

November 2014

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the first 2014-2015 newsletter! The start of the school year has been a wonderful one, and we hope that continues. As always, we encourage our families to stop in and share all that goes on in the middle school. Our goal is to make our students' time here memorable, exciting, and enriching.

The first trimester is passing very quickly, officially wrapping up the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. We've held several assemblies, including our Veterans Day breakfast. Students in all grades worked hard to put together a video montage for our veterans.

The 3 Rs' continue to hold our focus at RDMS, giving students a SOARING EAGLE for making good choices in regards to RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, and READINESS. We have weekly winners and monthly winners from each grade, with each winner having a prize of \$3 or \$10 (monthly) to apply to lunch account or donate to the charity of their choice. The last few years we have been able to give AIO Food Pantry and Pope Memorial Humane Society good-sized donations thanks to the students' generosity.

Infinite Campus will continue to provide students and parents with access to their grades. Please contact the office by phone or email if you are having any issues, or have questions. Parents should register for their own account; just contact the office to get the information.

Rockland District Middle School is trying to go as paperless as possible to be more environmentally friendly. We understand that not all families have access to computers, please let us know if this is the case at your home. We've got lots of valuable information on our website, including our student handbook. Go to RSU13.org and choose RDMS. You can also find athletic and health/nutrition information on the district's website.

Please contact with any questions or concerns. Thank you for all your support. Our staff and our families are a team working towards academic excellence in all our students.

Sincerely,
Kathryn Hollicker, Principal

Parents' Group Meeting Notice: The RDMS Parent Group will hold their next meeting on December 2 at 6pm at the Rockland Public Library in the Children's Room. All parents and school staff are welcome.

Visitors: All visitors must enter through the main front doors, which are locked during the day, and sign in at the office and sign out when leaving the building. Please help us maintain a safe and secure school for your children. We also ask visitors to wear a "visitor badge."

Dress Code: As a reminder, RDMS does have a dress code policy that will be adhered to. Students will be given a T-Shirt to wear if necessary. Students must continue to adhere to the length of skirts over leggings. Leggings are not a replacement for slacks or jeans. Ripped tops, pants, and jeans are also prohibited. Parents may be called to bring appropriate clothing. Please see our handbook for the entire policy.

YELLOW TEAM NEWS – Grade 5

Mrs. Cornforth, Math & ELA: We are pleased to say the Fifth Graders of 2014 have adapted quickly to Middle School! They now know their schedules, as varied as they can be, they have all conquered getting into their lockers on a daily basis, and they have been introduced to and have practiced the Three Rs of RDMS. The students have had many lessons on Anti-Bullying by Mrs. Hollicker, and have had classroom discussions with Mr. Martin, our School Counselor, both of which are continuing. We just enjoyed a fun day of Halloween costume-wearing, not to mention the rest of Spirit Week! It was nice to see the participation and enthusiasm from the fifth graders.

Academically, my Social Studies classes have been putting in a lot of effort learning about the geography of the United States. In particular, it's landform regions and bodies of water. In the beginning of the year, the students created maps of their own imaginative lands, including as many landforms and bodies of water as they could. They did a great job!! As a last project in this Social Studies unit, the students are working on creating pamphlets featuring a U.S. region of their choice. In their pamphlets the students are required to include such information as states and their abbreviations, wildlife, vegetation, climate, landforms, bodies of water, and a map of that region. Following this unit, we will be learning about various Native Americans who inhabited North America, and that will lead into Explorers of the World.

In Writing classes, we have been concentrating on developing Ideas, one of the six traits of writing. Students are keeping a Journal in which they keep notes on strategies to help them develop ideas to write about. Four of those strategies are: Funnel the Main Idea; Tame the Topic; Target the Main Idea; and Swiss Cheese. In the classroom are hanging visuals that help students remember what these strategies are. Also in their Journals, students are putting these strategies to work, showing how to use them, and then developing those pre-writing exercises into a written piece of work. For now, students have been writing about the topic they know best: themselves. We will soon be getting into the next trait, which is Organization. This lines up nicely for State Reports the students will be writing in Social Studies.

iPads have been a frustrating experience for many this year! Since Apple decided to have parents register their children's iPads in a different way than last year, it has been an ongoing issue. At this point, most students know their passwords, which will now permit us to use them more in the classroom. Please know, though, we do not permit students to be on FaceTime, or using Email, or any other such communication. Please, parents and siblings, do not email your child, brother, or sister. The iPads will be used solely for educational purposes. Presently, we have students working on MobyMax Math as well as MobyMax Reading Skills. Eventually, the students will be using Pages and other Apps in Social Studies and Writing.

Thank you to parents for your interest in your child's education. Please keep in touch with us! A warm and Happy Thanksgiving to all.

Mrs. Hart, Math & ELA: During the Enhancement Period, the 5h graders have been practicing nonfiction reading and comprehension. The first topic we covered was social studies. We have read, discussed, and completed papers on government/community, historical events, and geography.

The students have worked on the following topics in math: adding and subtracting, decimals, place value, rounding to the nearest thousand, hundred, tens, tenths, and hundredths, writing numbers in expanded notation, making magnitude estimates and solving problems using all operations, and multiplying decimals. Students are using their iPads to complete math applications.

English classes have covered the components needed to make sentences. Currently, they are learning how to make compound sentences. The students have used grammar apps on their iPads. The following topics have been covered in spelling: short and long vowels, variant consonants, and consonant digraphs

The first trimester closes on November 25, 2014. Please remind your 5th grader to turn in any missing work. As always, you may email me anytime. (bhart@rsu13.org)

Mrs. Groene, Science & ELA: It has truly been my pleasure to work with the fifth grade students this year. The boys and girls are very exuberant learners. They've come to the right place! :) In reading, we're just finishing the book, *There's a Boy in the Girl's Bathroom* by Louis Sachar. He also penned the popular book, *Holes*.

Science classes have been very hands-on and interactive with the setting up and studying of terrariums in 2 liter bottles. If all goes well, we will hopefully be adding an aquarium to each system. I've been capturing the days' activities via Apple devices. We are extremely excited about our Veterans Day Assembly on Nov. 10th. The entire fifth grade provided a background vocal of America the Beautiful for a video of student-designed posters honoring Veterans. Additionally, several students illustrated and narrated a wonderful poem comprised of lyrics from patriotic songs skillfully arranged by Mrs. Cornforth. The students also made Veterans Day cards and postcards that will be delivered to the veterans at the VA Hospital in Bangor. What an active and talented bunch of ladies and gentleman we have! I am so looking forward to what we can accomplish together during the rest of this school year.

RED TEAM NEWS – Grade 6

Mrs. Tripp, Social Studies: We started the school year off studying the five themes of geography and moved quickly into reviewing map skills. The students practiced using latitude and longitude and how to read and analyze a map. After working with maps, the students started their first unit, *The Beginning of Human Society*. In this unit students discovered the connections between geography and history. The unit also focused on how hunter-gathers lived during the Stone Age, the beginning of farming, the advantages people gained from settling down in one place and the

understanding of how the first civilizations formed and spread.

Mr. Crossley, Science: The 6th grade science classes have spent the first part of the school year studying how to predict the motion of objects using Newton's Three Laws of Motion. As part of our motion unit we will be studying the forces and history of flight that will end with a field trip to the Owls Head Transportation Museum on November 25. More information and permission slips will be coming home soon. We will be finishing up our unit on motion with sections on gravity, friction, pressure, work, and energy as we finish out 2014 and begin 2015. Sometime in January we will begin work on matter and intro to chemical interactions.

Ms. McNeilly, ELA: As we approach November, we are all well into our classroom routines and students are aware of classroom and teacher expectations.

In Reading class we have started with Theme 6 in the textbook, called *Getting Through Hard Times*. Our major emphasis for the first quarter is nonfiction reading.

In November, we will be doing our interdisciplinary unit on flight. The students will all be reading *Amelia Earhart* by Tanya Lee Stone. They will be putting together a portfolio of their work for this two-week unit.

My English class is finishing their study of sentence structure. This includes subjects, predicates, compound and complex sentences. My English class will be joining Mrs McMackin's class for our unit on flight for the next few weeks.

Mrs. McMackin, ELA:

Group 1 class: Students have read *Dexter the Tough* and *Help! I'm a Prisoner in the Library*. Both of these books are realistic fiction talking about possible real world problems. Students are having 10 spelling words per week to study. Reading skills are being handled through the Daybooks series. At this time students are studying what readers do to become more involved in their reading to make better meaning by asking questions as they read, stopping to comment on what was just read, stopping to predict and then finding out what happened next, stopping to visualize in their heads what is going on in the story, and marking up the text for "thinking about" comments. They also have a

"Do Now" activity in proofreading and grammar on a daily basis.

Group 2 class: Same as above only instead of *Dexter* book, they read *Strider*.

Group 3 class: The students have been working on pronouns and the different types of pronouns and how they are used in sentences. They have also been writing a narrative story about a topic of their choice from their "Writing Territories" section of their journal. Some have completed these; others have not finished quite yet.

All classes for November: We have begun the 6th grade interdisciplinary unit called "Flight". All classes will be making a magic book with research of one particular thing that has something to do with flight using an Internet source site, an encyclopedia or article, and a book for resources. They will also make an origami bird and develop 4-6 poems about flight or their topic on flight. This will probably end in the beginning of December at this time.

Ms. Slocum, Math: Over the first trimester our math class has been working on completing a thematic unit of Tools for Success, as well as developing and practicing effective partner and group work skills, learning the language of mathematics, applying the 4-step problem solving approach, and evaluating problem solving procedures using assessment scales.

Coming up next, we will be developing and applying geometry, fraction, and decimal concepts while completing a thematic unit on Patterns and Designs. Some of the topics we will be discussing are:

- the common occurrence of symmetry in nature and in artifacts
- how geometric transformations are used in quilt designs
- how decimals are used in automobile specifications

BLUE TEAM NEWS – Grade 7

Mr. Gallagher, Math & ELA: Two of the math classes have completed Module 1 and are now working in Module 2. This module has students working on some geometry (classifying angles and working with complementary and supplementary angles), integers (including addition and subtraction of integers and using integers in coordinate graphing), functions, and solving one-step addition and subtraction equations. The third math class will finish Module 1 over the next two weeks and then move on to Module 2. During the next two weeks they will develop some problem solving skills and review order of operations rules.

All the math students have established Moby Max accounts, the on-line math program that we are using this year. Please check with your student occasionally to ensure that they are putting time and effort into this skill-building program. Please make sure that your student has an inexpensive protractor for use with homework assignments. I do have a limited supply of them for use in the classroom, but they will need their own for a few of the assignments.

We are working on non-fiction reading in ELA. Students are given packets consisting of articles to read and an assortment of activities to complete. These packets are aligned to the Common Core standards and will help students to improve their reading comprehension and research skills. From the middle of November to the middle of December the class will be reading Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

Students will read passages aloud in class and then complete various activities about the book. They will also present a final project as the culminating activity for the unit (and decorate the room in the spirit of the story).

Miss Campbell, Social Studies and ELA: In my ELA class, we started the year with writing a persuasive essay. We focused on using prewriting strategies, stating an opinion or thesis, identifying three main reasons and backing them up with supporting details, adding in transition words and phrases, and writing a conclusion that leaves the reader in wonderment. We will continue to write argument pieces as the year progresses, and incorporate citing information from research they find on their iPads.

Daily we practice grammar, spelling, and proofreading. Every week we learn different words. We even integrate vocabulary words from our core classes! We also have been reading the book *The Revealers* by Doug Wilhelm. This book focuses on 7th grade kids who encounter bullying situations. It focuses on three characters who learn to overcome and help others cope with bullying. Along with *The Revealers*, each student should be reading their free choice book for 20-30 minutes a night. They have a book report due November 17th. Nightly reading should be done every night for the remainder of the year. The second trimester will be filled with a poetry unit, our interdisciplinary research unit, as well as more persuasive essay writing!

We also are involved with the Farnsworth Art Museum with their Stories of the Land and its People

Project. The 7th grade took a field trip to the Owls Head Lighthouse and took beautiful pictures of items and scenery that represent our community. We are looking forward to critiquing, editing, and writing about the photos!

In Social Studies we started the year off learning about world geography. The students worked hard memorizing the oceans and continents! The students also chose a continent of their choice to study. They focused on the geography, animals, climate, and interesting facts of their continent. It's very important to learn about different cultures and places of the world! Ask your student about the continent they studied and what they learned! We moved into our Maine Unit by studying the geography, symbols, and facts of Maine. We are ending the unit by the students making a Maine map or project of their choice. We then move onto our Maine Native American Studies and studying the history and explorations of Maine. Daily we focus on geography skills or current events. I encourage each student to go home and read current events or watch the news!

Mr. Roberge, Science & ELA: In science the 7th grade has been studying characteristics of life, cells and microscopy. Students made a 3D cell model and explained what job each organelle has. As we move into trimester two students will first be studying kingdoms and classification. There will be some live animals coming to help illustrate these ideas. Then we will move into evolution, natural selection, adaptation and finally genetics.

SPECIAL EDUCATION & RTI TEAM NEWS

Mrs. Whitney, Resource Room: It's hard to believe that the first trimester had already gone by! And boy, have we been busy:

6th grade ELA: Students have been working hard to improve their overall reading skills. This includes finding the main idea of a text, and supporting it with details. They've also started writing expository paragraphs to demonstrate their understanding of main ideas and details. Look for an "All About Me" paragraph soon! In addition to finding and understanding the main idea, students have also been working on sequencing ideas, especially in writing, as it's difficult to understand a piece of written work that does not follow a logical order. Students have had the opportunity to use a fantastic online reading program

called “READ 180” by Scholastic. For more information about this reading intervention program you can visit its website at www.scholastic.com/read180. Some other tools students have access to are Moby Max, Brainpop, and Brainpop Jr. Ask your student about these. Coming up next: Story Elements and Summarizing!

6th grade Math: In math, each student has been working on: place value, rounding numbers, adding and subtracting with greater fluency, and memorizing the multiplication facts. Geometry, statistics, measurements, time and money, as well as understanding division is on the horizon!

Mrs. Bode, Resource Room:

5th grade ELA: Phonics, decoding words, increasing vocabulary and reading fluency has been part of this first semester curriculum. Our class just finished up a unit studying famous paintings and artists. Students learned new vocabulary and researched paintings such as, Mona Lisa, The Scream and Water Lily Pond. Each student was required to create a poster with a copy of their painting with a descriptive paragraph about author and painting. Come see final projects hung in Ms. Bode's room.

5th grade math: So far in class, we have been busy reviewing addition, subtraction and multiplication computation skills. Geometry, statistics, measurements, time and money were also on our list of review. This week we are starting the process of division.

7th grade ELA: Students have been busy learning about the writing process and detecting errors and run-on sentences. Phonics, decoding words, increasing vocabulary and reading fluency has been part of this first semester curriculum. Oh, yes, they have started and completed the first two writing assignments for their Autobiography Unit too. Busy, busy, busy!

7th grade math: This math class has reviewed the four computation skills, while learning to apply to real life situations. The class also is working on multi-step math problems which require more in depth math reasoning skills. Fractions and decimals conversions have been introduced and practiced. Measurements with millimeters and fractions of inches are being practiced and reviewed also. Time, dates and math problems around this subject is practiced and reviewed.

Mr. Tripp, Math RTI 2 classes: In RTI 2 Math students have been busy working on a variety of skills. In addition to reinforcing automaticity of multiplication skills we have been working on two and three digit multiplication. We have been reviewing traditional methods of multiplication as well as some different methods and strategies. Other groups in RTI Math have been developing a better understanding of fractions. In particular manipulating mixed numbers and improper fractions as well as adding them together. As the year progresses students will continue to work on needed skills and develop a better understanding of math concepts and strategies to tackle challenging problems.

Mrs. Majunka's Read 180/RTI 2 classes: In Grade 5 we are working on decoding strategies, reading fluency, and making better connections between reading and writing. It's fun having an iPad to use for practicing individual skills as well as being able to write, revise, and share more easily and efficiently in and out of the classroom. In grades 6 & 7, so far we've read and learned a lot about immigration trends in the United States as a vehicle to increase our reading comprehension and writing skills with informational texts. Our personal narrative reading and writing has focused on using natural disasters and extreme weather conditions for being more aware of sensory details and sequence of events that draw readers into the narrative. Practicing similar writing is interesting and fun.

Several computer programs such as Read 180, Lexia, and Moby Max are instrumental to each student getting individualized help and practice in addition to direct instruction from the teacher in the classroom.

Homework for all three grade levels includes reading at home 20-30 minutes per day, keeping a reading log and reading at least two pages aloud to an adult every day.

Please encourage your students to read at home. Reading together, both silently and orally, are major factors in your student's reading progress. Modeling good reading and enjoying a good book are essential to demonstrating the importance of reading and education. Thank you.

ALLIED ARTS TEAM NEWS

Ms. Spring & Mrs. Faria, Library: At the RDMS Library classes have been scheduled on a fixed

basis. Each student has a 45 minute library research skills class once per week, either from Ms. Spring, on Tuesdays or Wednesdays, or Mrs. Faria the other three days. We have covered the library online catalog, Maine Student Book Award nominees, using the scan app. to reach websites and evaluate them, and have studied nonfiction books and the various parts. There is time then for book check-outs, returns, and renewals, and for recommendations. Suggestions for book purchases are always encouraged.

Mr. Tonner, Industrial Technology: This year has started off great with lots of fun projects starting in Industrial Technology. The 5th Grade has just started technical drawings using drafting tools to complete different drawings of different shapes. The students will soon be starting their first hand tool project of tic tac toe boards. The 6th graders have been working hard on completing their first floor plans using Planner 5D on their IPADS. The students will have to complete a second house as well which will actually be built into a scaled down model. The 7th graders are digging into a fun engineering project building hovercrafts and catapults. The classes are divided between the two to save on class space. They will be working in groups of 3-4 dividing up responsibilities. The classes are really operating smooth coming into the holiday season.

Ms. Nash, Music: Music at RDMS is in full swing as we head towards our concert season. The band and chorus had their first performance of the year at this week's Veterans Day Assembly. The 6/7 grade band performed America the Beautiful and all chorus members sang The Star-Spangled Banner.

This week several of the 7th grade band and chorus students will be auditioning for District 3 Honors Festival, an exciting opportunity for musicians around the state. In the next few weeks, 6th grade band and chorus students will also have the chance to try out for the 6th grade Honors Festival.

In the music classroom, students are busily working on exciting projects. 5th grade students are in the process of creating their own music video. 6th grade students are beginning work on what music has impacted their life, while 7th grade students will be creating their own soundtrack to a short story or picture book.

Mrs. Duke, Health and PE: Exercising as little as 45-60 minutes a day is a great way to love your body. It's also fun—so go for the gold! When you

exercise, you get a more alert mind so you can do better in school. Exercise increases the blood flow to the brain and all parts of your body!

The physical education units covered this trimester have been soccer, football, fitness, whiffleball, and Sabakiball (an action-packed, non-stop, *non-contact* sport similar to lacrosse and team hand ball).

In health, the 5th graders studied about the three aspects of our health (physical, mental/emotional, and social). In 6th grade health education, we have worked on making good healthy decisions, setting goals, and now are focusing on fitness and soon nutrition. The 7th graders studied the importance of being responsible of their health. We learned about melanoma and ways to promote good healthy skin. We have also did research projects about disease prevention. The students will soon becoming DEAs, experts in the field of a particular drug.

Madame Harrison, Foreign Language:

Parlez-vous français? Students in 6th and 7th grade French classes have been working on speaking mostly French in the classroom. The goal is to have all spoken language in the classroom be 90% in French during each weekly 45-minute class. This is not easy for beginning speakers! Classes able to observe the 10% English limit earn gold coins toward a class party. Several classes just need one or two more coins to earn their first party. I am insisting on staying in French because it is the most efficient way to learn the language.

Our focus has been a study of schools around the world. We have looked at school buildings, transportation, clothing, and rules in a number of countries. Final trimester assessments will involve speaking and writing a little about schools around the world.

Mr. Wehnke, Art: We have had lots of fun creating seasonal art in the art room, such as colorful fall leaves and pumpkin still lives, time flies when you're having fun! We recently have been working on a variety of different art in each grade. In 5th grade they are learning about the artist Vincent Van Gogh and sketching their version of Van Gogh's Starry night.

In sixth grade students were busy creating colorful Silhouettes using colors from sunrises or sunsets. Our seventh graders studied portraiture using Native

American Indians as their subject matter.

It is my hope that when the opportunity arises that parents will expose their children to the rich art culture around our community. We are very fortunate to live right in the middle of an Art center.

Best regards, the Artman

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Miss Bishop, Athletics: Rockland District Middle School will have the team name Oceanside Blue for 7th grade boys and girls basketball this winter. Coaches this year are Rachel Campbell (girls) and Kerry Ilvonen (boys).

To view the 7th grade basketball schedules online, log on to www.rsu13.org; click on the Sports link in the top right hand corner; when the Athletics page loads click on Calendars & Schedules and click on the RDMS link.

Mrs. Rogers, RASA/Arts In Action: RASA Arts in Action is an after-school arts group that has been meeting Tues, Weds, and Thurs after school until 4:30pm. The group is focused on making **art** for and in the community. This fall they have been planning murals for the school with Mrs. Hollicker. The group also created costumes and masks and attended the Farnsworth Fall Festival. For more information about RASA Arts in Action, please email rasaartsinaction@gmail.com.

Youthlinks: New clubs started up on November 10th, Outdoor Adventure Team and Student Garden Army: Mad Scientist. You can also sign up for Soup Kitchen Saturdays, taking place 12/13 from 10-2 at St. Peters. Check out Youthlinks online youthlinksonline.org or on Facebook under Youthlinks.

Mrs. Kuhn, School Nurse: Greetings to all from the Nurse's Nook. I am thrilled to be serving Rockland District Middle School and South School as the School Nurse. I have been a nurse for 9 years, employed most recently at Pen Bay Medical Center in the Special Care Unit. Working at this school and in this community, I can tell you that my primary goal is the health and wellness of your children. I will do my best to support their physical health and emotional growth.

Cold and flu season is rapidly approaching and I am pleased to report that we vaccinated over 100 children

and adults at our recent Flu Clinic (special thanks to Lynne Hall and Ilmi Carter). If your child has not been vaccinated and you would like to do so, please call your pediatrician's office to schedule a visit for a vaccine. Pen Bay Pediatrics has another flu vaccine clinic on Saturday, Dec 13th from 10-1.

The primary defense we all have against illness is a healthy immune system and frequent hand washing. Please take the time to practice good hand washing at home, as we will be doing the same at school. The gold standard is at least 20 seconds of scrubbing with soap.

If your child has a fever (temperature 100F or greater) please keep them home. S/he must be fever free for 24 hours, without medicine, before returning to school. Children that have nausea and vomiting must stay home for at least 24 hours and may return to school when 24 hours has elapsed without illness or medicine. If there is any doubt, please call me to discuss your child's illness.

If your child has an injury or illness or other condition that requires medication at school, it is necessary for their pediatrician to provide us with the Doctor's Order stating what the medication is for, the dose and frequency. When you bring medication to the school, it needs to be in the original container or we cannot accept it.

As a practice, if I see your child in my office and I have *any* concern about their condition, I will call home/work/cell numbers on file. If you have phone numbers or contact information that changes, be sure to notify the office.

I look forward to serving your children. My goal is to have your child in school and engaged. Please call if you have any questions – no such thing as a silly question! Thank you.

Gretchen Kuhn, RN, BS
School Nurse RDMS and South School

