

The Wildwood



Window

September 24, 2014

All around Wildwood: The Principal's view

Welcome to the first edition of the Wildwood Window for the school year 2014-15! We will publish this newsletter on a monthly basis to inform our families about the learning and events that are taking place in our classrooms and throughout our school.

On a picture-perfect sunny day we celebrated our first day of school with a parade led by the UMass Marching Band. In the time leading up to the parade our sixth grade students had discussed their role as the 'leaders' of the school. In small groups they thought of unique words to describe their leadership at Wildwood. They wrote these words, which included *Respect, Selfless, and Kindness*, on banners to carry during the parade. The UMass Band and the sixth graders led us to the back playground where we formed a gigantic circle and created a human wave which moved around and around the circle. We closed the event by making individual wishes for what we wanted to learn in school during the year.

Every year we welcome lots of new students to our school and this year is no exception. Presently we have welcomed close to 50 new students in grades 1-6 and 58 kindergarten children. In addition, eight new teaching staff members and six new para-educators have brought fresh energy to our school. At our annual Welcome Assembly which we hold every September we greeted all of the new students and staff to Wildwood. Welcoming every student, family and staff member is at the core of our vision of how we want our school to be. Every grade level learned how to say the word, *Welcome*, in a different language, and we all shouted these words out one at a time in a coordinated *Wave of Welcome!* We can all be a part of this welcoming culture by reaching out to the new members of our community.

The beginning of the year is an important time for us to reach out to all of you as partners in your children's education. One way that we set the foundation for working together is by holding a Curriculum Night during which we share essential information about the learning that will

take place in the classrooms and ways that you can support your children at home. **This year the Curriculum Night will take place on Wednesday, October 1st from 6-8:30 pm.** At the Curriculum Night you will be able to set-up a time for a parent-teacher conference. These meetings are great opportunities for you to share your goals for your children and hear about their initial progress at school. I look forward to a great school year together!

Nick

Important Upcoming Events

September 30 – Photo Day

October 1 – Curriculum Night, 6 – 8:15 pm

October 8 – Walk to School Day, 7:50 am

October 13 – No School

October 18 – ABC Fall Foliage walk/5K run

October 22, 24, 27 – Early Release Days (1:20 pm dismissal) for parent/teacher conferences

School-wide Safety Drill

Wildwood School, in conjunction with all of the Amherst Public Schools, has developed a crisis safety plan with the goal of being prepared for any situation that may threaten the safety of our students. Once again, we will be conducting school-wide safety drills with our students this year. This is one way that we can ensure that we have practiced what to do should an emergency situation occur. At the same time, we want to give our students the message that adults are prepared for emergencies and can keep them safe. Teachers will explain the drills' purpose to all students in developmentally appropriate ways. Practicing safety drills will be incorporated into the school routine just as fire drills have been. We will be conducting our first safety drill during the first week of October.

Walk to School Day

Everyone is invited to join us at Bertuccis at 7:50 am for Walk-to-School Day. Please return the attached flyer if you would like your child to participate in this event.

A Few Reminders:

Absent Line

Please call the special school number, 362-1401, before 9:15 AM if your child will be absent. Since school attendance is such an important factor in relation to academic success we will be working closely with all families to ensure that every child attends school on time regularly. Please do not hesitate to call the school guidance staff or Nick or Linda Gianesin if any issues arise that affect your child's attendance.

Change in Dismissal Routine

Please send a note to your child's classroom teacher if you plan to pick your child up earlier or you would like to change your child's way of going home for that particular day or on a regular basis. All students will need a bus pass filled out by the office in order to ride a bus that they are not assigned to or if they are riding their assigned bus, but want to get off at a stop that is not their assigned stop. It is very difficult for us to inform teachers of last minute changes to bus routines so, please let us know at the beginning of the school day if possible.

Parent Pick-Up Room procedures

All students who get picked-up by their families or a designated adult are asked to wait in Cafeteria One, which is the cafeteria closest to the playground. In order to have a more orderly dismissal routine in the parent pick-up room students sit at tables designated by grade level. We ask all families or designated adults to sign-out their children in the parent pick-up room. Families are also required to complete a dismissal plan form which is kept on file in the school office. We have been averaging about six minutes from the time that we let families into the parent pick-up room (about 3:12p.m.) until every child has been picked-up.

Walking Home

If you are giving your child permission to walk home this means that you trust that he/she can walk safely home alone or with friends. If you are meeting your child on the playground that is a 'parent pick-up' which should take place in the parent pick-up room.

Side Parking Lot

We are continuing to monitor the side parking lot in order to create a safe and orderly dismissal time. For this reason please make sure to walk your children carefully to your car. Please park in such a way that you do not block traffic and follow the directions of our custodians who are coordinating the traffic in our parking lots at dismissal. We have created 15 minute drop-off parking spots in the front of the side parking lot.

Hillside Pizza Fundraiser

Order Hillside Pizza and support our sixth grade students' annual field trip to the Morse Hill Outdoor Education Center at the same time. Fill out the attached order form and return it to school by October 8th. Any questions: email Georgia Malcolm in the main office, malcolmg@arps.org



Please Hand In Read-a-thon Folders

I hope that everyone enjoyed reading some terrific books this past summer. Some students registered to participate in the Wildwood Summer Read-a-thon and have already returned their folders. Pledges have been also been coming in and so far we have raised over \$1,200.00 for the school library.

If you have not already done so, please return your student's folder, with their list of books read and any pledges earned, to the library or office. Students did not have to raise money in order to participate. Checks made out to the Wildwood PGO.

Read-a-thon participants will be gathering on **Friday, September 26th at 2:20 pm** to celebrate the end of the read-a-thon. **Please hand in your folders during the week of September 22nd.**

Thank you, Elaine Donoghue

News from our Sixth Grade classrooms

The sixth grades at Wildwood have adopted a model in which students have three different teachers who specialize in one core subject. All of the teachers also teach math to their homeroom students. Here is a brief report from our sixth grade teachers:

In ELA, we are starting a mythology unit about the hero's journey. Students will be closely reading a book, *The Lightning Thief*, and some of the original mythology that comes up in the story. In about four weeks we will be writing our own hero's journey stories. You might ask your student about their heroes or discuss some of your own personal heroes with them.

In Science, we are exploring different concepts of basic physics and the scientific method. Students will perform many hands-on activities while exploring these concepts. You might ask your student about how air resistance and gravity affect falling objects or how scientists attempt to explain mysteries they are investigating.

In social studies, students are learning about the earliest ancestors of humans and how scientists uncover information about how they lived. Next week we will focus on how agriculture changed as humans evolved from the Stone Age. We will be making comic books about how life changed from the Stone Age to the time of agriculture.

Come join Principal Nick for the 5 K run at 10:30 am or walk with your family or a Wildwood group any time after 9 a.m.!



43RD
ANNUAL
AMHERST
ABC FALL
FOLIAGE
WALK  RUN
OCTOBER 18, 2014
AMHERST TOWN COMMON

8:30-10:30 A.M. REGISTRATION OPEN; WALKERS MAY START AT ANY TIME
10:30 A.M. 5K RUN STARTS

FOOD AND ENTERTAINMENT
WWW.AMHERSTABETTERCHANCE.ORG

DOTANDLINE.COM

Wildwood Elementary School



**71 Strong Street
Amherst, MA 01002**

**Phone 413-362-1400
FAX 413-549-9519**

Nick Yaffe, Principal

Linda Giancesin, Assistant Principal

September 25, 2014

Dear Wildwood families,

In February of 2011, Massachusetts was granted a waiver from the federal No Child Left Behind law that governed school accountability since 2002. Based on the details of the waiver, a new accountability system has been implemented. This system places all schools and districts in Massachusetts into five different “levels” based on the achievement of students taking the MCAS in math, language arts, and science as well as the growth in achievement of students in math and language arts. The primary measurement tool is called “PPI” (Progress and Performance Index), which takes all of those factors into account over a period that includes the past four years, with more weight placed on the most recent years in that span.

The accountability level of Wildwood School is a Level 2. Level 2 schools have PPI scores that are solid, but not at the highest level for the aggregate and all subgroups. Level 2 schools do not require state involvement because of their achievement and growth. The accountability level of the Amherst Public Schools is a Level 2.

The Student Growth Percentile (SGP) is a measure of student progress that compares changes in a student’s MCAS scores to changes in MCAS scores of students with similar scores in the prior year. Wildwood students once again demonstrated strong gains in their Student Growth Percentile in the 2014 MCAS tests. The aggregate SGP in math (grades 3-6) for Wildwood students was 65% compared to the state aggregate of 50%. The aggregate SGP in English Language Arts (grades 3-6) was 71.5% compared to the state aggregate of 49%. While these scores are a positive sign of growth, we know that there is still more work to be done to ensure that every student at Wildwood is meeting his/her potential as a learner.

We have always encouraged strong family involvement in our schools. Parents and guardians can participate in our School Council which generates and monitors our School Improvement Plan. All Parents and Guardians are members of our PGO which supports our students and families in innumerable ways. One of our continuing goals for Wildwood is to strengthen our partnerships with families around supporting student learning. The MCAS test results are just one measure of your child’s skills and knowledge. We are presently conducting beginning-of-the-year assessments in reading, writing and math for our students. The results of these assessments will be shared with you at your fall parent/teacher conference. Your child’s present-year classroom teachers and other members of the teaching team are given copies of the MCAS scores. They will be analyzing the results to create strategies for addressing any concerns that have been highlighted by the tests.

Information related to teacher qualifications and licensure can be found on the state website at: <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/>

Sincerely,

Nick Yaffe

Principal

Wildwood Curriculum Night, Wednesday, October 1, 2014

AN EVENING FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Welcome in the Gym 6:00 – 6:15

Classroom Teacher Presentations:

- 6:15 – 6:45 Kindergarten and 1st grade
- 6:45 – 7:15 2nd and 3rd grades
- 7:15 – 7:45 4th and 5th grades
- 7:45 – 8:15 6th grade

Specialist Teacher Presentations :

- 6:45 – 8:00 **Aesthetics Team**
**Come meet the Art, Computer, Music, and Physical Education teachers.*
- 6:45– 8:00 **Librarian in Library**
- 6:00-7:30 **Reading Specialist in G-3 for Intervention & Title I**
**Please stop by G-3 near the library to ask questions or hear about RtI, intervention or Title I program.
**Please sign A Book I Loved Reading, a favorite book poster from elementary school years.*
- 6:00 – 7:00 **Intensive Learning Center**

The General Education Team (literacy and math intervention teachers), the English Language Education ELE / SEI, special education staff and the guidance counselors will be visiting classroom presentations to introduce themselves.

Parking

It is important that Fire Lanes are kept open during the Curriculum Night and all other times. The Amherst Fire Department needs to know that they could get fire engines to the school in an emergency.

- Parking is permitted in all marked spaces.
- Parking is **not permitted** along the curb in front of the school. Please keep fire lanes open.

Childcare Information

While Curriculum Night is generally an adults-only event, once again the PGO will be providing childcare for those families who otherwise would not be able to attend. We hope that this will enable a parent or guardian from every family to come and meet the people who teach and care for our children at Wildwood School.

As our childcare capacity is limited, however, we request that you only take advantage of this service if you absolutely need it. Please do not use the childcare service at Wildwood if you already have another adult who can supervise your children at home. We will be adhering to a strict 1:8 adult to child ratio in order to make sure that we maintain a safe environment in the childcare program. Therefore, to aid our supervision planning it is important that you fill out the form below if you would like childcare.

To request childcare for part or all of evening, please refer to the Curriculum Night schedule and then fill out the form below. Please return the form to your child's classroom teacher tomorrow. Only one form per family needs be filled out.

CURRICULUM NIGHT CHILDCARE REQUEST

Name(s) of child(ren) and ages:

Time period during which childcare will be needed (please do not request more childcare than is absolutely necessary):

I authorize the school to provide emergency contact information to the childcare providers:

Parent Signature _____

WILDWOOD WALKS!
INTERNATIONAL WALK to SCHOOL DAY
WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 8, 2014

Dear Wildwood Parents and Guardians,

Your school is participating in Safe Routes to School, a program offered by MassRIDES, the Commonwealth's travel options service of the Executive Office of Transportation. The Safe Routes to School program aims to reduce congestion, air pollution, and traffic congestion near participating schools, while increasing the health, safety, and physical activity of elementary and middle school students.

Our first activity this year will be International Walk to School Day on Wednesday October 8, 2014. Each October, millions of children, parents, teachers and community leaders across the globe walk to school to celebrate International Walk to School Day.

This year we will walk as a community to school starting at Bertucci's Restaurant on the corner of East Pleasant and Triangle Streets. We hope that as many children in the Wildwood Community can participate as possible with their parents and guardians. Parents/guardians may park in the Bertucci's lot for the walk. All the children, regardless of whether they walk from Bertucci's, will participate in Walk to School Day by walking at school on Wednesday.

Children need to be pre-registered for this walk from Bertucci's so please return the attached form to your child's teacher no later than Monday, October 6th . We will meet at Bertucci's at 7:50am the morning of the walk. We will depart from Bertucci's promptly at 8am.

To find out more about the event please contact: Jen Mendelsohn at njmendel@gmail.com.

Please let us know if your child needs a ride to Bertuccis.

We look forward to seeing you on Wednesday October 8th for **International Walk to School Day.**

Sincerely,

Nick Yaffe, The Safe Routes to School Committee and the Wildwood PGO

Please return this form by **Monday October 6th** or contact Jen at njmendel@gmail.com to register your child.

YOUR CHILD MUST BE PRE-REGISTERED TO WALK.

**WILDWOOD WALKS
WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 8, 2014
MEET AT BERTUCCI's at 7:50am
Walk Departs at 8:00am**

___ *Yes, I will walk with my child from Bertucci's on Wednesday 10/8/2014.*

___ *Yes, I want my child to participate on Wednesday 10/8/2014 but am unable to join the walk. I will register my child that morning after dropping them off.*

___ *Yes, I want to volunteer the morning of the walk. (Please provide your contact information or email me at njmendel@gmail.com if you are volunteering to help.)*

___ *Yes, I want my child to participate on Wednesday 10/8/2014 but am unable to give my child a ride to Bertuccis. I would be interested in having my child get picked up and driven to Bertuccis.*

Parent Name: _____

Child Name and grade: _____

Email: _____

