. Telling time is an important life skill for us. We are working with both digital and analog clocks in telling time to the hour, the half-hour, and the quarter hour. Continue to practice please.

We discussed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the way he was able to accomplish

things through peace. Activities were planned and songs were sung.

We all have bird feeders outside our windows this year to help the birds and observe who comes to the feeders. Ask your child about birds he/she has seen.

First grade teachers are so proud of the progress that the students are making in all academic areas. As we grow in these areas we are also practicing our good manners to accomplish the school wide goal of becoming better citizens.

SECOND GRADE NEWS

The second graders have been working hard and it shows! Growth can be found in all academic areas. Their reading ability is improving as they read stories with longer text and chapter books. They continue to work in their reading anthology, enjoying stories about friends and how they get along. They have also been working hard in their guided reading groups, gaining exposure to a variety of genres while reading at their appropriate level. Reading and writing in classroom centers has also been encouraged.

Language Arts is becoming more demanding. We are looking at grammar, punctuation, spelling, and penmanship. All of these aspects of writing are being evaluated at this time. Lower case cursive writing is also being introduced. Watch how your child enjoys using this new skill!

In Math the children have been busy identifying geometric shapes, studying symmetry, drawing parallel and non-parallel lines, and working on story problems. Money and time are life skills that need to be practiced daily. Simple activities like counting and giving change are wonderful ways to reinforce what is being taught at school. Please have your child write the time on their math homework every night. Have them tell you the time from an analog clock. Also, practice addition and subtraction facts.

Science is always a lot of fun as the kids learn about light and sound, animal characteristics, habitats, and life cycles. They enjoy the lessons and are always fascinated with learning new concepts.

In Social Studies the children have been learning about government, working together, our Earth, people and places of long ago, and map skills. The many holidays celebrated in December gave us the opportunity to discover customs from around the world, such as Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa. The children also participated in a school wide sing-a-long. It was so much fun! Thank you to Mrs. DiGianivittorio for all of her hard work organizing this school tradition. Some classes celebrated with a winter party while others brought in the New Year with a bang! Everyone enjoyed the winter break and came back to school refreshed and ready to go.

In January, the children participated in Hoops for Heart during Phys. Ed. class. This allowed the children to experience the power of giving by raising money for the American Heart Association. Shooting hoops is a great way to help out a worthy cause! The second graders also took the Cognitive Skills Test. This was their first experience with standardized testing.

The second grade teachers would like to thank our parents for their continued support at home. Please continue to check over and sign the assignment book daily. Take advantage of your time indoors by having your child read to you at home. Don't forget to read to them. Everyone loves to hear a story! The love of reading will help them become a better student and take them on many adventures.

We would also like to thank the PTO for their generous holiday gifts of books for every student and a board game for each classroom. The children are grateful for more tools to help them beat the winter blues!

THIRD GRADE NEWS

Our third graders are working very hard this year! We can't believe half the year is already behind us! In Math, we tackled the basic facts of multiplication and division. We solved equal grouping number stories using multiplication, and used our Fact Triangles to assist us in memorizing our facts and

understanding fact families. We will be starting to work on multiplication and division again! Please continue to study and review facts at home. We also learned about place value in decimals and large numbers, as well as how to read and compare decimals and large numbers. The math games we've played have been both exciting and challenging!

In Reading, we have read many exciting short stories and novels. We continue to focus on reading strategies, summarizing, comprehension, sequencing, narrative elements, making inferences, and open ended questioning. Students enjoy reading individually, in pairs, flexible groups, or as a whole class. Our reader's workshop provides students with the opportunity to read books that interest them and respond to what they've read.

In Social Studies, we covered many interesting topics. We learned about the Southwest and Plains tribes and studied immigration. Our students presented their finished Country Projects. We sampled delicious food, enjoyed looking at replicas of special sites and native clothing, listened to interviews, heard why we should travel to countries, and learned lots of exciting facts and information about each country studied. Some other interesting topics we are covering are Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Chinese New Year, Black History Month, and Presidents' Day. In the third marking period we will begin Science. The students are very excited to learn about Matter, the Solar System, and Plants!

We are continuing to build our Spanish vocabulary thanks to Senorita Nilson and Senorita Colon. We learned how to introduce ourselves and how to ask someone their name, as well as numbers, letters, and colors in Spanish. Our teachers keep the pace moving by teaching through songs, games, and fun-filled activities!

The third grade teachers would like to thank the PTO and all the parents for their continued support and generosity! You are what helps make our school so wonderful!

FOURTH GRADE NEWS



Fifth graders can't believe that half of the year is over already and that they are that much closer to middle school. They know that the best is yet to come here in their final year at Wedgwood.

The students in Mrs. Evans' class are busy reading the novel In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson. We are learning many interesting facts about the customs and culture of the Chinese. Believe it or not, half the year is already over! Our fourth graders continue the journey to becoming independent, motivated students. We are stressing study skills, good work habits, and self-motivation as they improve on all the skills taught in fourth grade. In early May they will be taking the NJ ASK test in Language Arts Literacy, Math, and Science.

In Language Arts our Writer's Workshop is a daily experience. We are still working on good pre-writing and revision techniques. We are looking to see these young writers use exciting leads, organize their ideas, and conclude a piece of writing with creativity and focus. We will be using a variety of techniques and motivators as they learn their own voice. Many are now publishing on the computer. Reading has also become more enjoyable as they self-select and read daily in the Reader's Workshop. We encourage the practice of all comprehension strategies while enjoying good literature. We urge our students to visit libraries and book stores to make reading and writing a part of everyday life.

The Math curriculum is now focusing on long division and the use of protractors while measuring angles. They enjoy using the tools of math and solving everyday problems with logic and thinking. Open-ended questions (where they explain and arrive at conclusions) are becoming easier as we practice daily. Once again, parents can provide practical, every day activities at home- such as cooking, planning road trips, and playing board games.

They see how they can actually use math skills in real life.

Our year began with Social Studies and the study of our own state. We will conclude the year with this as well. For now, we are using our new science curriculum while studying either Earth Science, Forces and Motion, or Life Cycles. We are trying to incorporate the use of technology in the content areas by taking advantage of Virtual Field Trips or the computer lab.

We would finally like to send out a big thank you to all of our Book Buddies in first or second grade. Each of our classes plans varied and motivational activities with their younger peers. We are breakfasting, making crafts, writing, and reading, reading, reading!

We wish all of the grade levels a great second half of the year. There are many more exciting things yet to do!

FIFTH GRADE NEWS

The novel also concentrates on the hardships of being the new kid in town and learning how to be an "ambassador" for your culture. 2009 is the year of the Ox and we had a New Year celebration! We decorated our classroom with red lanterns and enjoyed the fine cuisine with our classmates. Thanks to the many parents who contributed! If you want to know what year you were born in, just ask your students.

In Social Studies classes, we learned about many "Presidential Firsts" by completing a webquest in the computer lab. We were also lucky enough to watch the Inauguration of our new President which made us feel a part of that historical moment.

We are now moving along with our studies of the American Revolution. The students found the details leading up to the war and the significant strategies quite interesting.

As a culminating project, they are creating their own alphabet books depicting some of the major events and contributors of this famous war. Our published books will be displayed in the library for the others students to view.

Time is flying by in Mrs. Amendt's room! Mrs. Amendt's class is busy reading their class novel,

Loser, by Jerry Spinelli. The humorous character, Donald Zinkoff, has made this an enjoyable novel! As a way of perfecting their comprehension skills, the students are using post-it notes to record their thinking while they are reading. Students are also reading for enjoyment with their self selected Just Right book!

The young writers have published various pieces throughout this school year. Currently, they are working on their speculative writing piece, which allows the students to form their own story based on a writing prompt. Next, they are moving on to a poem-linked writing prompt.

Mrs. Amendt's science classes are exploring scientific information about our Solar System. Working in groups, the students researched various facts about the planets and displayed all their hard work on large informational charts. Students are continuously discovering interesting facts about the solar system. Next, they will be studying stars and constellations

In Miss Mallett's class we have been reading the exciting Newbery Award Medal Winner book Number the Stars by Lois Lowry. This is a story about two ten year old girls during World War II and their life in Copenhagen. It also focuses on the struggles they face and their enduring friendship. Some of the themes we have been discussing in class have been bravery, friendship, family, and how to keep a positive attitude during difficult times. We will soon finish this book and conclude our unit of study with a Grand Conversation. A Grand Conversation is where each member of the class will share their favorite part of the book and what they have learned.

In Social Studies, we have talked about our new President and were excited to watch the Inauguration. We are now beginning our unit of study on the Revolutionary War. There will be many fun projects and class work assignments ahead in the upcoming month.

In Ms. Smith's class we have been very busy! In Reading we finished up our class novel In The Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson and have now moved back into our Harcourt Reading Series. The students

enjoyed learning about the Chinese culture and were able to explore Chinese customs and traditions.

In Writing class we published our Feature Articles and have now moved onto Persuasive Writing. Some of the students (and future members of the debate team) have posed some very good arguments; parents beware!!!! We will soon be finished the publishing of our Persuasive Pieces and will move into Poem Linked Writing. Parents, please make sure your child is keeping up with their Writer's Notebook Entries.

The students in Mrs. Gelzunas' class are sharing the book reports from their self-selected readings. In her Science classes, they have completed their space unit and had 2 Virtual Field Trips: "America's Spaceport" and "Looking at Earth from Space". They are now ready to move onto Electricity and Magnetism.

In Math, all the fifth grade classes have completed Unit 5 on fractions, and discovered that fractions are used frequently in our daily lives! Now they are working in Unit 6 on organizing data and finding landmarks in number groups. Students continue to explore all their math manipulatives, and are having fun solving challenging Math problems. We are also learning many ways to gather and sort the data we collect along with new strategies that we can use on the NJASK test in May.

As part of our Health curriculum, each of the classes took part in the START program. START stands for Students Training to Act Responsibly in Township. Officer Welding did an excellent job explaining how to handle peer pressure and provided the students with a useful decision-making model. The topics discussed were tobacco, drugs, alcohol, drinking and driving and bicycle safety. When they are finished this program, they will put their new insights in writing and also create a poster to illustrate good examples to others. There will be a ceremony in the future to celebrate this achievement.

On January 30th, our annual student/faculty basketball game took place. It was such an exciting game, but the Red Team was the winner! Congratulations, Red Team! Both teams demonstrated great sportsmanship!

Overall, it was a fun event that raised money for the American Heart Association.

MRS. FINOCCHIARO'S CLASS NEWS

Mrs. Finocchiaro's class has been reading many books. Blame It On Winn Dixie was a class favorite. To celebrate the winter holidays, the class read a number of holiday books and made story posters to decorate the classroom. The class is currently reading The Green Dog by Suzanne Fisher Staples.

Reading isn't the only way to enjoy the holidays- there's eating! For Thanksgiving, the students continued the tradition of making turkey cakes. Many parents came in to help make the cakes. The class also performed a Thanksgiving play for their friends and families.

The class has been studying nouns, verbs, pronouns, and adjectives, then putting their skills to use by writing different types of essays, such as persuasive, descriptive, and instructive. They have been stretching their imaginations by writing in their journals every day on many different themes. They also have enjoyed writing poems about snow, stories about friends and family, and many other topics.

The math groups have been adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, and learning about measurement. The math is practiced in real life with a real "The Bake Sale" in the school's lobby. "The Bake Sale" features items like coffee, tea, pastries and fruit for staff members to purchase. This project has helped the children develop money skills (e.g., counting money and making change) . A BIG thank you to the staff and parents of Wedgwood School who support the project!

Science projects have included experimenting with plants and learning about saltwater and freshwater environments. The class learned about ocean currents and ocean food chains. They will learn about vertebrates and invertebrates next.

Mrs. Finocchiaro's class has learned about the Lenape Indians. The students are

currently learning about the American Revolution.

LITERACY AT HOME



A strong vocabulary and good writing skills help students succeed in literacy tasks at school. Here are some ways parents can help their children build their vocabularies and practice written expression at home.

- Making Category Lists – Think of a category, such as sports, weather, or technology. Write the category on a piece of paper or large index card. Ask your child to write a list of words related to that category. Words can be added to the list as the child learns them. This activity can be helpful as a study skill as well. For example, if your child is studying planets, a card with a list of words related to each planet can be used as a study guide. Making a new category daily or weekly can be a challenge that kids look forward to working on.
- Writing for Everyday Life – Provide your child with the opportunity to practice "real" writing. It's often easier for kids to write about things that have true meaning for them. Some real life writing tasks could include:
 - Writing a thank-you card for a birthday or holiday gift.
 - Making a scrapbook of family photographs and writing descriptive captions for each photograph.
 - Writing a planning guide for an upcoming family event.
 - Keeping a daily journal while on vacation to remember the highlights of each day.
 - Write sentences for what the family pet could say if he could speak.

- With Valentine's Day approaching, ask your child to perk up your day by writing you a personal Valentine's Day card. (Perhaps start a tradition of getting personal cards for each major holiday that your family celebrates and extend it to grandparents, aunts and uncles, too!)

Working on literacy skills doesn't have to end when the school books are closed. Providing short but meaningful vocabulary or writing activities are great ways to have kids broaden their skills without even realizing it.

RESOURCE ROOM NEWS

The second grade students working with Mrs. Sanders are learning many things. They are practicing their writing skills by communicating with a senior citizen. They sent winter holiday greetings in December and will be working on Valentine poems for February.

The students are learning the different syllable types in Foundations. They now can identify, read, and spell words with closed syllables, vowel-consonant-e syllables, and open syllables. They have learned about closed syllable exceptions and vowel-consonant-e exceptions. They can read and write longer words by using these syllable types.

We are trying our hand at Readers' Theater. As the class practices reading the parts in a play, they are becoming more aware of the characteristics of this form of writing and are improving their oral reading phrasing, fluency, and expression.

In math the students are learning to perform double digit subtraction problems using the "Trade First" method. They are using base-ten blocks to solve the problems as they begin to use this technique. Refer to your Family Letter for pointers on how to reinforce this skill. The students also do a daily math minute in class. The two-sided sheets are sent home every second day. Thank you for using the bottom half of the sheets at home to help them practice. Set a kitchen timer for one minute and see how many problems your child

can complete in that time. We celebrated "Half-Way Day" in math class on the 90th day of school with a special treat.

Thank you for your support with homework and maintaining communication.

Third Grade Resource Room students have been very busy! We have just finished reading Chocolate Fever and completing the comprehension work and writing chapter summaries. They also just completed a fiction book report that resembled a photo album. These students have been doing a lot of reading and writing! There is more to come!

In math not only are they working on fractions and decimals but they are also very busy studying the multiplication tables! They have promised to study every night and it appears they have been keeping their promises.

The students in the 5th grade Resource Room have been working very hard. They just finished reading their second novel, The Shoeshine Girl, and created dioramas of their favorite scenes from the novel. They enjoy reading novels, and can't wait until we begin reading the next one. They also continue to work hard in developing their writing skills. The boys and girls have just completed the unit on division in Everyday Math. Everyone did a fine job and are looking forward to beginning the next unit on fractions. We hope everyone is trying to remain warm during this cold winter, as we are all looking forward to spring.

HEALTH OFFICE NEWS

Deborah Sernicola, RN
Wedgwood School Nurse



Well here we are halfway through the school year! The health office has been busy with screenings. We are just about finished all grade levels. Height, weight and blood pressure are recorded in all grade levels yearly. Vision screening is done in grades 2 and 4

unless there is a problem, hearing screening is done in grades 1 through 3, unless there is a request in the other grades, and scoliosis is screened in grade 5. All the children and teachers have been cooperative and have helped greatly in making this run smoothly. Remember, if your child has been referred for any reason please let the health office know the outcome of the follow-up.

Winter is the time of year we tend to see more illness. The cold and flu season is upon us. **Please remember if your child is sick, especially running a fever, diarrhea, and/or vomiting, please keep them home. They should be fever free and without the symptoms of diarrhea and vomiting for at least 24 hours.** This will help control the incidence of illness within the school setting, thus preventing the spread of infection. Also remember to remind your children that good hand washing is the best defense against the spread of infection.

This month the second graders will experience the presentation "Clean Hands Rule" provided by the Gloucester County Health Department. It was a big success last year and they have agreed to come back this year. We are in the process of scheduling a presentation for the fourth grade classes on Brain Injury Education given by Moss Rehab, in the month of March. The fifth grade presentation on Epilepsy will be rescheduled within the next few weeks if their schedules permit. We will continue to look for more opportunities for these free health presentations to supplement their wonderful curriculum.

Before I wrap it up for this issue, I want to remind all parents to label personal items that the children wear or bring into school. This will help keep down the volume of lost and found articles. Please feel free to check our lost and found if your child is missing any personal items. It is located in the attendance office. I will close for now. Stay healthy! We will have more healthy news in the spring!

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Cindy Volpin

Peer Pressure: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Whether we like it or not, we all have to deal with pressure in our lives. Good forms of peer pressure can get us going, motivate us to succeed at a task, or try something new. Bad types of peer pressure can lead us to make wrong decisions and hurt others around us. All types of pressure exist no matter how old we are...

Kids: Keep from Caving-in

- Pay attention to your own feelings and beliefs! Resist doing something that you know is wrong.
- Choose your friends wisely and surround yourself with people whose values are similar to ours. It is often easier to resist peer pressure in numbers.
- If you feel pressured, talk to someone you trust. Talking to a parent, teacher, counselor or a trusted friend can help you feel much better.
- Try to recognize when you are putting pressure on others, no one likes a bully.
- Remember it is always your choice to make safe and wise decisions.
- Parents: Use positive pressure
- Talk to your child early about the different types of peer pressure. Explain how certain types of peer pressure can be very dangerous.
- Try role-playing with your child. What would they do if someone offered them a cigarette?
- Define your expectations and hopes for your child. Emphasize the importance of good values and decision making.
- Be a good listener. Paying attention and showing support for your child is key to dealing with any potential pitfalls.
- Teach your child how to respond in "sticky" situations.

LIBRARY NEWS

The Wedgwood library is a busy place! Not only do we host 25 classes every week, but we are frequently updating the collection of books. This year we have received donations of books from two sources. The PTO was, as usual, very generous and shared some of the profits of the Fall Bookfair with the library. We were able to add many coveted titles to the collection as a result of their contribution. In addition, The PRIDE Committee which is part of the teachers' union gave us a huge donation! \$1000! The books we bought with this money have been processed and are available for circulation.

Library skill lessons for all students continue. We focus on "information literacy." That is, teaching students how to find information efficiently, how to judge whether or not that information is worthwhile, and how to use the information effectively. Library skills are not JUST about books anymore, and libraries are not the quiet, still places of the past! They are exciting and bustling and full of enthusiasm!

I want to remind all parents and students about the web site that is available to them, due to the PTO's purchase of an online subscription, called **TUMBLEBOOKS**. It is a site that enables kids to hear books read aloud to them, to read books online, to play games and take comprehension tests associated with those books and more. Our subscription runs out in April and I would appreciate input as to whether or not we should request that it be renewed for next year. The site can be accessed through my eboard site, or through the district web page, wtps.org. The user name is "wedge" and the password is "books." The students do use this site in school, and it is appropriate for grades pre K- 3 for read-alouds, but it also has books for older students as well as classics for everyone.

In March, to honor the memory of Dr. Seuss, we will start our annual Reading Incentive Program. As we have done for the past three years, students will be asked to record their reading MINUTES for the month of March. All students who participate will be entered into a drawing for free books. Since the MS Read-a-Thon is running at the same time, students can record the names of the books they are reading for that contest on a separate list and participate in both activities at the same time! Letters with details of both contests will go home as the dates get closer.

Thanks to all the students and parents who work hard to return library materials on time each week! Our "on time" records are way up this year! Mrs. Mastripolito and Mrs. Beyer are VERY happy! Kudos to all of you! Remember, while we must charge you for LOST books, if you can find the book within the SAME SCHOOL YEAR, we can refund your money. We would much rather have the book back.

Don't forget! Bring your old batteries to the Library. No plastic bags please.

Keep READING!

ORCHESTRA NEWS

Mrs. Zahradnik

The string students are performing a prepared musical selection this week for their performance assessment evaluation.

While I am blessed with many fine young string students at Wedgwood School, I have to reflect upon the results of the performance assessment. Many of my string students have excellent skills....good hand position, nice bow hand, an understanding of music notation, etc; but, the students who truly show excellent progress are those who can make the commitment to a regular practice schedule at home. Please make an effort to help your string student achieve their best level of playing by asking them to play for you at home as often as you can.

All string students will be performing in our annual Wedgwood School Instrumental Concert on Wednesday, March 25, 2009. Students have been asked to please remember to bring their music folders and instrument on their lesson or orchestra rehearsal day. The beginning strings will have a different schedule in March. Beginning strings will have a lesson on Tuesdays and Thursdays at lunch-time recess to help them prepare for their first concert. This schedule will replace their regular lesson time until the concert is over.

Many thanks to all parents for your patience in listening to your string students at home and for sending them to school on their lesson day with their instruments and music!

Looking forward to seeing you on March 25, 2009 for our concert performance!

