

Thursday

November 12, 2009

Patty Marquis-Principal

Westminster Elementary & Meetinghouse School News

Kathy Kelley-Assistant Principal

News from the Principal's Office

Upcoming Dates

- **Nov 13** – Grades Close
- **Nov 16** – Fitness Walk 2:00pm
- **Nov 17** – Rain date for Fitness Walk 2:00 pm
- **Nov 18** – PTO Meeting WES Library 6:30-8:00PM
- **Nov 20** – Report Cards Issued
- **Nov 23-24** – Noon Dismissal – Parent Conferences
- **Nov 25** – Noon Dismissal – Thanksgiving Break
- **Nov 26-27** – No School – Thanksgiving Break
- **Dec 8** – Noon Dismissal Professional Development

From the main office...

When sending notes into school, remember to write your child's first and last name, as well as his/her teacher's name.

Please return any Visitor Badges you may have accidentally walked away with recently. Our supply is running low!

The Lost and Found area is growing every day!!! Please look through it when you come to the school for parent teacher conferences. All garments will be bundled and donated to local charities after the holiday season.

Parent teacher conferences are scheduled to take place on November 23rd and 24th. I cannot stress enough the importance of these meetings. Please contact the school if you do not have an appointment yet.

The Multi-Service Center of Leominster is returning to Westminster Elementary School again this winter. Last year many of us enjoyed watching *The Jungle Book*. This year's musical production will be *Beauty and the Beast*. Practices will run on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons, starting in January. The final show(s) will be set for the end of March. More information will be sent home soon!

Tickets are available at both school offices for *A NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM*. This special event (sponsored by the Ashburnham Westminster Foundation for Academic Excellence) will take place

at the Fitchburg Art Museum from 6:00 – 9:00 pm on Thursday November 19th. There will be music, food, a silent auction, AND the announcement of the winners of the first round of mini-grants for our schools. Hope to see many of you there!

SAFETY REMINDER

Parents, Guardians, Grandparents, and all others drivers...Please drive with extreme caution around the parking lots and doorways of our two school buildings. NEVER PASS A BUS OR VAN while our students are loading or unloading! Those that ignore the STOP signs, flashing lights, or adults frantically waving their arms about, will have their license plate numbers turned in to the Westminster Police Department.

FAMILY FUN NIGHT POSTPONED TILL THE SPRING!!!

November is Massachusetts Family Literacy Month

As parents, you know that shared learning and reading experiences are valuable gifts you can give your child. Reading is a key learning skill that enables your child to be successful in all areas. Below are easy-to-do activities from the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's website that are designed to build a solid foundation of family literacy at home.

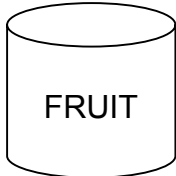
Know your child. Before selecting books, make sure you know your child's reading abilities and interests. You child's teacher or town librarian can make recommendations on age-appropriate books.

Set aside time for reading. Pick a time of day when family members can read for fun. Make reading a part of your family routine.

Make reading special. Children should feel that having a book is special. Help them create a space for storing their books. If your child doesn't show an interest or strong ability in reading, be patient, and don't give up. Reading should be fun.

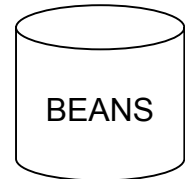
Use your local library. One of the best resources you will have as a parent is access to the local library. It's free to borrow books. Many libraries also offer story hours and other fun literacy activities. Make visits to the library a routine activity.

Developed by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education family learning staff team in collaboration with the Title 1 Dissemination Project and the Children's Trust Fund (1996).



FRUIT

**FOOD DRIVE FOOD OF THE MONTH
CANNED FRUIT AND CANNED BEANS**
Thank you for helping out our local food pantry.



BEANS

NATURE'S CLASSROOM FUNDRAISER

Our fifth graders will soon be selling Butter Braided Breads for the upcoming holidays! The sale will start after Thanksgiving, but parents are encouraged to try samples during the week of parent teacher conferences. If you are interested in purchasing some, and you do not know a fifth grader...contact Tanya LeBlanc. The sales through Tanya will go directly towards the total cost for the trip to Nature's Classroom, which could bring the cost down for all of our students. Thanks for your support!
Tanya LeBlanc 978-874-1626 or theleblancs@comcast.net

NEWS FROM THE SPEECH/LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

As we are nearing the end of our first trimester, we have seen so much positive growth in all of the students whom we service. While in their speech/language sessions, the children continue to show great strides in so many areas which are evident in their interpersonal communication skills, their level of responsibility, as well as their sense of ownership for what they are learning. Thanks not only go to all of their teachers, but from where it all starts...that is, at home, with great family support which is reflected in the students and in their accomplishments.
Michele Rogacz (speech pathologist) and Claudia Ewing (speech assistant)

NEWS FROM THE SECOND GRADE

Have you wondered why brown paper bags have been difficult to find in our town? You can blame it on the second grade students who snatched them up for their recent project. These bags were transformed into creative puppets based on a character from their favorite book. Not only did the children share the puppets with their classmates, but also, explained why they chose this character and revealed the setting of their story. Presently, they adorn the hallway outside the second grade classrooms if you care to take a peek.

"WOW WORK" second graders!

Our Fall-o-ween celebration was both enjoyable and filled with delectable goodies provided by our generous parents. We extend a warm thank you to our volunteers who set up the refreshments and served our students. Additionally, our thanks to the many parents who sent in goodies and supplies.

Enjoy a special Thanksgiving holiday with your family!

November 9, 2009

Dear Parents,

Every year students in grades three through five participate in the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). The MCAS test is one component schools utilize to track progress we are making helping all students become proficient in English Language Arts and Mathematics.

Schools across the country are also working to meet the goal of **all** students reaching proficiency in English Language Arts and Mathematics by 2014, a fundamental goal of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). In accordance with NCLB, schools that do not make sufficient progress toward this goal are identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.

Each school's progress toward meeting the NCLB goal is tracked through the annual Adequate Yearly Progress report. The report is based upon four criteria; level of student participation, student performance, testing improvement targets, and attendance/graduation rate. Our school's 2009 Adequate Yearly Progress report shows that the Westminster Elementary School has not made AYP for all subject areas and subgroups.

These findings are an important part of your right to know how well our school is helping all students to reach proficiency in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Schools receiving federal Title I funds that do not make AYP for two consecutive years must allow parents the opportunity to transfer their child to another school in the district that is performing satisfactorily. At this time, we do not have this option available. The elementary schools of the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District are working together to develop a corrective action plan in response to these findings, including; professional development, response to intervention, and the development of common school improvement plans.

We are happy to help you if you have further questions about the AYP report.

Sincerely,

Patricia Marquis

