

April 2015

Dear Parents,

Trimester 2 has wrapped up and 3 is under way. The year is moving very quickly and spring is on the horizon!

Band and chorus had an amazing performance at the Strand in January. It was wonderful for the kids to be on the stage.

We hosted the Knox County spelling bee again this year, sending two students, Hannah Edwards (6th) and Chloe Courant (7th).

Smarter Balanced testing will start later this month for all grades. Please be sure your student is prepared by being well rested, hydrated and fed. All students will need some earbuds or headphones, with a long jack to fit into the new iPad cases.

We were able to get Station Maine rowing up again. We have 2 boats with 7 kids each going out for an hour every week. The bitter cold, snow and ice hasn't stopped them!

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 April 6 at 5pm in the RDMS Library. 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: Even though the second trimester was disrupted because of the many snow days, the fifth grade students continued to work toward achieving Learning Targets in Social Studies and Writing.

Keeping a Social Studies Journal focusing on "North American Explorers from 1400s -1600s" has supported developing different styles of writing. Students have had the opportunity and challenge of answering questions about John Cabot and his expedition to Newfoundland; creating an acrostic poem to represent Hernando Cortés's exploration in Mexico and conquering the Aztecs; creating a "What Would You Bring?" list of items for exploring; making a miniature board game to tell about Jacques Cartier's trip to Canada; and soon will be writing headlines and articles for the *Explorer Gazette*. By the end of the unit, the students will have acquired a brief timeline of events and people important to North American history.

In Writing classes, students have (finally!) finished their Just-So Stories explaining how an animal got a specific trait (ex: How the Turtle Got Its Shell), based solely on fiction. First, we read Native American stories that had such explanations to give the students ideas. Then we brainstormed what traits were unusual for some animals, and, lastly, the students had to create the reasons these traits happened. The students have great imaginations, so the stories are very entertaining. But, it has taken a long time to edit and proofread. Now that they are finished, some of the students will be submitting their stories to the school newspaper for "publication".

The students will soon begin researching a state of the U.S. to try their hands at non-fiction writing. This will include writing an outline of information, then adapting their outlines to write formal research reports. Some of their information will then be transferred to a poster of their state.

A reminder to students and parents: we now have Tuesdays and Thursdays reserved for After-School Help, from 2-3. If a student has been absent, please consider those days for make-up. The three fifth grade teachers are available on those days to help students catch up, or to understand a concept taught in class that may not seem clear. Thank you to those parents who have supported this already, and to those students who have voluntarily stayed!!

Mrs. Hart, Math & ELA: During our Enhancement period the 5th grade teachers have been reading the book WONDER by R.J. Palacio. Mrs. Hollicker has been reading this book to the students on Wednesday afternoons. The children have really enjoyed the book.

Math – All students are having timed facts assessment tests in class. Please encourage your child to brush up on math facts. The students are still rounding to the nearest underlined place, and are reviewing previously taught skills. Currently we have been comparing and ordering fractions; writing mixed numbers as improper fractions; writing fractions and decimal in order from least to greatest. We also use our iPads in class to enhance our learning of math.

Spelling / Language – Students are using their iPads for English / Grammar. They may further their skills at home as well. We use BrainPop and MobyMax. In spelling, the class is working on affixes (prefixes and suffixes); homophones; irregular plural nouns; possessives. There is a pretest and a final test on Friday. I encourage your child to study their spelling list.

I can be reached at: bhart@rsu13.org.

Mrs. Groene, Science & ELA: Thank you to all parents/guardians who have given consent for your student to increase his/her vocabulary skills using the vocabulary.com website. The fifth grade is currently participating in the Vocabulary Bowl. Although we did get a late start, our fifth graders have mastered 528 words and are currently in 4th place for the state of Maine. Just a reminder, students are able to access both vocabulary.com and MobyMax from home as long as you have internet access.

In reading, we are studying figures of speech and fiction and non-fiction short stories to aid in developing comprehension skills and locating specific details in daily reading samples. During the third trimester, my fifth grade reading groups will be making a cereal box book report. Please save one average-sized, empty cereal box and send it to school with your child in the next couple weeks. Thank you.

In Science, we have been reading many articles about current events in our Super Science Magazines. The students are finishing up our first in-depth Keynote project on their iPad. I am anxious to see their final creative pieces as they are learning to use transitions and build-ins/outs on

the slides for the planet presentations.

One last note - as we look ahead to the start of our Smarter-balanced testing sessions, please be sure that your child has a set of working headphones/earbuds for school use. We prefer that these headphones/earbuds remain at school for the duration of the achievement testing this spring as this is a necessary item for test completion.

Thank you again allowing us the pleasure of teaching your child or children during their fifth grade school experience. They have put forth tremendous effort this year and have whole-heartedly embraced the middle school environment. We are all so looking forward to seeing green grass and smelling the daffodils of spring!

RED TEAM NEWS – Grade 6

Mrs. Tripp, Social Studies:

Mr. Crossley, Science: Students are finishing up our introduction to matter unit and will soon begin our heat and energy unit. They will look at different forms of energy, energy transfers, heat flow, and comparing kinetic and potential energy. After energy we will move from physical science to Earth science as we begin to study geology. We will look at Earth processes, rocks, and minerals.

Ms. McNeilly, ELA: In my English classes we are studying pronouns. The students are learning about subject, object, possessive, and indefinite pronouns and how to use them correctly in sentences. They are continuing to work on the weekly Eagle English assignments that are always due on Thursdays.

In reading classes we have started our novel study. The spelling words will be coming from the book your child is reading and will not necessarily be every Friday. We will be doing a literacy circle format that will include group discussions and journal entries. The books that we are reading are **Where the Red Fern Grows** and **Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry.**

Mrs. McMackin's group 1 and 2 classes: Students are working on Pronouns and Idioms in our English classes. They have also been doing grammar Do Now's on parts of speech. They have spelling homework every week, so ask your child where their list is for them to complete their 3 choice homework assignments. Quizzes are on Thursday or Friday. We have gone back to the DayBooks for reading skills. We are learning how to write better answers to questions and to make sure all the questions asked are answered with support from their readings.

Mrs. McMackin's group 3 class: Students are now working on a persuasive essay. We have been taking

comparing essays and how they are structured, what they should and should not have, and making lists of pros and cons on different topics. Students have debated their issues in class and are about ready to start working on a good solid introduction (no fence-sitting). They will eventually research supporting information online and develop a good persuasive essay. Some will get published in the next school newsletter.

All Mrs. McMackin's classes: Starting next week, we will be into the SBAC testing for MEAs. Students should be working on their academic fair projects that will be presented at the open house in May. Parents should have all received a parental acknowledgement paper that had to be signed and returned to homeroom teachers. If your child has not done this yet, please inquire for another copy.

Ms. Slocum, Math: Over the past few weeks in 6th grade math class we have been using ratios to compare measures, exploring rates and unit rates, using graphs to make predictions, solving proportions, comparing similar figures, measuring angles and using percents for probabilities. In the next few weeks we will be learning about customary units of area, volume, and weight, calculating areas and volumes, creating nets for space figures, studying properties of circles and cylinders, and investigating integers. After that we will be adding and subtracting integers, creating and interpreting graphs, exploring scientific notation and metric measures, extending our knowledge of percent, and finding probabilities.

Things to ask your student:

What is a unit rate?

If two ratios are equivalent, what is true of their cross products?

How do you measure and angle with a protractor?

How can you find the area of a parallelogram?

Can you name several objects in the room that are shaped like prisms?

Students will be taking the Smarter Balanced tests soon. Please try to help them make wise choices in the areas of restful, restorative sleep and eating healthful, nutritious meals.

BLUE TEAM NEWS – Grade 7

Mr. Gallagher, Math & ELA: We have finally completed Trimester 2. With all of the snow days it seemed like it might never end!

All 3 Math classes are currently working on fractions. We will start with the basics of finding Greatest Common Factors, Least Common Multiples, and simplifying fractions to lowest terms. From there we will work on adding and subtracting fractions and mixed numbers, followed by multiplying and dividing them (which is actually easier than adding and subtracting them).

Please encourage your student to spend time at home working on the Moby Max math program on their computer. Although some of the material is basic, it provides them with a good review and a good base from which to build on in learning new concepts.

Miss Campbell, Social Studies and ELA: We just finished our studies on U.S. Government. We learned about the functions and powers of the Three Branches of Government, studied the political parties and their stances, and the process of a bill becoming a law. The 7th graders took part in a Legislature Simulation full of creating bills, researching facts, creating surveys, and practiced their public speaking skills by debating their bills.

We are now studying the history and culture of the Middle Ages. We are focusing on key turning points such as: the Black Plague, Magna Carta, Feudalism, rise of kings, decline of the church, and the crusades. The 7th grade will also be randomly selecting a certain role and researching the lifestyle of that person within the medieval society. They will either be researching a commoner, clergyman, or someone of royalty. Our annual Medieval Day will be **April 10th** this year. We have a local Medieval reenactment group coming in to show Medieval fighting techniques, educate them on weapons, and to discuss important cultural aspects of that time. Students are encouraged to dress up as their role to take part in our Medieval Day. They are not expected to buy costumes! They should use their imaginations and create their own costumes using whatever materials they have.

After our Medieval studies, we will move on to WWII. We will focus on the causes of WWII, major events, important leaders, and the aftermath. Finally, we will end the year with our annual Bridges interdisciplinary unit. During this unit my social studies classes will work together in groups and focus on a specific culture. They will research important events in history, the geography, and create several different small projects of their choice such as cooking, creating a language chart, researching music, etc. We look forward to seeing you for our Open House on May 14th!

Mr. Roberge, Science & ELA: In 7th grade science students have finished up the evolution and genetics unit and are moving on to chemistry. The chemistry unit focuses on states of matter, heat, density, chemical reactions, periodic table and acids and bases. This unit has labs and demonstrations and students will wear safety goggles and any hazardous reaction is demo only, so we will try to make it as fun as possible but of course safe.

The 7th grade ELA classes are working on a research unit to start trimester three. We will continue writing for the autobiographies and they will be presented to their family and friends at the open house on May 14th. Students need to be reading their choice books every night for this trimester at home. Students will also be reading The Giver in class this trimester. We will focus on literature circles and group work

during this book. Students will also be taking the Smarter Balanced state test in reading and math.

SPECIAL EDUCATION & RTI TEAM NEWS

Mrs. Whitney, Resource Room: Two-thirds of the way through the school year, and despite so many snow days, we've accomplished a fair amount of assignments:

6th grade ELA: Students have been working hard to improve their overall reading skills. This includes finding the supporting the main idea with textual evidence. They've also started writing a narrative paragraph about their wildest weather experience, to demonstrate their ability to support their topic with vivid details, and order the events in a logical order. Look for a "wildest weather" paragraph soon! Students continue to use a fantastic online reading program called "READ 180" by Scholastic. We will be finishing up Workshop 2, this week, and will begin Workshop 3: titled "Identity Crisis". We will use literary works by Shirley Jackson, Emily Dickinson Angela Shelf Medearis to demonstrate their comprehension of story elements. 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.

6th grade Math: In math, each student has been working with a more specific skill driven program called Focus Math. Each lesson teaches a specific skill, in order to better prepare them for the upcoming Maine Educational Assessment in Math.

Ms. Meuse, Resource Room: 5th grade ELA: We are reading *There is an Owl in the Shower* together aloud and the students have begun a writing journal based on writing prompts. We have incorporated a "Project Wet" unit onto our lessons and are working on a unit about sea turtles. Learning about the folklore of these incredible creatures, the students have created their own folklore stories. Each has chosen a specific species of turtle and are incorporating it into their stories. Students have been practicing literacy skills on the Lexia program for a time each day.

5th grade math: Students are working on their math skills on MobyMax. This program assesses students and challenges them with practice problems that are appropriate for the individual skill level. During class, we are reinforcing multiplication skills and have begun multiplying two digit numbers and simple division.

7th grade ELA: In honor of Women's History Month, students learned about Jerrie Mock, the aviator who was able to complete Amelia Earhart's solo flight around the world. They have been studying biographies and have written some beautiful poetry pieces. Students have been continuing to work on learning about the writing process and detecting errors in sentences.

7th grade math: This math class has reviewed tricks and strategies to retain multiplication facts. We are beginning to learn math vocabulary terms. Understanding the operation that is indicated by the terminology will be critical for them to know which action to use to compute the correct answer to a problem. Students are working on their math skills on MobyMax. This program assesses students and challenges them with practice problems that are appropriate for the individual skill level.

Mr. Tripp, Math RTI 2 classes: In RTI 2 Math we are continuing to work on a variety of skills and strategies driven by where students need help the most. Some common themes across grade levels are concepts based on multiplication, division strategies, area, perimeter, and fractions. One of the more popular projects some students have done is building their dream house first on graph paper and then in 5D planner. Students had a budget to work with and this projected weaved in many different skills and concepts including area and perimeter of irregular objects. All students are making positive progress towards their goals and continue to work hard. If you have any questions or concerns about your student in RTI 2 Math please feel free to email me at btripp@rsu13.org.

Mrs. Majunka's Read 180/RTI 2 classes: All three grades are finishing the classic novel *The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes. The book centers on a timeless message of compassion involving a group of girls who find themselves drawn into a game that teaches the players an unexpected lesson.

Students are currently focusing on nonfiction writing and developing ideas and details into interesting essays to share. We are hoping to use our experience in reading *The Hundred Dresses* and our writing skills to produce a technology based project to showcase what we are learning.

Students are continuing to use computer programs such as Read 180, Moby Max, Lexia, and Vocabulary.com for individualized practice on particular skills in addition to direct instruction in small groups

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 student's at home reading. 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 & Ms. Hyde, Library: Classes in the library are taught by either Ms. Spring or Ms. Hyde as part of the

Allied Arts rotation. Lessons for 5th grade have covered the Maine Student Book Award nominated books in anticipation of their voting at the end of the month. We have done Kahoots which are online quizzes that have covered the Maine Student Book Award books, digital safety, and news articles from Tween Tribune. In grades 6 and 7 there have been more extensive lessons on internet safety, computer coding, and how to recognize high quality websites. At the end of the class sessions there is time for book checkouts. Reading is to be encouraged.

Mr. Tonner, Industrial Technology:

Ms. Nash, Music: Life is busy in the music world at RDMS! 5th grade band is making great strides in their playing abilities, and are really starting to strengthen their tone and musical abilities. We have made some good progress since the concert and are continuing to add to their experience. 5th grade chorus is also making some good progress. Since the concert we have been focusing on proper choral rehearsal etiquette, music literacy, and good tone, as well as preparing our songs for the next concert. The older band is well on their way to learning the pieces for the next concert, and each rehearsal they impress me with the sound quality they are producing. It really is quite incredible how well they do considering many of them have only been playing a little over a year and several started this year as 6th or 7th graders! We have also started an after-school volunteer 7th grade band to give those older students a more focused, intense rehearsal setting. The older chorus has made the most progress of any group since the concert. They are beginning to really be able to hold their own and sing in true harmony, as well as follow along in the music more easily. I look forward to presenting them in concert later in the coming year!

Mrs. Duke, Health and PE: Take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live. -Jim Rohn

The physical education units covered this trimester will be scooters, dance, indoor soccer, cooperative games, fitness, track & field, lacrosse, climbing wall, and recreational games. We are continuing to work on 5 STARS days! (Sportsmanship, Teamwork, Attitude, Rules, & Safety)

In health class, the 5th and 6th graders will be continuing nutrition and will be starting lessons on drug prevention soon. The 7th graders are learning about Making Proud Choices, a HIV and teen pregnancy prevention curriculum.

Madame Harrison, Foreign Language: French class is going to be very busy the last trimester of the year! 6th and 7th graders are working on a unit organized around the theme *Who am I (Qui suis-je)?* Students are learning to describe their interests, their likes and dislikes, their personalities, and basic facts about themselves.

6th graders are also learning to talk and write about what their dream house might look like – and they are actually building a model house out of recycled materials. If you stop by the room later in the trimester you'll be able to see the model houses and read the descriptions of them. The houses are built from cardboard, corks, paper tubes, egg cartons, and other recycled goodies. If you have anything you would like to donate to the project we would love your (small and clean!) recyclables!

Guided by artist Cindy McGuirl (and thanks to a grant from Donors Choose) - 7th graders have made some fantastic puppets out of recycled bottles, fabric, yarn, cardboard, buttons and pipe cleaners. They will be performing short puppet skits that they are writing themselves later in the year. The audience will be younger students. Please stop by to take a look at the puppets!

Mr. Wehnke, Art: Hello from the busy art room here at RDMS. We are all busy preparing for our art show in May which will be during the Academic Fair. In 5th graders have been having fun getting into Surrealism, creating pictures that are dream-like for example - flying horses and iPhones with legs. In 6th grade the students are learning to work with tints of different colors to create a stain glass painting. The 7th Grade students are creating Medieval knight pop outs using heavy gaged aluminum foil. It is my hope to see you all at the Art show at during the Academic Fair in May! Best Regards (Artman)

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Miss Bishop, Athletics: Spring sports start up soon! For middle school this includes track & field (open 6-8), plus 7th grade baseball and softball. There is a parent & athlete night 3/31 at 5:30pm at Oceanside West.

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: At last, we are coming out of a busy cold and flu season. For the most part, I am seeing fewer children for high fevers and cough. On the other hand, we have had a run on orthopedic injuries...several sprained ankles and twisted knees. If your child has had such an injury, please try to use the "RICE" treatment at home (Rest, Ice, Compression bandage, Elevate). Also, anti-inflammatory medication (Ibuprofen "motrin") or pain medication (acetaminophen "tylenol") is recommended if the injury is swollen and painful (use one or the other or alternate and follow directions for administration on the bottle). Using these interventions at home will allow for a

more speedy recovery. School hours are generally not convenient for icing an injured ankle, etc. however, we will accommodate when necessary. Please let me know if you think your child will need orthopedic support during the school day. If your child has an injury that requires a wheelchair, please understand that the school does not have a wheelchair for general use, it is reserved for emergencies. You may bring one in for the child to use in school if necessary. Please call ahead to let us know.

Looking ahead, spring is here which means it's time to spend more time out of doors! According to the National Center for Disease Control, only 1 in 3 children are physically active every day (insert frown☹ here). Additionally, Healthy Maine Partnerships, Bureau of Health has researched children and screen time and the latest information is that children are spending an *average* of 30+ hours a week watching TV, gaming, and using social media. The National Institute of Health recommends children less than 2 years old have NO screen time. And children older than 2, screen time should be limited to 1-2 hours a day. So that leaves plenty of time to get outside and run around! Let's do our best as a community to limit screen time and encourage children to have an active lifestyle. Off to the gym I go...yes, we are their role models. Please don't hesitate to call me to discuss any health concerns you may have.

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