

Around the Courtyard

Williams Middle School
410 Williams St., Longmeadow, MA 01106
April, 2013



*WILLIAMS MIDDLE
SCHOOL*

APRIL 2013

NEWSLETTER

Upcoming School Events

April 5	Drama Performance – Public 7:00 pm
April 12	Drama Club Presentation – School Perf.
April 15-19	Spring Break
April 25	School Improvement Council – 4:00 p.m.
May 6	Early Release Day – 1:30 p.m. dismissal
May 9	MCAS Math, Gr. 6-8
May 10	MCAS Math, Gr. 6-8
May 15	MCAS Sci.-Tech, Gr. 8
May 16	MCAS Sci.-Tech, Gr. 8
May 17	Staff Appreciation Luncheon
May 23-25	Grade 8 Quebec Trip
May 27	No School – Memorial Day
May 29	Gr. 6 Spring Concert – 7:00 p.m.
May 30	School Improvement Council – 4:00 p.m.
May 30-Jun.1	Grade 8 Gettysburg Trip

In this issue:

From the Principal's desk
Music Notes
PAC News
Notes From The Nurse
Grade Six News
Grade Seven News
Grade Eight News
Gettysburg Trip
Grade 8 End of Year
Math Counts
PAC News
Student Council
Field Day
Yearbook
Foreign Language
Intramurals
Drama Club

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

It is hard to believe that April break is right around the corner and we are already planning our end of year activities. Please see below for additional information regarding upcoming events.

I would like to focus some of my comments this month on our end-of-year awards process. For many years, our grade 8 students at Williams have received a variety of academic and building-related awards on the last half-day of the school year. There are really two types of awards that have been given out to eighth grade students. Most of the awards are academically/classroom based and these awards are chosen by each individual teacher (i.e., a math award, a physical education award, a science award, etc.). The other "type" of awards focus more on character/citizenship and are overall grade-level awards. There are four of these awards given out each year. Three of these four awards; the Wally White award, the A.L. Wood award, and the Jan Bellows award are given in honor/namespace of someone who contributed greatly to the Williams Middle School and community during their many years as a staff member at Williams. The fourth award is called the Principal's award and even though it has my position attached to it, I seek significant input before making a decision on the student receiving this award. Each of these awards has a specific description attached to it outlining the qualities and characteristics each award winner should possess.

While I have always been supportive of students receiving this recognition, I have never been excited with the overall process. In the past, a few weeks before the end of the school year, parents of those students who were chosen for one of these awards received a letter in the mail inviting them to the last half day assembly. I have talked with parents at various times about how uncomfortable it has been both to receive and not to receive one of these letters. I have also received feedback that, at times, getting or not getting one of these awards letters has caused friction and a level of angst in the WMS community and even amongst some students.

As I mentioned above, I have not liked this process since arriving here 5 years ago but have never taken enough time to consider other options - until now. Beginning this year, we plan to pilot a new model. First, there will no longer be any letters going out to parents. We will continue to use a morning assembly for teachers to hand out their individual classroom awards to their students. This portion of the awards process will be for teachers and students only, no longer by invitation. During our eighth grade graduation ceremony, the four WMS grade-level awards will be announced and distributed in front of our entire parent and student community in attendance so no prior notification will be required. While this may not be an ideal alternative, it is one we will try out this year. I look forward to your feedback after the process is complete.

I continue to enjoy our student body tremendously. We have such a wonderful collection of young adults here, and it is such a pleasure to spend time with them. Additionally, the faculty and staff working with your children each day continue to inspire me to be my best because they bring so much energy and hard work to this building every day. With the consistent support we receive from our parent community, this combination of factors makes Williams the exceptional educational community it is. Thank you all for your part in it!

Chris Collins, Principal

MUSIC NOTES

By Daniel Albert, Susan Lauser, and Michael Smith

It has been a very eventful and productive two months! Congratulations to the following groups of students:

- All Variety Show students for producing incredible afternoon and evening shows.
- All Junior District Festival participants. You all worked hard during the two Saturday rehearsals. The Festival concert at UMass Amherst was great!
- All band students for an incredible Band Festival at Longmeadow High School. You have all been the subject of many conversations and compliments! Congratulations on a successful evening. Your hard work paid off.

Seventh and eighth grade band students participated in Band Day 2013, featuring Michael Mucci, director of instrumental music at Longmeadow High School. Band Day also featured faculty from the Community Music School of Springfield. A huge "Thank you!" goes to LEEF, the Longmeadow Educational Excellence Foundation, for sponsoring the event.

The middle schools orchestras and jazz ensembles go on the road on Tuesday, June 11, and will perform at the three elementary schools. Additionally, the jazz ensembles will perform at the Longmeadow Adult Center at Greenwood Park. More information on these tours will be distributed as we approach June.

Our Spring concert season is approaching! As a reminder, here are the concert dates:

- Wednesday, May 29 – Sixth Grade Concert, 7:00 PM
- Wednesday, June 5 – Seventh and Eighth Grade Spring Concert, 7:00 PM

Notes from the Nurse

Parents of Grade 6 students,

Please be aware that your child (currently in grade 6) but entering grade 7 in the fall of 2013 will be asked to present a copy of his/her latest physical exam. In addition there are immunization requirements for grade 7 that will be explained at the same time. This information will be sent out around the time of the second report card which is in March/April.

Thank you in advance for your help and if you have any questions, please call me or email me at egartman@longmeadow.k12.ma.us

Liz Gartman, RN
School Nurse

Grade 6 News

Social Studies

The odyssey has begun! We have begun our foray in ancient Greece. In our efforts to increase our writing across the curricula, the students will have a common writing assessment during this unit of study.

Math

Our current geometry unit will end with volume and surface area of three-dimensional figures. After the vacation, we will be focusing our work on preparing for the upcoming MCAS assessment.

English

Please save the date for the Sixth Grade Wax Museum on April 9th from 11:45 -12:30. The students will become their biography character right before your eyes. Families are invited to join us for this fun event!

Science

Students kicked off the Weather unit by doing demonstrations to show that oxygen and carbon dioxide are present even though it can't be seen. They will work cooperatively to develop layers of the atmosphere songs. Finally, we are continuing to use the science tech book to enrich our curriculum.

Grade 7 News

ELA

April is National Poetry Month. If your child loved the poems of Shel Silverstein and Jack Prelutsky when he or she was in elementary school, it may be a good time to look for poetry collections designed for the middle school audience. There are a number of anthologies available that focus on middle school interests. April 18th is Poem in Your Pocket Day. Everyone is encouraged to carry a copy of his or her favorite poem to share with family and friends on this day. Throughout the month, seventh graders will continue their study of the forms, figures of speech, and sound devices that poets use to convey meaning in their poems.

Mathematics

The seventh grade math classes are gearing up for our MCAS test coming on May 9th and 10th. The students will be bringing home MCAS practice tests and working in their Finish Line Book to prepare. This will be in addition to the lessons we teach in class. Most of it is review of concepts we taught in the beginning of the year to refresh their memories. Please feel free to help them and make sure they have a good night's sleep before the test. After MCAS, we will be shifting to a new book to pilot called Big Ideas Math Book. Look for the book coming home in the middle of May. Please cover them as soon as possible. As always we appreciate your support as we go through this year finding a good text for the new core curriculum.

Science

As we begin the month of April our seventh graders will be starting the study of Genetics. This unit will include constructing Punnett squares and calculating probabilities from those crosses. We will explore some human traits controlled by single genes as well as genetic disorders. Our culminating assignment will be a position paper on the pros and cons of GMO (genetically modified organisms) used in our foods.

Grade 8 News

Science

We are beginning a unit about Forces & Motion. Students will build balloon racers and describe the forces acting on the racers and the effect of those forces on the racer's motion.

Grade 8 Travel Team

English 8

In English we are deep into our Anne Frank/Holocaust unit. We have been reading and writing in a variety of genres including fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry. Students are also practicing open response prompts to prepare for upcoming MCAS and other assessments. We are also looking at how to use commas effectively in our writing.

Math 8

The algebra class is halfway through our geometry unit. We have explored lines, angles, triangles, Pythagorean Theorem, translations, and reflections. In pre-algebra we have been discussing different ways to find slope and recently introduced to slope-intercept form.

Science 8

We have moved into our Forces, Motion and Energy unit which began with Tracking a Toy's motion. In the coming weeks, we will discuss Newton's Laws of Motion and construct balloon racers. We will compete for furthest and fastest balloon car between all grade 8 classes. Good luck!

Social Studies 8

In 8th grade social studies, we just finished a unit on the Industrial Revolution. We learned about all the new innovations in the mid-1800s and looked at the impact these revolutionary changes had on society. After this, we began examining the reform movements of the mid-1800s. By April vacation, the students will be familiar with many reform movements including temperance, abolition, and the women's rights movement.

Gettysburg Trip

Eighth grade students that will be attending the Philadelphia/Gettysburg trip should be sure to get their medical forms in to Mrs. Gartman as soon as possible. We will be scheduling a parent meeting sometime in May to answer any questions that you may have about the trip. As soon as the date is set, a message will be sent out through students and email. Please try to attend this very important meeting. We are looking forward to a great trip.

Grade 8 End-of-Year Activities

Now that the end of the school year is in sight, we have begun to plan our grade eight end-of-year activities. This year the picnic will be held at High Meadows in Granby, Ct. on Monday June, 17th. This will be the first official Class of 2017 event as we will be picnicking with the eighth grade from Glenbrook. Our graduation ceremony and dinner dance have been scheduled for Thursday June 20th. More information on these events will be coming soon and will be posted to the Williams website.

Math Counts

We would like to recognize all the students that participated in Mathcounts this school year:

TEAM MEMBERS:

Brendan Philbin- Captain, Mohammad Fazaeli, Emily Anfang, and Lee Duan.

INDIVIDUAL COMPETITORS:

Charlotte Berry, Francisco Oh, Nancy Lewonchuk, and Michael Cooper

SCHOOL CLUB PARTICIPANTS:

Lily O'Connor, Emma Gerchberg, Phil Van, David Schwartz, Noelle Ehrenberg, and Alexander Schechtman

We would also like to congratulate Brendan Philbin and Mohammad Fazaeli for qualifying to compete in the State Mathcounts Competition on March 9th in Boston.

PAC News

During January and February, all of our advisories at Williams made fleece blankets to donate to Sandy Hook Elementary School in honor of those who were lost. When the blankets (60 total) were completed, Sandy Hook was not accepting any donations other than money so the school donated the blankets to various local shelters in the name of Sandy Hook. Our WMS PAC purchased fleece material and other supplies to help make this service project a reality.

Over the course of this school year, the WMS PAC has spent close to \$11,000 on various projects including money toward a new computer cart, wireless printers, the fleece mentioned above, lighting for our auditorium, and other smaller items. This level of support has been truly incredible and instrumental in helping us keep up with the various needs of educating students in the 21st century that we might not otherwise be able to fund. Thank you to all who have donated money, time, and/or energy to make all of these purchases possible. An especially big thank you to our PAC leadership team this year:

Deborah MacDonald, Julie Erwin, Sherri Ehrenberg and Anne Acquista – Thank you all!!

Next PAC Meeting is May 21st at 9:00 am at Williams

Student Council

Thank you to everyone who donated personal care items to the Springfield Rescue Mission. They were extremely thankful to receive almost twenty bags filled with these much needed supplies.

Get Ready to Go Orange This April!

April is Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Month. Williams Middle School students and staff will take a stand against animal cruelty by wearing orange on Friday, April 26th to show their support. We're also asking that students and staff bring in at least one dollar on the 26th to donate to this worthy cause.

Field Day

Field Day has been changed to Friday June 14th due to the extended time in school...love those snow days! The 8th grade captains are currently building their teams of 6th, 7th and 8th graders. T-shirt order forms will be distributed after vacation so check the bottom of the backpack. There will also be a link online for students who might lose their form. Be sure to check team color and size. Shirts are adult sizes only.

We will be looking for volunteers to help with the T-shirt order towards the end of April. We need help counting money, tallying sizes and colors, and completing the order. Please email Anna Gelinas agelinas@longmeadow.k12.ma.us or Trish Kingston PKingston39@comcast.net if you are interested. With just a few people, the work can be accomplished quickly.

We will also need volunteers in the few days prior to Field Day to purchase supplies, volunteers the morning of Field Day to help with relay events, and volunteers to take photos that day. Again, contact Anna Gelinas or Trish Kingston if interested.

Yearbook

The yearbook committee is putting the finishing touches on the 2012-2013 Williams Middle School yearbook. Students have been working hard with Dr. Gelinas and Mrs. Haar taking photos, compiling photos of school events, using web-based software to build pages, writing captions, and proofing work to get our book finished. Books will be distributed in June.

Spanish Grade 8

Students just completed a whirlwind tour of Spain - the history, food, culture, geography, major attractions and more. Don't be surprised if they ask to take a vacation there! Classes were also treated to a special visit by "Don Quixote" aka Mrs. Santaniello (science teacher extraordinaria), who, with the help of a few students, acted out the most famous scene of the story, when Don Quixote fights windmills.

Intramurals

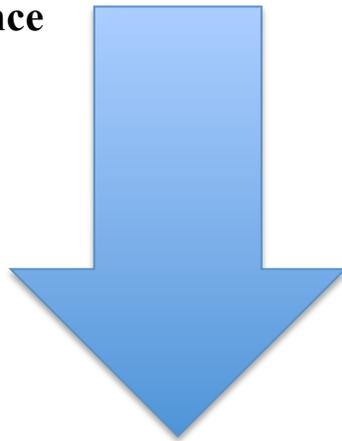
Congratulations to all 78 students, our largest participation ever, who participated in our Team Handball Intramural season. The 8th grade especially our commissioner, John Douglas, and captains Frank Gentile, Shane Kivel, Liam Fitzgerald, Camden Kelleher, Carl Schirmeister, Sam Freedman, Vivian Li, Blythe Rafferty, Brendan Philbin, Benji Fazaeli, and Ryan McGeary for refereeing all 62 heart pumping matches. They all showed tremendous amounts of leadership throughout the season despite how competitive the matches had become.

Lastly, a congratulations to the eventual Intramural Champions **Xavier**(Sam Freedman, Andrew Bonavita, Will Echeverria, Matt Sambor, Joe Cosenzi) for winning a thrilling final beating **BU** (Liam Fitzgerald, Aidan Eagan, Sam Byrne, John Fitzgerald, Max Winkler, TJ Acquista, Joe Letendre) by one goal. Thanks to everyone for participating, and I look forward to next year

Mr. Leahy

Drama Club Performance

Information Below



WILLIAMS MIDDLE SCHOOL DRAMA CLUB



Presents

“Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland”

Adapted by Tim Kelly

April 5, 2013 at 7pm in the auditorium

(Due to space limitations the April 12th performance is for students and staff only.

Please see me if there is an issue.)

Tickets

\$6.00 for adults

\$3.00 for children and seniors

Send your check payable to Williams Middle School and the completed form below to the Williams office c/o Mrs. Lawson or Mrs. Scanlon.

All proceeds will go to the continuation of Drama Club, now in our ninth year!

Student’s Name _____ Homeroom _____

Number of adult tickets _____ X \$6.00 = _____

Number of child/senior tickets _____ X \$ 3.00 = _____

Total # of tickets _____ Total \$ _____

Phone number (In case there are questions)

Thank you for your continued support.

Mrs. Lawson

Check out our WMS website for great pictures!