

January, 2012

West Hill School Newsletter



from the *PRINCIPAL*

Dear West Hill Families:

I hope you had a wonderful December break and enjoyed time with family and friends.

The winter weather is definitely upon us. Students must have a winter jacket and appropriate clothing in order to enjoy outdoor recess. I believe in students receiving fresh air as much as possible. As long as the weather (including temperature) is safe for students to go outdoors, we do send the students outside. Students who are not dressed warmly enough to go outside must remain indoors, which can be very upsetting. The health and safety of our students is our priority.


As the 2012 year begins, West Hill School staff has continued their focus on academic achievement. Our staff is gearing up for the CMT testing season as well as making certain our students are on track for grade level expectations. We continue to promote uninterrupted classroom learning time as much as possible. I ask you to utilize the main office for communicating with your student during the school day. Parents should not be going to the classrooms to retrieve students. If you are going to the classroom to volunteer or for a visit planned with the teacher, you must have a visitor's badge. The visitor's badge provides our students with a safe environment and awareness of the adults around them.

During the next couple of months, you may hear your children talk about Blue Ribbon Tests, DRA's, DRP's and some other tests. All of these tests are not reflected in your child's report card grades. The tests help the teachers make important educational decisions to guide them in teaching your child. CMT's and tests in general can be stressful for some students. If you find your student is having some anxious thoughts regarding tests and testing, please contact the school so we can provide the proper support for your student.

We have many events coming up to celebrate learning. The PTO has invited Adventure Bound back to West Hill for the wacky game show preparing students for academic challenges while students are entertained by fun competitions. Staff members will also be playing some trivia games during lunch times. All of these activities are designed to bring fun into the school during test preparation season. We are proud of our high achievement, and we never lose sight that we are working with children!

Please continue to check the West Hill website for the latest information. We will begin to utilize the email system for Thursday folder information distribution based on survey results you provided. We are continuing our efforts to "Go Green" as well as utilize the best form of communication with parents.

The year 2011 brought lots of changes and some exciting events. I hope you have a wonderful 2012. I look forward to our continued success as a school and community in 2012.


Megan Bennett, Principal

mark your CALENDARS

- Jan. 1-2 Holiday Break - No School
- Jan. 16 Holiday - No School
- Jan. 17 PTO Meeting - 7:00 PM-Library
- Jan. 18 Winter Concert - 6:00-8:00 PM
- Jan. 19 Board of Education Meeting -
Town Hall -7:00 PM
- Feb. 3 Early Dismissal Day - 12:30 PM -
Professional Development for
Teachers
- Feb. 10 Sports Night/Ice Cream Social-
Grades K-3 - 6:30-8:00 PM
- Feb. 16 BOE Meeting-7:00 PM - Town Hall
- Feb. 17 Sports Night/Ice Cream Social -
Grades 4-5 - 6:30-8:00 PM
- Feb. 20-22 Holiday Recess - No School
- Mar. 5 Grades Close-2nd marking period
- Mar. 13 PTO Meeting - 7:00 PM
- Mar. 15 BOE Meeting - 7:00 PM- Town Hall

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NEWS you need to know

PBIS counts!



Our newest PBIS reward is **The Golden Plunger!!** The cleanest class is decided by the night custodians. In the morning the room number is announced and the golden plunger arrives complete with bonus points toward our new goal. Pictures are being posted. Last month students reached a huge goal of 4,500 YES tickets earned for good behavior and following school rules. This month our goal of 3,000 tickets will be rewarded with a spirit day with an assembly. Go West Hill!!

Parent Corner by Merle Cohen

Happy New Year to everyone, I hope you all had a wonderful winter break! There are several parent programs planned for the new year. I hope to have a program in late February or early March regarding internet safety and harassment issues through digital and electronic means. This program is still in the planning stages and the date will be announced as soon as it is finalized. In addition, there will be a parenting series offered in March on two consecutive evenings, March 21st and March 28th. The series is called "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families." And we will discuss ways to help your family problem solve and make a more cohesive family culture. The last program of the year will be a morning workshop and will take place on May 9th. All programs will be announced closer to the dates they take place.

I look forward to the upcoming programs and hope many of you will take the opportunity to learn and grow and meet other parents.

Reading Corner by Sharon Truex

Tired of the sound of chortling pigs? Turn off the Angry Birds App and turn your kids on to TumbleBooks...now available for iPads! The Tumblebook Library makes even reluctant readers enjoy reading. The books are formatted to engage readers, while building their fluency and expression, as they simultaneously hear and read the text. Each line of text is highlighted as it is read aloud in dramatic fashion. Pages turn automatically. Animated pictures jump off the screen. Kids can share their reactions by submitting their own book reviews. I hear there are even games!

Darlene Brown, Coordinator of Language Arts, has arranged for the free shared use of the Tumblebooks site. You can gain access by googling Tumblebooks, and entering the user name: rockyhills and password: books, or by simply typing in the Rocky Hill Public Schools website: rockyhillps.com, then clicking on Resources Students at the top of the page. You will see the link on the page, no need for user names or passwords. Click on TUMBLERREADABLES for intermediate grade books. Don't be surprised to see your son or daughter sit at the computer for hours reading Matt Christopher's Stealing Home. For younger readers click on TumbleBookLibrary to find talking picture books. Some are even read by the authors themselves. Your youngster might remember David Biedrzycki's visit to West Hill and laugh at the animated version of Ace Lacewig: Bug Detective.

Our students live in a world of e-mails, instant messaging, blogs, and e-books. A book is a book is a book. And readers get better at reading by reading. Happy Reading!

Student Council by Mrs. Cohen and Mrs. Laing

Student Council was very busy in December and January promises to be active as well.

In December we did a lot of community service activities to benefit the wider community. We had our coat drive and collected 120 coats that were distributed to local shelters to help keep both adults and children warm this winter. We adopted a family in need and collected over \$200 in cash and \$200 in gift cards, shopped and wrapped their presents and delivered them to the Human Services office. Student Council members also participated in a program called "Holiday Mail for Heroes" and made holiday cards for our service men and women who are overseas this holiday season.

On January 9th, six of our student council members participated in a State Leadership Conference at Asnuntuck Community College. They took part in team building and communication workshops to foster their leadership skills. There was also a parent component that some of our parents would be participating in as well.

We look forward to a productive and fun year with our Student Council members! Thank you.



CURRICULUM counts!

Kindergarten

In December, the kindergarten students worked hard preparing for their winter concert. They learned songs, movements and lines for the various pieces. They also made their own props and special crafts for the show.

In January, we plan on learning about lots of great things. We are working hard in reading groups. We are also writing about the season of winter. The students are writing about activities that they can do during the winter season. They have written about inside and outside activities. They are also understanding that you can have winter without snow on the ground. We learn about the calendar, the seasons and the weather daily. This month we will learn about Martin Luther King, Jr.

Grade 1

The First Graders are off to a great start in the New Year!

In reading, we have many new and exciting themes. These include "Shadows" and "Families". We will read many fiction and non-fiction texts that go along with these themes. For the remainder of the school year we will begin to focus on fluency. Have your child practice reading the way they talk when you read stories at home. Re-reading a familiar book is great practice for fluency.

In math, we are practicing subtractions strategies. We are also grouping numbers by tens. You can practice this at home by grouping and counting objects by tens and ones left over.

Grade 2

In January the second graders will begin the fourth unit in the Treasures reading program. The theme is "Land, Sea and Sky." Students will be asked to compare and contrast the behaviors of various animals, to notice the cause and effect of events, and to use strategies for summarizing text. Keep reading daily to improve fluency skills and comprehension skills.

In Math, we will finish the units "Multiple Masses" and "Ways of Adding Large Numbers." In the first unit, the children will have opportunities to use the equal-arm balance and compare the mass of objects. In the second unit, students will be estimating or rounding numbers and will be asked if their answers are reasonable. Adding two digit numbers using base-ten pieces, the 200 chart, calculators, drawings or the traditional paper and pencil method will have been taught. Keep practicing the triangle cards for addition with your child! It is helpful when the facts are automatic for them. Soon we will be starting to learn subtraction facts using the triangle cards. Thanks for your help at home with this!

Solids, Liquids and Gases is the current science unit. The children work cooperatively on the experiments. Our social studies unit is on Continents and Oceans. We have creative ways to learn them!

Grade 3

January has been a busy month so far in the third grade! The students have returned to learning about addition and subtraction but are extending their knowledge to solve problems up to the thousands place. Any additional review of addition and subtraction facts at home will facilitate their work in this area. In the current unit, students are also working with estimation strategies. Methods for rounding numbers to the tens and hundred place are utilized.

In Language Arts, the students are reading to make inferences and compare and contrast. They will read a wide range of texts, ranging from a traditional African fable about seven brothers to a nonfiction text about preserving Earth's natural resources. The students will continue to work on written responses to text each week through work in the classroom as well as their weekly homework practice.

CURRICULUM counts!

Grade 4

In January, our grade four student mathematicians will continue to concentrate on multiplication, shifting their focus to lines, angles and symmetry. During the latter part of the month they will continue with a unit on decimals which links decimals with measurement and money. In science, all classes will begin investigating the physics of motion by analyzing the motion of vehicles they have built, how forces affect a vehicle's motion, and design vehicles that are propelled by stored energy.

In social studies everyone will randomly select a state for our annual States' Fair. Classes have begun exploration of our first region in the United States, the Southeast. In mid- January, our reading will focus on viewpoints. Students will ponder how alternative points of view help us understand each other better.

Grade 5

Fifth graders are honing their musical skills as they prepare for the winter chorus, band and strings concert on January 18. They are also continuing to increase their reading stamina while silent reading every day. When reading we are instructing our fifth graders to think while they read, inferring the meaning, identifying the theme, and look for author's craft (including metaphors, similes, personification, exaggerations, and so on). Fifth graders are also writing. They learning how to organize, express and elaborate on their thoughts or experiences in expository form. In math we continue to explore fractions including adding and subtracting fractions and mixed numbers. They are applying these skills through word problems and labs. Students should practice their multiplication facts to help them work with fractions.

We are beginning our 4th rotation with science and social studies. Your fifth graders will either be learning about ancient cultures, phases of the moon, light, sound or the senses.

Specials (Music)

December and January have been busy with concerts. The 88-member Rising Stars 5th Grade Chorus paid a visit to the residents at Emeritus in Rocky Hill on December 21. After the chorus performed, they presented a carnation and sat with the residents for a holiday/winter sing along. This was a most rewarding experience that left lasting impressions of love and joy. One of the students reflected: "Going to Emeritus was probably one of the best things that ever happened to me. I felt so grateful to sing to wonderful people like them. I had fun going next to one of them and singing famous Christmas carols. Although it was happy, it was also a little sad too. Someone was partially deaf and another person was paralyzed. That's why I felt awesome about singing to them."

Another valuable experience is coming up when the chorus along with 5th grade band and 4th and 5th grade strings will perform in their Winter Concert on Wednesday, January 18 at 7:00 p.m. (snow date, Jan. 19) in the West Hill Café. Hope you can come and enjoy the musical development of your children.

From our PTO President



Hello West Hill Families,

As we leave 2011 and start 2012, I can only hope that you are enjoying this school year as much as I am. It has been a complete joy to work with all of you and I only hope the second half of the year will be as productive as the first.

The winter months are upon us, and the PTO kicks things off with two nights, one for grades K-3 and the other for grades 4-5, of fun and excitement with our Sports Night/Ice Cream Socials which will be held on **February 10th and 17th**. Please come out and enjoy the festivities. If you are interested in helping out on either night please contact Julia Eisenhaur at juliaeis@att.net for more information on what is needed to make the evenings possible.

Original Works has a new look this year. Our "First Annual Family Art Night" will be held on a date to be determined in March. This night will be a chance for all students to see different art displays to get their creative groove going. There will be artists from the community that will be there to bring out the artistic abilities in each student. Orders can be completed with your child's artwork that is created that evening. If any "artist" would like to show their talents and help out the students please contact me directly.

The Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Marian Hourigan will join us at the **January 17th PTO meeting**. She will be speaking to us about the student portal and how your child's information can be at your electronic fingertips. **The meeting will be held at 7:00 in the West Hill School Library.** Hope you can attend.

The PTO is still working toward our goal of purchasing technology for the school. So far this year, with the help of the Scholastic Dollars earned at the book fair, the PTO has been able to purchase three document cameras and one set of 24 "clickers" which can be used with the SMART Boards to help with testing and reviewing knowledge learned in class. **Please remember an hour of your time can go a long way.**

Happy New Year!!
Nicki Holt

For questions or comments please feel free to contact me directly at 860-716-5216 or nickiholt3@att.net.

*Thank
you*

A special thank you to all the moms who donated their time, expertise and display items to make Harvest Ball 2011 a success. The Ball would not happen without the support of parents who set up the cafe, check in the guests, serve food and drinks, and take that special photo we all look forward to seeing. Thank you for keeping the tradition alive. Of course, it all begins and ends with the help of the janitors who never fail to accommodate our requests to completely reorganize the cafe! Thank you!

~ Lisa & Dita

If one of your New Year's resolutions is to clear out the clutter, there are ways that PTO can help! Gently used clothing can be dropped in the Kiducation collection box on New Britain Avenue. Crayons can be left in the bin in the school lobby to be repurposed into new crayons. Magazines are still being collected for the Hartford Hospital emergency room. And finally, think of the libraries when you are cleaning out the bookshelf. Check with your child's teacher or Mrs. Hutnick to see if used books can be added to the library. If not, the Cora J. Belden library always accepts donations.

Happy New Year and be green!

The Halloween That Wasn't

Ann Dobmeier

With the horrible weather, power outages and school closings, and the fact that many children did not go out trick-or-treating this year, our donation to UNICEF was still quite impressive. A check for **\$452.78** was sent to UNICEF on behalf of West Hill School.

Many children, including Matt S., went into their piggy banks to make their donation. A big thank you to the 88 students at our school, and their families, who returned their UNICEF boxes filled with coins and bills to help this worthwhile cause.



MAKE OUR SCHOOL A CUT ABOVE!

Keep clipping as the next contest will be held **Jan 26 – Feb 10th!** Details to follow...

January 2012



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 Holiday—No School	3 Day 2	4 Day 3	5 Day 4	6 Day 5	7
8	9 Day 1	10 Day 2	11 Day 3	12 Day 4	13 Day 5	14
15	16 Holiday—No School	17 Day 1 PTO Meeting - 7:00 PM	18 Day 2 Winter Concert - 6:00-8:00 PM	19 Day 3 BOE Meeting - Town Hall-7:00 PM	20 Day 4	21
22	23 Day 5	24 Day 1	25 Day 2	26 Day 3	27 Day 4	28
29	30 Day 5	31 Day 1				

February 2012



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
5			1 Day 2	2 Day 3	3 Day 4 Early Dismissal- 12:30—Prof. Devel. For Teachers	4
	6 Day 5	7 Day 1	8 Day 2	9 Day 3	10 Day 4 Sports Night/Ice Cream Social—K-3 - 6:30-8:00 PM	11
12	13 Day 5	14 Day 1	15 Day 2	16 Day 3 Board of Education Meeting—Town Hall—7:00 PM	17 Day 4 Sports Night/Ice Cream Social—4-5 - 6:30-8:00 PM	18
19	20 No School - Winter Recess	21 No School - Winter Recess	22 No School - Winter Recess	23 Day 5	24 Day 1	25
26	27 Day 2	28 Day 3	29 Day 4			

March 2012



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Day 5	2 Day 1	3
4	5 Day 2 Grades Close—2nd marking period	6 Day 3	7 Day 4	8 Day 5	9 Day 1	10
11	12 Day 2	13 Day 3 PTO Meeting— 7:00 PM	14 Day 4	15 Day 5 Board of Education Meeting—Town Hall—7:00 PM	16 Day 1	17
18	19 Day 2 Report Cards	20 Day 3	21 Day 4	22 Day 5	23 Day 1	24
25	26 Day 2	27 Day 3	28 Day 4	29 Day 5	30 Day 1	31

