

September Newsletter

MASON ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 2009/2010

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Theodora Dono

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The opening of school on Tuesday, September 1st went smoothly as we welcomed almost one hundred forty first grade students. As the first graders were settling into their new classrooms, the Kindergarten parents and students were busy with orientation and screening. The first day of full-day Kindergarten was Tuesday, September 8th after the Labor Day holiday. Currently, the enrollment in our NAEYC accredited kindergarten is approximately one hundred thirty students. On September 11th, our preschoolers arrived ready for their first experience in our NAEYC accredited preschools. We welcome all of our students and look forward to the 2009/2010 school year.

I would like to introduce the following new staff members to the Mason Road School Team: Mrs. Michelle Gray, Title 1 Teacher, Mrs. Kimberly Gajewski, Special Education Assistant, Mrs. Michelle Hooper, Kindergarten Teacher and Mrs. Paula Desmarais, Kindergarten Assistant. Welcome to all of you and best wishes for a wonderful year!

On Tuesday, September 24th, our Dudley P.T.O. sponsored "Meet Your Teacher Night" in first grade. It was a pleasure to see so many parents that evening. Thank you to

our Dudley P.T.O. for providing the membership drive and the School Council Parent Election.

The School Council Membership for the 2009/2010 school year is as follows:

Mrs. Theodora Dono
Mrs. Gloria Gould
Mrs. Tina Raymond
Mrs. Dawn Faubert

Ms. Mandy Jarominski-Parent Representatives
Mr. Jeffrey Giarnese- Parent Representatives
Mrs. Amy Marshall-Parent Representatives
Mrs. Emily Babbitt – Community
Representative

The first meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 20th in the office conference room at 3:45 p.m. These meetings are open to the public and suggestions for improvement can also be forwarded to any member listed above.

It has been a wonderful beginning! Please remember that your child's education is a partnership and you are always welcome at Mason Road School. Do not hesitate to call if you have any questions or concerns during the year. Wishing all of our families, students, and staff a wonderful fall season!

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

October 1- Title 1 Information Night at Dudley Elementary from 6:00-7:30 p.m.

October 2-Mrs. Dono's Lunch & Reading Club

October 5 - Kindergarten Visit to the Fire Station

October 5 – Kindergarten Library Starts

October 6- Grade One Visit to the Fire Station

October 6 – P.T.O. Meeting-Mason Road School in the Library at 6:30 p.m.

October 7– Grade One Library Starts

October 9 – Mrs. Dono's Lunch & Reading Club

October 12 – No School–Columbus Day

October 14 – School Committee Meeting – Shepherd Hill at 7:00 p.m.

October 15 – Title 1 Family Math Night - Dudley Elementary School at 4:00-6:00 p.m.

October 15 – “Officer Friendly” visits classrooms

October 16 – Mrs. Dono's Lunch & Reading Club

October 16– “Officer Friendly” visits classrooms

October 20 – Mason Road School Council Meeting at 3:45 p.m. in the conference room.

October 21-Community Reading Day

October 23-Professional Development Day-***NO SCHOOL***

October 23– No Lunch & Reading Club

October 28- School Committee Meeting – Charlton Middle School at 7:00 p.m.

October 30- Mrs. Dono's Lunch & Reading Club

October 31-Halloween

Notification to Parents of Teacher Qualifications – Compliance with P.L.107-110, Section 1111(h)(6) (A)

The Federal *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001 requires school districts that receive Title 1 funding to notify parents of their right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers who instruct their child.

As a recipient of these funds, Dudley-Charlton Regional School District will provide you with this information in a timely manner if you request it. Specifically, you have the right to request the following information about each of your child's classroom teachers:

- Whether the teacher meets the state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grades and subjects he or she teaches.

- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or provisional status because of special circumstances.
- The teacher's college major, whether the teacher has any advanced degrees, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- Whether paraprofessionals provide services to your child and, if so, their qualifications.

Dudley-Charlton Regional School District is committed to providing quality instruction for all students and does so by employing the most qualified individuals to teach and support each student in the classroom. If you would like to receive any of the information listed above for your child's teacher, please contact the school principal, (*Mrs. Theodora Dono*), at (508-943-4312).

Likewise on special occasions, i.e., Holiday Programs, Spring Concert, Field Days, etc. frequently parents videotape special instructional activities for the purpose of capturing these events to share with children.

“Use of Recording Devices – To enhance the safety of our students and staff, the District reserves the right to employ audio/video recording devices in the schools and on its school buses and school grounds.”



PUBLIC RELATIONS

Over the course of the year, reporters from local newspapers may publish articles pertaining to school activities or special events. As part of this process, reporters may take photographs of children within the school setting and/or interview students as part of a feature article.

A Message from Preschool

Preschool children need a variety of experiences with real things such as art projects, dramatic play, manipulatives, science experiments, etc. The preschool environment is designed to provide these kinds of experiences for children. Children are given the freedom to experiment, explore, try things out, and to make choices. Children learn best in a positive environment where they feel safe and secure. The development of self-confidence and a positive self-image enhances a child's ability to learn.

Preschool age children learn best through play. Children are curious, interested, and enthusiastic about learning. The best way to teach children is to build on skills through play and their natural learning styles. Play fosters total development and should be integrated into everything young children do. Children also learn by observing others in their environments. They imitate what they see.

The preschool children have spent the month of September adjusting to their new environments. Children have had time to explore and become familiar with their classroom, rules, and routines. Focus has been placed upon "getting to know their new friends and teachers."

A Message from Kindergarten

Our first month in Kindergarten has been a very busy one. The children have been working hard to learn and establish daily routines. They are also adapting nicely to our school fire drills, lunch procedures, and recess/playground rules.

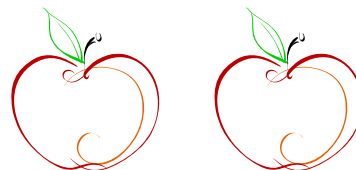
There is so much to learn especially in the very first month of Kindergarten.

Our first theme in the *Houghton Mifflin Literacy Program* is "Look at Us!" Each student made a personalized page to share with the class and then each special page was later put into a class scrapbook. The children enjoyed talking about their special pictures and showing their scrapbook page to their friends.

Our *Everyday Mathematics* Program focused on establishing daily routines such as, class jobs, days of the week, months of the year, and graphing weather, lunch, and birthdays. These routines are done on a daily basis throughout the year.

Our Character Education trait for September is "Respect." Students learned the importance of respecting others through songs and class discussions. Each student enjoyed decorating and wearing their "Respectacles" to lunch the last week in September.

The kindergarten staff would like to thank all the parents and families for helping to make this new experience a positive and rewarding one. We appreciate all your time, patience, and cooperation for a great beginning to a wonderful school year!



A Message from First Grade

Welcome to the new school year. It is hard to believe that this month is already

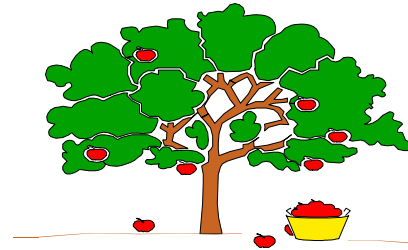
over! The children in first grade have made a smooth transition from kindergarten to a very different environment in first grade. They have been busy meeting new friends and teachers, learning new rules and routines, and adapting to a brand new curriculum. Wow! This year will be very different for them. Naturally, there will be more responsibilities and higher expectations than there were in kindergarten. We will continue to use the Houghton/Mifflin Reading Program as our core language arts curriculum this year. The first three weeks of school were spent reviewing the letters of the alphabet, the sounds they make, and kindergarten high frequency words. We have just started our first theme, "All Together Now". We also ask and encourage you to read to your child for a minimum of fifteen minutes per day.

We will continue to use the Everyday Math Program this year. The children have practiced skip counting by ones, twos, fives, and tens. They continue to practice daily calendar routines as they did in kindergarten. They have explored many of the new math activities we will use throughout the year. They have played fun math games such as Bunny Hop, Number Line Squeeze, Penny Dice Roll, and Top It. Please continue to practice mathematic skills at home with your child.

As you know, the children have started getting homework from Monday-Thursday. The homework folder will go home daily with your child. It is to be returned the following day with the homework completed neatly and correctly. Please spend time with your child completing the required homework. It shows your child that you

care about his/her education and provides a nice home/school connection for them.

We are all looking forward to a new and exciting year in first grade. It was nice to see so many of you at "Meet the Teacher Night". The first grade team thanks you for your continued support.



**A Message from the Physical
Education & Health Teacher -
Janet Strazzullo**

Welcome to the world of Kindergarten and First Grade Physical Education. Classes include many types of games and activities. These encourage fitness for all. Presently we are working on readiness skills which include listening skills and following directions. I also teach Kindergarten and First Grade Health. A *friendly reminder* was sent home, with the students, informing you of their schedule. Please make sure they wear sneakers and play clothes on these days. This is for the safety and well being of your children. Throughout the school year please teach and encourage your children to tie their sneakers. The more they practice the better they will become.

Health classes have been working on listening skills and bus safety. Keep an eye on their backpacks and folders for health schoolwork.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at school. I am looking forward to a great school year.

**A Message from the Art Teacher-
Catherine Dube**

September brings the end of summer but the beginning of a new school year! The searching little faces and the eager little hands prove that it will be, once again, a learning and fun time in the art room.

Kindergarten and first grade children first read the story *The Rainbow Fish* by Marcus Pfister. The concepts of sharing and friendship from the story were reinforced through a drama skit performed by each class. Next, the children created crayon resist seascapes which included a “school” of fish drawn with geometric shapes to which glitter was added for “shimmering” scales.

Please know that you are welcome to the art room during your child’s art time. Call me at school Monday and Tuesday and we can discuss this option.

**A Message from the Music Teacher-
Julie Winans**

Welcome back to another wonderful school year at Mason Road School! It’s been fun to reconnect with first grade students and their families, meet new students in first grade who have come to join us and meet all my new kindergarten friends! September certainly is a busy month!!

In music classes, we’ve focused on singing and moving – always my favorite activities!! My first graders are learning about rhythm instruments –

they LOVE them! Kindergarten students seem to like all the songs and activities I’ve chosen for them this month – more fun is on the way!

As always, if you have any questions about the music program at Mason Road School, please contact me via email at jwinans@dcrsd.org or by leaving a voice mail message on xt. 666 at the school. I’m in the building on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Here’s to a great year!



**A Message from the Technology
Teacher – Kelly Frederico**

We’re off to a great start in the Computer Lab! We began the year by reviewing the parts of the computer and rules of the lab.

In Kindergarten, we started working in our learning series. The classes all visited Bailey’s Book House first. While there, they did some exploring then spent a class working in the Letter Machine. We also visited Sammy’s Science House where the students visited the Workshop. The kid’s created all kinds of items from the blueprints provided. They also did some virtual painting of the things they created. We will be spending a few more weeks using these programs.

The First Graders spent their time using KidPix, our graphic design program. We reviewed how to use the drawing tools and spent a day practicing how to save documents. The student have created a Self-Portrait which will be sent home at the end of the year after they have drawn another one. They really did

a wonderful job! We will continue to work in KidPix for the next couple weeks.

Overall, everyone is doing a great job!

A Message from the Library
Coordinator– Laurie Jankowski

Welcome back everyone! I am looking forward to a great year at the library! This year, we are going to incorporate classroom themes into the library program to tie in what the children are learning in the classroom. This will include wonderful stories as well as activities I am sure the children will enjoy! We have a wonderful group of volunteers who are donating their time this year. If there is anyone who is interested in volunteering and has not signed up to do so, please contact me at the library. Library will start October 5th for Kindergarten and October 7th for First Grade so the children will be coming home with their library books that week. I encourage everyone to take the time to read your child's library book with him or her. They are very excited to check out books and bring them home to share with you. We have over 200 new books this year; which have been purchased, donated by the PTO as well as donated by a number of Mason Road families. Your generosity is greatly appreciated and I am sure the children will enjoy our expanded reading selection this year!



A Message from the Reading
Specialist– Linda Hackenson

I would like to welcome all students back to school. I hope you had a wonderful summer and are ready for a happy, productive learning year. We are embarking upon a wonderful literacy journey here at Mason Road School. As part of the district literacy plan, we will continue with our use of CBM measures (formally known as DIBELS. CBM stands for *Curriculum Based Measures*, and are brief but powerful measures of the critical skills that underlie early reading success.

CBM are tools designed to assess student development in literacy. Specifically, it looks at students' performance in the areas of phonological awareness, alphabetic understanding, and fluency with connected text. Linkages of early skills of letter naming and sound segmentation to later, higher level fluencies in reading comprehension are well supported by research. CBM assess these critical skills and predict how well students are likely to be doing in reading comprehension by the end of third grade. These short tasks are administered individually to help teachers locate, monitor, and intervene with appropriate instructional strategies.

CBM testing took place from Monday, September 21, through Friday, September 25th. CBM results will be sent out during the month of October. If you have any further questions, please contact Mrs. Linda Hackenson, Reading Specialist, at the Mason Road Elementary School.

I would like to thank all of the parents that made our "Meet the Teachers

Night” such a success. It is very important to have parental support as we work together to provide a solid foundation in your child’s education. If you should have any questions or concerns regarding your child’s progress in the area of reading during the school year, please feel free to contact me here at Mason Road Elementary School.

A Message from the Title 1 Teacher
-Michelle Gray

The children in the Title One program have been reviewing basic early language art and math skills. During the year, I will be working closely with the classroom teacher to reinforce and support these skills.

If your child has been selected to participate in the Title I program, please join us on Thursday, October 1, 2009 for the Title I informational meeting at Dudley Elementary from 6:00-7:00 p.m.

The Title I program offers:

- Smaller group instruction
- A variety of supplementary teaching methods
- An individualized program for students
- Additional teaching materials, supplement their regular instruction

Parents... you can influence the success of your child in school more than any teacher or federal program. By becoming an active participant in the Title I parent involvement plan at your school, you will:

- Serve as a role model, showing your child that you support his/her education.
- Teach your student that your input at the school is appreciated and that you support its efforts.

Research shows that how well a child does in school depends a great deal upon how much their parents get involved in their education. You can become more involved by:

- Joining school/parent organizations.
- Volunteering at the school.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences.
- Communicating with your child’s teacher regularly
- Keeping your child’s teacher informed about events in your child’s life which may affect his/her performance at school.

A Message from the Speech/
Language Pathologist –
Jessica Davis

Welcome back to a new school year! I would like to take this opportunity to introduce Mrs. LeeAnn Howarth to Mason Road School. She will be providing speech/language therapy to some kindergarten and all first grade students until Mrs. Resener returns from maternity leave in November. We are looking forward to a wonderful year!

Activities to Encourage Speech and Language Development
(excerpt from *Let’s Talk*, no. 42)

Two to Four Years Old

- Provide appropriate speech that is clear and simple for your child to model.
- Build and expand upon what was said “Want juice? I have juice. I have apple juice. Do you want apple juice?”
- Flipping through colorful magazines and catalogues is a fun activity. Cut out pictures and group them into categories, such as things to ride on, things to eat,

- things to play with, etc. Create silly pictures (for example, glue a picture of a dog behind a steering wheel of a car) and talk about what is wrong with the picture.
- Help your child understand and ask questions. Play the yes-no game. Ask questions such as “Are you a boy?”, “Can a pig fly?”. Encourage your child to make up questions and try to fool you.
 - Use photographs of familiar people and places, and retell what happened or make up a new story.

Four to Six Years Old

- Continue to build vocabulary by introducing a new word and offering its definition (for example, “I think I will drive the vehicle to the store. I am too tired to walk”).
- Talk about spatial relationships (first, middle, last; right and left) and opposites.
- Work on forming and explaining categories. Identify the thing that does not belong in a group of similar objects: “A shoe does not belong with an apple and an orange because you can’t eat it; it is not round; it is not a fruit”.
- Offer a description or clues, and have your child identify what you are describing.

A Message from the Team Chairperson— Pamela Boyle

Welcome to the new 2009-2010 school year. As the Special Education Team Chairperson, I look forward to working with many families as we develop the best and most appropriate educational

plans for students at Mason Road Elementary School. Please feel free to contact me if you ever have questions or concerns regarding your child’s education. I can be reached at 508-943-4312 x660 or through email at pboyle@dcrsd.org. Through monthly newsletters, I plan to share excerpts from current periodicals that I hope you will find helpful and informative.

The following information was obtained from www.wrightslaw.org in an August issue of Special Ed Advocate:

Back to school can be very stressful for families. Parents in your child's class, your school district, and across the country are dealing with the same concerns. We'll try to alleviate some of your fears and help you start your kids off on the right foot.

Beware! Helping your kids succeed is great. But, making things easier for your child by lowering the bar is not the way to create high expectations for them and build the strength and resilience they need for life-long success.

One problem for parents of kids with disabilities is the overwhelming desire to *make things easier* for your child. This is understandable, but it is **not going to lead to good outcomes** in the end.

Help your child create high expectations for themselves. Then, make sure they do all the work expected of them as well as their abilities allow.

Teach your child to:

- work hard
- set high goals

- handle disappointments without giving up or giving in.

In [Raising the Bar: How Parents Can Fix Education](#), New York writer Daniel Akst says that with parental effort, children can do better. He provides some interesting research facts:

- Parents prefer teachers who make their children happy over those who emphasize academic achievement.
- The most consistent predictors of children's academic achievement and social adjustment are parent expectations of the child's academic attainment and satisfaction with their child's education at school. Parents of high-achieving students set higher standards for their children's educational activities.
- Americans ages 2 to 17 spend an average of three hours a day watching television.
- Weekday TV and videogames were strongly correlated with poor school performance.
- A mere 30% of 13-year-olds read for fun daily (a number that has been shrinking), while 13% hardly ever read for fun (a number that has been growing). Americans aged 15 and over spent less than 22 minutes a day on voluntary reading of any kind.

"Start insisting that your children **fully apply themselves to their studies** -- and commit yourself to doing your part."

A Message from the School Psychologist – Theresa Veilleux

Although most children are excited to begin school, this transition can be stressful for many families. To make this important time manageable and enjoyable, implement a routine into your everyday life. Establishing a routine gives children a sense of security. Having consistent times for meals, bedtime, homework, etc. lets a child know what is expected of them. It makes their day predictable. This is comforting to children. Routines should be somewhat flexible. Modeling flexibility helps children learn to cope with change. When a routine is too strict, it can create anxiety when something does not go as expected. In the morning allow extra time to get ready for school to avoid the stress that accompanies rushing around. Tell your child that he or she can play with toys or watch a television show after they have eaten breakfast and gotten dressed and ready for school. After a long day at school, children need time to play freely. If your family's schedule allows, provide them with free time when they return home before settling down to do homework. Provide transition time. Warn your child 5-10 minutes before they need to begin their schoolwork or bedtime. At bedtime try reading one book to your child every night. They will know that once the book is done they need to go to sleep. After doing this consistently for a period of time, it can help to deter them from getting out of bed to ask for a drink etc. Routines let your child know what to expect and how to behave. Hopefully these pointers can help your life run more smoothly as your children's responsibilities increase.

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

I would like to review a few things that will make the school year go smoothly:

MEDICATIONS: If any child needs to take medication while in school, please have adults bring this to school. We also require a physician order form and a parent consent form to come with the medication. The medication must also be in the original container from the pharmacy. No child is allowed to bring medication into school. This includes cough drops and lotions. This is for the safety of all the children here at the school.

ILLNESS WHILE AT SCHOOL:

Becoming ill at school is very difficult for a child. Please make sure we have emergency numbers here at school so we may reach either a parent/guardian or another responsible adult. If this should happen to your child, they will need to be dismissed.

Medical Concerns: If your child has any medical issues that you feel we should know about, please feel free to either call or stop by the school nurse's office. I will be happy to meet with you and discuss this. We all want to ensure that our environment's a healthy one in which your children will learn and grow.

Substitute Nurses: We are looking for Registered Nurses to fill in when the nurse needs to be out. If interested, please feel free to call Mrs. Gagnon at (508) 943-4312 ext. 630.

I look forward to a healthy and happy school year. If I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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

Welcome back to another school year at Mason Road and Dudley Elementary School. For those who do not know me, I am Chief Steve Wojnar of the Dudley Police Department. Many of the returning students may remember me from my participation in the "Officer Friendly" program at Mason Road. For the new students and parents who may be unfamiliar with this, I visit the school from time to time throughout the year having lunch and interacting with the students at the school. There is a day of introduction, where I visit the classrooms and explain my job and police work in general. The goal of this program is to minimize the fear and apprehension children may have about the police by providing children with a positive image of police officers and an overall understanding of police work. We also have two other officers who will be participating in various programs throughout the year. Sergeant Dean Poplawski will assist with the upper grades and will be conducting the sixth grade DARE Program. Sergeant Pamela Daniels will provide assistance with the students of Dudley Elementary and Mason Road. These programs allow students to interact with a police officer and learn we are not only present when someone is in trouble.

We look forward to another great year with the faculty, staff, and students at Mason Road and Dudley Elementary. We can also be available to assist the teachers with any special programs throughout the year. If any parents have questions about these programs, I am available to assist. I wish to thank

Superintendent Gilrein and all the Principals for their support of our various community policing programs. I look forward to seeing everyone in the upcoming weeks.

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

Welcome back to another school year. We trust that you've enjoyed a safe and joyful summer.

As always in October, our Department will be an active participant in the annual "National Fire Prevention Week". This year the week of October 4 – 10 has been designated to provide awareness and education in order to reduce the number of deaths and injuries from fire. The theme for this year "Stay Fire Smart, Don't Get Burned" focuses on ways to keep home fires safe.

Don't get burned – by keeping hot liquids away from edges of tables you do not risk getting burned if they were accidentally knocked over, keep a "3-foot" kid zone around stoves and wear tight fitting sleeves or short sleeves so clothing won't catch on fire

Heating- keep space heaters at least three feet away from combustible materials and turn these appliances off when leaving the house or going to bed

General Fire Safety – test batteries in smoke alarms once a month, plan and practice a home escape plan and when your smoke alarm sounds "*get out and stay out*".

Should you have further questions regarding fire safety please call fire headquarters at 949-8040.

A Message from the PTO

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

Upcoming/Current Events

Fall fundraiser Pickup: Joe Corbi Pizza Dudley Middle School Tuesday November, 17, 2009 5:00 – 8:00pm.

Also, we will be holding our raffle calendar for the month of November. Calendars will be on sale the whole month of October. Information was sent home along with the calendars. If you have any questions please call Debbie Simpson 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;

Tuesday, October 6 at 6:30pm, Mason Road School

Tuesday, November 3 at Dudley Middle School