

January Newsletter

MASON ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 2010/2011

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Theodora Dono

I would like to extend my best wishes for a Healthy and Happy New Year to all of our families at Mason Road School! It was wonderful to see so many of you at the Holiday Shows performed by our Kindergarten and First Grade students. The children were terrific and we thank Mrs. Winans, Miss Valentine (music teachers) and Mrs. Dube (art teacher) for the preparation of the songs and the lovely costumes.

Kindergarten registration for the 2011-2012 school year was held on Thursday, January 20th and Thursday, February 3rd from 9:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-4:00 p.m. Preschool registration will be held in April. Please be assured that we will be sending home additional information and entering the dates and times on the website in the very near future.

We are delighted that several members of the Dudley Senior Needlework Group visited the Grade 1 classes on Friday, January 28th. They read the story The Hat by Jan Brett to all of our first grade classes. They gifted beautiful handmade hats to every student! The colors were beautiful and each hat was knitted to

perfection! Thank you for a wonderful day for our students!

Just a reminder – please have a plan for your child if there is early dismissal due to inclement weather or an emergency. Also, thank you for bringing your children to school on time (no later than 8:40 a.m.) Being tardy is uncomfortable and embarrassing for your child and it also causes a disruption in the morning activities for the teacher and the other students. Your cooperation is sincerely appreciated!

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

February 1 - P.T.O. Meeting at Dudley Middle School at 6:30 p.m.

February 2 – Commerce Banking Day

February 3 – Mrs. Dono’s Reading Club

**February 3 - (in the cafetorium)–
Kindergarten Registration
(rescheduled) –from 9:00-11:30 a.m.
and 1:00-4:00 p.m.**

February 4 – Mrs. Dono’s Lunch Club

February 4 - Wear Red Day – Heart Association

February 7-11 – Jump Rope for Heart (all Kindergarten & Grade 1 PE classes)

February 9 – School Committee Meeting-Shepherd Hill at 7:00 p.m.

February 10 – 100th Day (contingent upon additional snow days)

February 11- Mrs. Dono’s Lunch Club

February 14 – Happy Valentine’s Day!!

February 16 – Commerce Banking Day

February 17 – Grade 1 “Friendship Day”

February 17 - Mrs. Dono’s Reading Club

February 18- Mrs. Dono’s Lunch Club

February 21-25 -Winter Vacation

February 28 – School Council Meeting at 3:45 p.m. in the Conference Room



A Message from Preschool

During January—our theme was Winter. All of our songs, games, stories and art projects centered around this theme. Our fine motor skills have steadily improved and we were all excited to learn how to make folded, cut, snowflakes and snow people. We decorated our rooms transforming them into a Winter Wonderland.

A few of our favorite stories were The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats and Going on a Bear Hunt by Michael Rosen.

We learned about bears and how they hibernate during the winter. We celebrated with a Teddy Bear Picnic. We baked Teddy Bear bread which we ate on the blanket in our rooms, pretending we were actually at a picnic. We are learning our numbers through games, songs and stories.

The preschool children continue to work on concepts such as numbers, letters, writing their names, counting, rhyming, and opposites.

Thank you to all who contributed to Gazette Santa. The Preschools together collected \$80.00 Thank you also for contributing to our Mitten Tree to benefit the New Hope Center and the Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance. They were overwhelmed with the support and generosity of the families at Mason Road School. Happy New Year to all!!!!



A Message from Kindergarten

Happy New Year! The winter break is now behind us and we are leaping into a New Year full of snow! In kindergarten, we enter 2011 with high expectations and a strong enthusiasm for learning.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a great civil rights leader and our students have learned a great deal about his goals and achievements through literature and center activities. The students have been learning about respect and honesty, which tied directly into Dr. King's philosophy on equality. We explored what makes a good friend and how important it is to be honest and to always be the best person you can be to yourself and to those around you.

Our literature theme for the month of January was "Let's Count". We have been exploring a variety of counting and number/number word recognition activities through Big Books, writings, graphs, and within dramatic play. The children are really enjoying these activities and you can see this within the projects displayed throughout the kindergarten hallway.

In science, we have been learning about the solar system. The children have explored a variety of topics including stars, constellations, the phases of the moon, the sun, and the planets through whole group and center activities. We have also been talking about weather and the seasons and how our environment is effected and changes during these times. This includes temperature readings, weather observations, and science experiments within the classroom.

The book Snowballs by Lois Ehlert was read to the classes and snowmen were created with recycled goods from the child's home. The children absolutely

loved this activity and were proud to see their creations displayed within their classrooms and hallway. The snowmen are so unique to each child and it was fun to see what each child brought from home. Connecting the lesson to your homes strengthened the home-school connection. The children love when you are involved with their schoolwork and you could certainly see this through this activity. Thank you for continuous support in and out of the kindergarten classrooms.



A Message from First Grade

Happy 2011 to all! We've been very busy this month and are off to a great start for the New Year despite the snow! This month's Houghton/Mifflin reading theme was entitled "Home Sweet Home". As the year progresses skills are becoming more challenging. The children have learned the digraphs sh/th/ch/wh (also known as "The "H" brothers). They have also learned that the letters "c" and "g" also sound like the letters "s" and "j". The children have practiced reading and writing words ending with "nd", "ng", and "nk". We have started learning long vowel sounds and how a silent "e" at the end of a one syllable word makes the first vowel in the word say its long name sound. So many rules...so little time! We also read fun stories about hermit crabs, maps, and the weather. As always, we continue to learn new high frequency words as well as new spelling words. Children should be able to read

the high frequency words, but should be able to read AND spell each week's spelling words. We also expect the children to apply taught spelling words in their everyday writing. They should also know to begin each sentence with a capital letter and end it with appropriate punctuation.

The children have been just as busy in math, too. They have learned about relation symbols greater than, less than, and equal to. They have practiced writing number stories and number models that relate to them. Place value has been introduced and practiced using "rods" and "cubes" to help understand this concept. Several games have been played to reinforce this concept and we will continue to practice place value as the year progresses. The children have been introduced to telling time to the quarter hour. They have been counting pennies, nickels, and dimes and are solving "more or less" number stories using coins. We have been working with turn-around addition facts, doubles facts, facts to the sum of 10, and fact families. Whew!

The month of January also presented us with the opportunity to learn about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and how he cared about all people and fought for equal rights.

The grade one teachers thank you for your continued support and appreciate all you do to strengthen the home/school connection.

A Message from the Art Teacher- Catherine Dube

Another new year! I wish my students and their families a wonderful 2011!

Kindergarten and first grade children spent most of January creating colorful favorite drawings for the PTO for the "Square 1 Art" fundraiser. Information about this project will be sent home with your children in a few weeks.

Happy winter to all, happy shoveling and please stay WARM!

A Message from the Title 1 Teacher
- Michelle Gray

We have had a great start to the New Year! In Language Arts we are on Theme 5, Home Sweet Home, in our Houghton Mifflin reading program. We continue to read Phonics Library Books as well as Leveled Readers to improve reading fluency and comprehension. Please listen to your child read every day and practice the high frequency and sight words often. Even if for just a few minutes a day, every minute helps! I will be sending home some reading materials to be used as additional practice. We will be making a home version of the Moose game. Ask your child to explain to you, how the game is played. It will be going home prior to the February vacation and can be played at home, on vacation, or in the car.

In math, we have been practicing time to the nearest half-hour and the nearest quarter-hour. We have learned and practiced place value for tens and ones using base-10 blocks. Students have had fun learning about relation symbols including greater than, less than, and equal to, along with using them to represent number relationships. Number stories are a concept we have been working hard at. Students apply many skills in writing number stories.

Students read and identify important information in a number story and then create a number model to represent what is told in the story. Ask your child to sing the Triangulation song! Repeated practice at home with basic math skills including counting, identifying numbers, counting coins, telling time and basic addition and subtraction will help students become more secure in their number sense skills which are so important as math concepts get more challenging.

Title One Parent Questionnaires have been sent home with students. The feedback that you provide in this questionnaire will be used to help Title One staff to assist parents with the process of improving their child's academic performance. Please complete and return the questionnaire to your child's classroom teacher by January 30, 2010. Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

A Message from the Physical
Education/Health Teacher -
Janet Strazzullo

Our Mason Road students will be participating in a Jump Rope for Heart event sponsored by the American Heart Association. This will occur during their Physical Education class the week of February 7th - 11th. A parent letter and pledge envelope was sent home previously. If you are interested in making any donations please put them in the envelope and return to school before February 16th. It should be a lot of fun for everyone.

A Message from the Technology Teacher – Kelly Frederico

The children have really been learning a lot the past two months. In December, we spent some time finishing up Millie's Math House and Bailey's Book House. The Kindergarten classes also worked on their sorting skills in the program KidPix.

The First Grade classes spent time in KidPix working on a scavenger hunt to make a Candy House. The children love doing scavenger hunts. They are given a picture that I create in KidPix and are asked to try their best to recreate the picture matching all the colors and rubber stamps. It's amazing how quickly some of the students can do this challenge! We also worked in www.abeya.com to work on some of our skills and learned about animation and sound in KidPix.

In January, the Kindergarten classes worked in KidPix learning about the paint bucket tool and also how to choose backgrounds to color. This is always a favorite for the children. They also spent some time in KidPix learning some new tools like the trapezoid tool. We need this tool to create triangles other geometric shapes. We ended the month by using this skill to create a carrot nose for a snowman.

The First Grade classes have spent some time using the website www.spellingcity.com. This is a great website for the children to work in as a way to practice their spelling words. They are able to enter their spelling list and then after taking a quiz, they are rewarded with many games like hangman and word searches that are

created using their spelling words. Just make sure that the words are entered correctly or else all the other items will be created using the misspelled words! We also worked in KidPix learning more about textboxes, typefaces and font sizes.

I hope that you all were able to view the slideshows of the children before the Holiday Show. Creating the slideshow is a project that I enjoy and hope you all enjoyed seeing your child's face on the big screen.

I hope you all had a happy holiday season!

A Message from the Music Teacher – Julie Winans

Happy New Year! Let me begin by expressing my joy for my students! Their performances in December at their holiday shows were tremendous!! I could not have been more proud!! I thank each and every family member in attendance for taking time out of their busy schedules to be there! I'm sure you understand that it means a great deal to the children for them to show you what they've been working on in school – they feel so special on those occasions! We began the month working on a sound story. We used a wide variety of rhythm instruments to “illustrate” sounds and ideas in the story “Bear Snores On.” We had a lot of fun with this!! We then continued exploring rhythm instruments and participating in some exercises to gain more skill in both playing and listening as well as following cues. I look forward to doing more movement activities with the children during the long, cold winter months, when so much time is spent indoors – the need to stay

active is important!! Try putting on some music while going about the typical weekend chores at home – you'll find yourselves moving and grooving together – and laughing, too!!



A Message from the Reading Specialist— Laura Teczar

Getting the Most Out of Picture Books

Picture books represent a unique literary form that blends stories with art. In a picture book, the illustrations are as important as the text, and both work together to tell the story. When you share picture books with children, be sure to pay attention to the illustrations—reading picture books means exploring the art as well. This article can help you get more out of picture books by showing you how to use the illustrations to engage children and enhance their reading experience.

Hook Kids In With Illustrations

We are told, "Don't judge a book by its cover." Well, children do it all the time. A child's first impression of a book is usually shaped by the pictures. So involve children in choosing books with wonderful, eye-catching illustrations that beg to be explored. Conduct "picture walks" through books by leafing through the pages to look at the images and discussing what you see before you read. That way, the illustrations will draw in even the most reluctant reader.

Illustrations can do even more than draw a child into a book; they can hook children into a lifelong love of reading. For our youngest children, pictures are an introduction into the world of books. Long before they can read, children respond to images in an effort to place themselves and the others in their lives into the world around them.

Bring Books to Life

Pictures enable children to explore the world within their own imagination and make connections to characters and events they see depicted in books. When you help children connect with characters and events, you make the book more real to them.

Here are some ways that illustrations bring picture books to life:

- Illustrators usually tell stories with pictures.
- Authors use illustrations to depict specific scenes of high emotion or action.
- Illustrators often use a variety of techniques to convey mood and tone as well as character and plot.

When illustrations reflect people, objects, and situations familiar to children, the images help validate their emotions and experiences. The process of making an emotional connection can help a child learn empathy and compassion for others.

See the World

Illustrations convey meaning and carry information, especially in non-fiction books where pages are often filled with commentary that is not in the text. Be sure to "read" your way around the

pages—read and discuss the captions, tables, charts, and the information conveyed by the illustrations themselves. Storybooks, although fictional, can also convey a great deal of information. A story about a trip to a farm or to the moon may have illustrations that can teach kids a lot about these places. Realize that it takes time to explore picture books when you are using them to learn about the world.

Expose children to pictures of the unfamiliar, or use images in books to confirm and expand upon what they already know. Illustrations in children's non-fiction books can expose children to new ideas, different people, and places they've never seen. Or careful exploration of the illustrations may uncover new facts about familiar objects. Whether fiction or non-fiction, a picture book can help children gain knowledge and move them to ask new questions about history, inventions, nature, other cultures, and more!

Build Reading Skills

Picture books help young children understand that words convey meaning, well before they are aware of the text. Pictures can help increase vocabulary, an important building block for reading. Books can help young children to identify:

- Colors, shapes, numbers, and letters.
- Names of people, places, animals, and everyday objects.

Picture books can also help build background knowledge that is essential to successful reading. A child who has never been to the zoo, a farm, or a beach can still learn all about these places by

exploring picture books. Select books with simple or realistic images so that kids can point to objects and learn names.

Picture books help older kids with comprehension and prompt them to read critically. They can use the pictures to predict what's going to happen next. The images can teach children to watch, look, and listen for clues, warning signs, and exciting things they might otherwise miss. More experienced readers can learn how to cross-reference the text and pictures in order to "read between the lines." Choose books whose illustrations convey meaning not contained in the text, and help older readers play detective by going back and forth between the story and the pictures.

Explore Art When You Read Together

Picture books present a perfect opportunity for adult-child interaction, another critical element in developing a lifelong love of books. Talking about what the child likes or dislikes about illustrations is an easy way to generate conversation around a book and its plot.

Pre-Readers: Choose books that have bold, vivid, and colorful illustrations of everyday objects.

Art Tip! Play "What's that?" by pointing to objects on the page and having the child name what they see. Or read the story, stopping periodically to ask the child to find the picture of the object or character you just read about.

Beginning Readers: Choose books with simple storylines and illustrations that closely match what is going on in the story.

Art Tip! Help children use pictures to keep track of the story as they go. Suggest that they retell the story as they read it to you. Encourage them to predict what will happen next based on the pictures they are seeing. Help them pay attention to the clues the illustrator left to foreshadow what is coming.

Independent Readers: Choose books where the illustrations tell a story of their own in fiction, or where they provide information of their own in non-fiction.

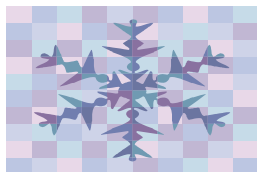
Art Tip! Consider reading the text aloud first without showing the illustrations. Then have children reread it while exploring the pages themselves. Discuss how the illustrations contribute meaning to the story.

(Source: RIF Parent Guide Brochure-- Reading Is Fundamental)

AHOY! Thank you for your fantastic response to the Read-A-Thon. Our ships are really starting to sail and we need your continued reading to reach treasure island. Remember your child's log in sheets are due back every Wednesday. We are asking you to read with your child for 75 minutes per week so we can reach our goal .

Literacy Quote for the Month:

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."-- Dr. Seuss (We will celebrate his birthday on March 4).



A Message from the Library
Coordinator-- Laurie Jankowski

Happy New Year to you all! I hope everyone had a happy holiday season. Here at the library we are continuing to receive donations of gently used books. Thank you very much!! The children are enjoying them and I have a number of new titles that I am hoping to get out on the shelves over the next few weeks. If your New Year's resolution is to get organized (like mine!) feel free to donate any books your family has outgrown to our library. We happily accept donations!!

Enjoy the snow and I wish everyone a healthy and Happy New Year!!

A Message from the School
Psychologist -- Theresa Veilleux

The importance of sleep

Sleep is important to everybody. When we sleep, we rest and gain energy for a new day. But sleep does more than that. When we dream, we process all the events of our daily life.

After a night without enough sleep, one feels exhausted and irritable. But after a good night's sleep, one feels rested, refreshed and full of energy. No wonder that it is so important to parents that their child sleeps through the night. It influences the entire family's life and wellbeing.

How much sleep does my child need?

- Sleep is important for the child's well-being.

- At night, the body produces more of the hormone that stimulates growth. So sleep is important for your child's development as well.
- Newborn babies sleep up to 16 hours per day. At first, they wake up every two or three hours to feed.
- From four months old, babies often start to sleep for longer periods of time.
- From six months old and up to one year, they often sleep five to six hours continuously.
- Children between one year and five years old sleep up to 12 hours each day.
- A pre-school child may still need to sleep 10 to 12 hours each day.
- A schoolchild sleeps about 10 hours each day.
- It is important to remember that each child's sleeping pattern is different. If a child is one year old and sleeps 10 hours each day, it is perfectly OK, as long as the child is happy and healthy.

Before parents start to worry about the amount of time their child sleeps, it is a good idea to look at the sleeping patterns of other family members. There might be a connection.

If your child has a difficult time falling asleep start your bedtime routine earlier. Try soothing strategies such as a warm bath before bed, relaxing music, etc. Good sleep is essential to your child's emotional, behavioral, and academic well-being. Keeping with a routine on a

regular basis will help to alleviate sleep problems and provide your child with consistency and security.

Excerpt from: Christel Bech, R.N. and Vibeke Manniche, Paediatrician, Phd.
www.netdoctor.co.uk



**A Message from the School Nurse –
Maureen Gagnon**

The Mobile Dental Program is coming to Mason Road School! Permission slips have been sent home with the children. This is a great program and one that benefits children across the board. The dental team comes into the school and sets up a complete dental treatment area in our Media Center. Services that will be provided are dental cleanings and exams, fluoride treatments, sealants and x rays. All children are eligible and no child is ever turned away based on the inability to pay. Generous grants are available for children without Medicaid, private insurance or sufficient financial resources. **Our date at Mason Road School is March 10, 2010.** We have also begun our Fluoride Rinse Program for the 1st graders. This is also a great program for the children's oral health. If you have any questions regarding either of these programs, please feel free to contact me here at the school.



**A Message from the Dudley Police
Department –
Chief Steven Wojnar**

Police officers are often asked to give presentations to children and parents about “stranger danger” and safety awareness. A major priority in all parents’ lives should be protecting their children from harm. We as police officers are often asked by parents to assist them in explaining these dangers to their children.

It is important for parents to remember most children do not have the same concept of “strangers” as an adult does. It is difficult for children to understand who is and who is not a “stranger.” The priority focus, when teaching your children about this subject, is to concentrate on three main feelings they know well. These are scared, confused, and uncomfortable. These are easier to describe to children and they know when they feel them. The symptoms may include such things as a nervous stomach. These feelings can apply in many situations, and not simply when met by “strangers.” They can then be taught to get out of a given situation when they experience these feelings.

It is also important for children to feel comfortable talking with their parents about ANYTHING without the fear of trouble. This is difficult, but they must have the confidence they can tell you of a “bad” experience without suffering consequences. Unfortunately, parenting is not an exact science and flexibility is often an asset.

I encourage parents to take advantage of internet and child safety programs whenever they are available. These can

provide you with new and valuable information. Feel free to contact our department if you need assistance or have additional questions and we will be glad to provide you whatever information or assistance we can.

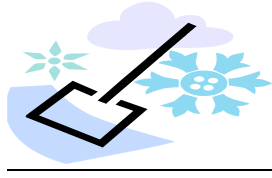
**A Message from the Dudley Fire
Department –
Capt. David Konieczny**

Last month we focused on heating system maintenance as a way to help reduce the risk of high levels of carbon monoxide entering into our homes. As the cold weather is still with us we need to remind ourselves of other potential fire hazards of the season.

Space heaters are used by many of us or family members. If this appliance is used for supplemental heat it must be done safely. When buying an electric heater look for one that has been tested and labeled by a nationally recognized testing company such as “UL” or “FM”. Keep the heater at least three feet away from combustible materials like drapes and furniture. Ensure the heater is equipped with an automatic shut off that turns the power off if it is knocked over.

Another hazard associated with the cold weather is dryer fires. Dryers are used more often in the winter than the summer months. Some simple methods to prevent dryer fires are to clean the lint filter screen after each load. This will help keep the vent hose clear. If accumulated lint clogs the vent the dryer can overheat and a fire could result. At least twice a year use a vacuum cleaner to clean any lint that may be in the vent hose. Also vacuum around the motor area. The heat from the motor operating

could ignite the lint dust and *never* leave a dryer operating when not at home



Tuesday, February 2, 6:30 pm at the Dudley Middle School

Tuesday, March 2, 6:30 pm at the Dudley Elementary School

A Message From Dudley PTO

Dudley PTO News – January/February

Please visit our Website available through your school webpage for updated information, reminders, and involvement opportunities!

Upcoming/Current Events

Winter Fundraiser: Yankee Candle, Start February 26 – March 15!
Square One Art will be coming home soon!

We will be holding our annual Red Sox raffle soon!

If you have any questions please call Debbie at 508-459-8803.

Things to know

The Dudley PTO is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a “non-profit charity”. Our 501© (3) status designates us as exempt from sales tax and donations to our PTO are tax deductible.

Check out the website for our monthly newsletters, information and updates.

Do you know we have enough members that if everyone only volunteered once or twice a year we would never have to ask for volunteers?

If you do not find the fundraisers attractive, and wish to make a cash donation, please make checks payable to Dudley PTO and send it in an envelope with your child to school.

Meetings

Please join us for our next meeting;

