

December Newsletter

MASON ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 2010/2011

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Theodora Dono

Parent – Teacher Conferences were held on December 2, 2010 from 1:00-3:00 and 5:00-8:00 that evening. I am very pleased to announce that we had ninety-six percent of our parents and guardians in attendance for the afternoon and evening scheduled times. This is a very important day for students, parents and teachers. The opportunity to communicate about academic and social progress is essential to every child's achievement in school. We sincerely appreciate the support and effort you provide your children with at home. Together we can make a tremendous difference in their educational journey. Thank you for your commitment to education!

I would like to thank the Dudley PTO and the parents who prepared the delicious buffet for the teachers on the evening of conferences. A very special thank you to Mrs. Debbie Simpson, our P.T.O. building representative, who organized decorated, and set up a buffet that was absolutely outstanding. I can't begin to tell you how much the teachers appreciated it!

The student holiday programs "The Joy of Christmas" in Kindergarten and

"Favorite Songs for the Season" in Grade One were truly spectacular presentations. Mrs. Winans was outstanding in preparing the students with the joyous songs and individual speaking parts. I thank all of you for attending and sharing in the Mason Road School Holiday Season Celebration!

In November, you received a memo requesting that in lieu of teacher and staff gifts, donations be made to New Hope and needy families in our community. The response has been tremendous! The staff of Mason Road School sincerely appreciate your generous holiday spirit and donations.

The Mason Road School Staff would like to thank the Dudley PTO for the "Holiday Breakfast". Thank you to everyone who made this holiday season so special for us.

Also, many thanks to Laurie Jankowski, our library coordinator, and our many library volunteers. We truly appreciate your involvement and time commitment. You have made such a significant difference in our school. We look forward to seeing you after the vacation break.

I wish all of our Mason Road School families Happy Holidays and much happiness and good health in the New Year!

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

January 1 – Happy New Year!

January 4 - P.T.O. Meeting at Mason Road School at 6:30 p.m.

January 5 – Commerce Banking Day

January 6 - Mrs. Dono's Reading Club

January 7 – Mrs. Dono's Lunch Club

January 12 – School Committee Meeting- Shepherd Hill at 7:00 p.m.

January 13 - Mrs. Dono's Reading Club

January 14 - Mrs. Dono's Lunch Club

January 17 – Martin Luther King Day (No School)

January 18-21 – Curriculum Based Measures Testing

January 19 – Commerce Banking Day

January 20- (in the cafetorium)– Kindergarten Registration –from 9:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-4:00 p.m.

January 21- (in the cafetorium)– Kindergarten Registration –from 9:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-4:00 p.m.

January 24 – School Council Meeting at 3:45 p.m. in the Conference Room

January 26 – School Committee Meeting- Charlton Middle School at 7:00 p.m.

January 27 - Mrs. Dono's Reading Club

January 28 – Mrs. Dono's Lunch

January 28 – Council on Aging visits the Kindergarten

January 31 – P.T.O. Learning Store

A Message from the Reading Specialist– Laura Teczar

Encouraging Reading

Establishing a love of books in your young child is an important tenet in their educational development later in life. Books promote an exploration of the imagination that is lacking in most other tangible areas of a child's life such as the television and many common (and popular) toys. But it is a love of books and all things associated with books that will lead your child to success, not just in their school age years but also in their professional careers. It is the love of books and learning that will propel them forward for the rest of their lives.

As parents you are important educators in our child's lives. It is up to us to teach many things from how to learn to how to make good decisions. Starting at a very early age, children are taught their lessons from watching what you do and imitating those actions. Responding positively to praise and negatively to criticism is a large part of their learning through trial and error. But as educators it is not enough that we teach our children everything they need to know, as we will not always be there. It is also extremely important to teach our children how to teach themselves - a task

that cannot be fulfilled without learning to read.

As parents there are several things that we can do to encourage your child to read; some may seem obvious but it is important to understand that it is a process where success is realized over time, often over several years. Encouraging your child to read cannot be done simply by handing your child a book and expecting them to fall in love with it. There are too many distractions (ie: the television again) calling out for their attention which provides more of an immediate short term satisfaction with less work. The following are some ideas (though certainly not exhaustive of a list) that can help encourage your child to read and to actually enjoy it.

Lead by Example

When was the last time your child saw you pick up a book? Remember, children learn through imitation. Seeing you as their parent and role model make a point to read everyday will have a profound impact. Even if it is just the newspaper at the kitchen table, and sharing out loud some of what is contained within the pages will have a profound impact of opening your child's mind to the world outside of their home, city or town. Some families have 15 or 20 minutes of reading time as a family before the kids are off to bed, which is a great way to demonstrate the importance of reading while including reading in the daily routine.

Visit the local library

One of the best and most under-utilized services communities offer is the public library. All have fantastic children's

section and many offer great programs such as author readings. The best part is that it is absolutely free (provided you return those books on time). Taking time out of every Saturday morning to visit the library is a great way to show your child the importance of reading for zero cost. They can then get involved in making decisions of choosing the books that are tailored to their individual interests thereby promoting a sense of self-expression and individuality.

Make books a part of your night time routine

Children, especially young ones thrive on routine. When getting ready for bed many families have a process that starts as soon as dinner ends. Children quickly learn that as the process progresses, bedtime approaches. Why not consider reading out loud for 20 minutes every night right before lights out. This is a much better activity than watching the television and can actually make them more ready for bed. Reading out loud to your child allows for the mind to drift off into imagination and dreaming. That is why many times you will look down by the third chapter and see your child has already drifted off to sleep.

Encourage your child to read out loud

Reading out loud forces your child to consider the pronunciation of the words that they are reading. It allows you as a parent to monitor progress and provide constructive and timely criticism when needed. Even if you have your child read while you are cooking dinner in the kitchen for a short period of time it will have a positive impact. Learning to

sound out the words that they have never seen before will teach them take chances with words and provide them with a sense of accomplishment thereby building self-esteem.

Make Books the focus of the living room

Prominently display different types of books on a coffee table or better yet move the bookshelf into the living room to store the books. In a child's bedroom, a child size bookshelf is a great alternative to storing all of those children's books in an old box currently located in the bottom of the closet. Out of sight, out of mind holds true for last year's birthday and holiday presents as well as all of those books collected over the years.

(Ideas adapted from an article by Misti Norusis)

Literacy Quote for the Month:

A drop of ink makes thousands think. If you've learned to read, you can learn to succeed.-Author Unknown

A Message from the Dudley Fire Department – Capt. David J. Konieczny

It is the time of year we discuss maintenance on our heating systems, as we are now in the middle of our cold season. Without periodic and proper maintenance they can cause serious illness or even death. A heating system, regardless of its fuel source, produces carbon monoxide. If the system is not working properly or not venting properly a lethal amount of carbon monoxide may enter your home.

Remember, carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that is odorless, colorless and tasteless. It displaces the oxygen within your bloodstream and without the oxygen the cells begin to die. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are *flu-like symptoms* such as: headache, nausea, dizziness, confusion and fainting. At higher levels it can cause unconsciousness and death.

Protect your family against potential poisoning by having your heating system serviced, clear snow away from heating system exhaust vents so the gas will not back up into your home and in addition to your smoke detectors make sure your carbon monoxide alarms are working.

If you suspect the presence or have an alarm activation indicating high levels of carbon monoxide, *evacuate* the house immediately and call 9-1-1 from a neighbor's house or cell phone. A meter is available to determine the level of concentration.

A Message from the Dudley Police Department – Chief Steven Wojnar

Small amounts of snow and the appearance of some ice are sure signs that winter is upon us. The holiday season and early snow storms often find children making the most of the winter. Although this should be a fun time, precautions should always be taken when enjoying outdoor activities. Always be sure to dress for the weather. Frostbite can occur in only a short period of time. Wear not only a proper jacket, but hats, boots, and gloves. Always be aware of your surroundings. Snow can cover potential hazards such as holes, storm drains, and rocks. This is especially important when sliding. Traveling at high speeds and colliding with something can result in injury or death in some circumstances. Always have an adult supervising and check the area before sliding. Also be aware of the roads, driveways, or other areas where there is

traffic. Cars cannot always stop quickly on snow covered roads and it is very important not to be playing near these places.

A frequent question to the police department regarding skating asks, "Is the ice safe?" Certainly we will not declare any ice "safe" unless it is a controlled rink or another known location. Any time water is moving below ice, there is the possibility of thin spots and dangerous areas. Ice should always be checked by an adult and children should always have supervision before using these areas.

The season can and should be fun. These events are more enjoyable when no one is hurt. Please take all the precautions to assure each others safety. The Dudley Police Department wishes everyone a safe and happy holiday season and a very happy new year.

A Message from the DC SEPAC

Strategies for Handwriting Difficulties - A Multisensory Approach

The Dudley-Charlton Special Education Parent Advisory Council (DC SEPAC) is proud to offer this very informative workshop on multisensory handwriting. This workshop will be held on Tuesday, January 18th from 7pm-9pm at the Charlton Middle School Library, 2 Oxford Road, Charlton.

Chris Matthews is an Occupational Therapist (COTA/L) working in our school district and will be presenting on this topic which is relevant to many students who struggle with handwriting and written work. This workshop will provide families with strategies that can be used at home to help their children. Chris will share her knowledge regarding this topic including:

- Techniques easy to teach and easy to learn.
- Multisensory techniques and consistent habits for letter formation

to help all children learn handwriting – from preschool through cursive.

- Engaging techniques and activities that help improve a child's early self-confidence, pencil grip, and body awareness skills.
- Strategies to teach good letter formation, spacing and neatness, and cursive connections.

Please sign up for this workshop to allow us to have enough handouts and a seat for everyone. Contact the DC SEPAC at dcsepac@gmail.com to reserve your spot today!

All parents, staff, and community members are invited to attend this workshop.

DC SEPAC 2010-2011 Calendar:

2/15/11 Open Forum Meeting (7-8:30pm)
3/15/11 Presentation TBA (7-9pm)
4/12/11 Nominations/Open Forum Meeting (7-8:30pm)
5/17/11 Elections (7-8:30pm)

**Please Note: When attending meetings held at the Shepherd Hill Library, please enter through the Superintendent's door. Thank you!*

DC SEPAC is open to parents of students and professionals in Dudley and Charlton, as well as any interested parties. Please view our website for more details regarding our 2010-2011 calendar, membership information and updates at <http://www.dcrsd.org/community.cfm> or send an email to DCSEPAC@gmail.com

