

Around the Courtyard

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



*WILLIAMS MIDDLE
SCHOOL
NEWSLETTER*

AUGUST, 2013

Upcoming School Events

- August 22 New Student Orientation (for students & parents **new** to our district) – 9:30 a.m.
- September 2 Labor Day—No School
- September 3 First Day of School
- September 5 Rosh Hashanah-- No School
- September 10 School Picture Day
- September 12 Back-to-School Night – 6:30-8:00 p.m.
- September 27 Gr. 8 Field Trip to Boston
- October 7 Early Release Day—1:30 p.m. Dismissal
- October 14 Columbus Day—No School
- October 21 Picture Retake Day/Gr. 8 Photo
- October 24 Parent Conferences—Gr. 6-8 afternoon & Evening 1/2 Day – 11:30 a.m. dismissal
- October 25 **Grade 6 Parent Conferences—11:30 a.m. Dismissal (Grade 6 only)**
- October 31 Halloween

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FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

As the new school year approaches, I want to use this August newsletter to share a variety of information and to bring you up to date with some of the changes with our teaching staff.

With the retirement of three teachers and the loss of another, we have added some new faces to our staff over the summer. Sara Ferris, our computer technology teacher, retired in June. A veteran teacher from Blueberry Hill School, Lori Gallerani, will be moving from Blueberry to Williams to take over this program. For those of you who know her, Lori is super high energy and has such a wonderfully positive outlook on her work and her students – Blueberry Hill's loss is certainly our gain. Mary Jean Reilly, our school Speech Language Pathologist also retired in June. We recently hired Carol Murray-Trotman to replace Mary Jean. Carol is a veteran Speech Language Pathologist having worked for years at Baystate Medical Center and in a school-based position for the past 10 years in Granby. Carol has also recently become Orton Gillingham certified. One of our most veteran math teachers, Marilee Trompke, will be retiring at the end of October. Since we did not want students to begin the year with one teacher and then have to transition to a new teacher on November 1st, we have hired a replacement this summer. Aren Scanlan-Emigh taught both seventh and eighth grade math for us two years ago and did an excellent job teaching a variety of math learners. Due to reductions in staff last summer, we were not able to retain Aren at that time. Fortunately, we were able to rehire Aren this summer and he will be teaching grade 8 math beginning in September. Finally, we have hired a new band teacher at Williams. Long time band teacher, Dan Albert, has moved out of the area to go back to graduate school. We have hired Travis Higa to replace Mr. Albert. Travis comes to us from Montana and has a wonderfully varied musical background.

In January of 2013, we rolled out new Google accounts for students. This was important for a variety of reasons but most significantly because this gave each of our students access to the Google Apps for Education suite. What is ideal about this suite of apps is that they are all web-based and do not need to be "loaded" on to a computer. Any computer with access to the internet has access to google apps.

<http://www.google.com/enterprise/apps/education/products.html>

Among the applications students had immediate access to were a new school gmail (email) account, access to google docs (similar to Microsoft Office) and to google drive – an online storage app. We immediately saw our students and teachers working together in classrooms writing in the google doc format with the ability to share work with their teachers electronically. Many of our teachers became more and more adept in sharing feedback electronically and were able to use class time more efficiently as well. Another important aspect of these web-based apps is that they are accessible from any connected computer so students can access their work at home without the need of an external storage device (such as a USB flash drive/pen drive). One important factor in the use of these accounts is having access to computers during school hours.

To that end, we will be adding a significant amount of new technology again at Williams for the fall. We ended our school year last June with three iBook mobile laptop carts of 25 each, two mobile iPad carts of 25 each and a new mobile Chromebook cart with 36 devices. In June, we were notified by the Longmeadow Excellence in Education Foundation (LEEF) that they had

approved two grants written by WMS teachers to fund the purchase of two additional mobile Chromebook carts, each containing 25 Chromebooks.

<http://www.google.com/intl/en/chrome/devices/>

These additions along with our existing equipment will allow for exceptional flexibility with writing and research within classrooms. Finally, we have moved our 24 station computer lab from a small classroom to our library to create a new media center. Over the summer our technology department installed the equipment in the library which will give our students additional technology resources in our library allowing for full classes to use the area for a variety of research and access to information. In total, we will have well over 200 devices available for student use daily. At this time, we will not be asking students to bring their own devices to school at the middle school level. We hope to continue to build our equipment levels to allow students greater and greater access each year. We do allow students to bring cell phones to school but require them to turn off their devices upon entering school. We had several issues with phone use during school and often times students were texting their parents and parents were responding or, in some cases, initiating contact via text messages during school hours. Please know that texting your child during school hours may put your child into a disciplinary situation in school that can easily be avoided by following our rules. At no time do we allow student phone use during school hours so please help us by enforcing this as well. Students will always be given access to a phone should they need to reach you during school hours.

This is our first newsletter of the 2013-14 school year. Due to the cost of copying and mailing the newsletter, I will post future newsletters on to the Williams Middle School website at www.longmeadow.k12.ma.us/wms/ Once there, just look for the “**Around The Courtyard**” box and click on it for the most current newsletter. In addition, I will e-mail all of you a message each time a new newsletter is posted (October, December, February/March, April/May).

I use e-mail on a regular basis to communicate important information. It is imperative that I have all of your e-mail addresses accurate and current to be sure you all receive the information I e-mail out. To check that we have your e-mail in our system, I have also e-mailed out an AlertNow message about this newsletter. If you did not receive this e-mail, please be sure to contact the school at 565-4260 and give us your name, your child’s name, and your e-mail address. We will be sure to update our information.

On the first day of school, all students will be given the **Premier Agenda Notebook** that operates as a daily assignment notebook and contains the revised Student Handbook. I strongly encourage students and parents/guardians to read the handbook **together** within the first week of school to be sure you are clear with policies and procedures at Williams.

I would also like to share some information regarding tardiness and dismissals as we have had some challenges in this area. During the school day, we try to keep disruption to the classrooms and teachers to a minimum. In order to avoid a large number of “last minute” dismissals, the office staff would appreciate a written dismissal note to be given to the office staff **at the beginning of the day**. The office staff will give your child a pass to be dismissed at the designated time and then we do not have to call into a classroom and disrupt teaching. We know making some last minute appointments cannot be avoided during the school day, but this procedure helps keep the school day running more smoothly for the majority of dismissals. Also, if your child is late for school we would appreciate a note indicating the reason for tardiness. If your child returns to school after an appointment, please have your child come to

the office for a pass to return to the classroom. We appreciate your support to help us keep accurate attendance and dismissal records.

As is always the case this time of year, I am very excited to have our staff and students return. This building is very quiet over the summer. While it makes it a bit easier to get this kind of work done, the building lacks the life and energy that makes Williams such a great place in which to work and to learn. I look forward to working with many of you over the course of this year to help make their education a success for each of our students.

Please feel free to e-mail me at ccollins@longmeadow.k12.ma.us or call the school at 565-4260 if you have any questions.

Chris Collins, Principal

UPCOMING EVENTS

There will be an **Orientation/Welcome** for students and parents who are new to our district schools (this is not an orientation for incoming sixth grade students who were in a district elementary school last year). It will take place on **Thursday, August 22rd starting at 9:30 a.m.** New students and their parents are cordially invited to this program that will include introductory remarks, a tour of the school, and possible placement tests.

On Thursday September 12th, you are invited to attend a **"Back-To-School Night" at 6:30 p.m.** The evening is designed to give parents an opportunity to meet their child's teachers and to hear teachers explain their plans for the school year. If you wish to talk to a teacher more specifically about your child, please call the school to set up a mutually convenient time as there will not be time for these discussions on this evening. The schedule for the evening will run about 90 minutes.

We will be looking for new **parent representatives on our School Council** for this school year. Those interested parents will be placed on a ballot and a vote will be taken during "Back-To-School Night" to determine representation on the council. The School Council meets once per month for about one hour, usually from 4:00-5:00 on a Thursday. This is a great way to get involved at the middle school without committing to too much time. If interested, or if you would like more information, please contact me at school.

MUSIC NOTES

By Travis Higa, Susan Lauser, and Michael Smith

We had an outstanding 2012 - 2013 school year full of successful rehearsals, concerts and community performances. All of us in the music department look forward to this new school year's upcoming successes through the generous support of parents, community, returning students, and incoming sixth graders.

Parents, please be on the lookout for important paperwork that includes concert dates for the year. Remember to mark these dates on your family calendars as soon as possible to avoid conflicts. This important paperwork also includes details on necessary equipment and books for Band and Orchestra students.

Expect auditions for Ensemble 7:45 (an auditioned eighth grade vocal ensemble that meets before school) and Jazz Ensemble (an auditioned sixth through eighth grade after school instrumental ensemble that includes saxophones, flutes, clarinets, trumpets, trombones, guitar, piano, bass, and drum set) to take place during the last weeks of September. Audition music for these groups will be distributed during the opening days of school.

Seventh and eighth grade band students will travel to UMass Amherst in late October for the annual Multibands matinee concert, an event that features all of the music ensembles on campus, including the famous Minuteman Marching Band. Seventh and eighth grade band students will also participate in Band Day, a collaborative event featuring Michael Reinemann, director of instrumental music at Longmeadow High School and faculty from the Community Music School of Springfield. We would like to thank LEEF, the Longmeadow Educational Excellence Foundation, for their support of this wonderful event. More information regarding all events will be distributed in the fall.

Orchestra students can look forward to this year's grades 4-12 Longmeadow Orchestra Festival, a performance that features all of the orchestra students throughout the Longmeadow Public Schools. We will also be joining forces with the Jazz Ensemble for our annual tour for the three elementary schools and Greenwood in the spring.

Choral students will perform at Symphony Hall in Springfield for their biennial "Imagine" concert including all Longmeadow choruses, grades 5 - 12, performing together and individually.

Variety Show auditions will be earlier this year than has been the case in the past. We will be looking for vocalists, bands, skits, and any other acts that might be entertaining to a middle school audience. We will also need dedicated students to be a part of the stage crew. Details about the show will be announced the first week or two of school.

Enjoy the rest of the summer! We look forward to making great music with Williams' students this fall.

NOTES FROM THE NURSE

I hope you are all enjoying your summer and getting some well deserved rest. This is to remind parents of incoming seventh grade students that your child's immunizations **MUST** be updated prior to the start of the school year. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has updated its immunization requirements for all students entering grade seven, making this a requirement for all public schools. Information about this requirement was mailed out to your home at the end of last school year. In addition, all seventh grade students will need an updated physical exam completed and on file at the school this fall. If you have any questions about these requirements, please e-mail me at egartman@longmeadow.k12.ma.us

Thank you for your help in meeting these requirements.

Liz Gartman, RN School Nurse

GRADE 6 NEWS

Welcome to Williams Middle School! We are looking forward to meeting our new students and helping them all adjust to the move to a new school. Communication and organization skills are two important goals the team has set for all students this year. To help meet these goals, all sixth grade students will be given an agenda book which will include the WMS handbook and daily assignment book. This is an important tool we use to help keep students organized, keep parents informed about the daily assignments, and to create an open line of communication between the classroom and home. To ensure that this is a successful tool, please review the agenda frequently with your child and visit homeworkknow.com.

Grade 6 Supply List

To support organizational skills for all students in grade six, teachers are requesting that the following materials be purchased:

CHOOSE EITHER:

ONE three inch binder

OR

FOUR 1.5 inch binders in

- * blue – social studies
- * green – science
- * red – math
- * white – English

- two packages of wide-ruled notebook paper
- one marble composition book
- two single subject spiral notebooks
- one package of subject dividers (for binder)
- packages of pencils
- highlighters
- colored pencils
- glue sticks
- one plastic two pocket folder for homework
- optional locker organizers: pencil case and locker shelf
- one box of tissues and one roll of paper towels

Please note: Students will be responsible for covering four textbooks. No cloth book sox (stretch covers) are allowed because they damage the bindings of the books.

GRADE 7 NEWS

Welcome to seventh grade! This will be a year filled with exciting changes; we look forward to working with you to help you have a positive year.

Parents - In order to help you make a smooth transition to seventh grade, we would like to share our expectations for the school year. Carefully spelled out guidelines offer the greatest chance for success. We know that when parents and teachers collaborate, the result is a successful school experience. Your child will be receiving a copy of the grade 7 policies on the first day of school. Please ask your child to show you the copy of our policies for grade 7 and review them together. In addition, one of the best ways to support your child from home is to get into the habit of checking your child's agenda notebook on a daily basis to ensure homework completion on the day it is due.

Students - One basic way to help you be successful in school is to complete your homework assignments every night. We have learned that a clear and consistent homework plan is the first step in being prepared for a successful school day. One goal in seventh grade is to encourage our students to take responsibility for their work. We know that we can count on your parents for support as well.

This is going to be an exciting year for all of us and we look forward to meeting all of our new parents on Back to School Night.

Grade 7 Supply List

- Large 3-ring binder 3" with clear plastic sleeve on cover, if possible
- Plastic pencil case (zippered pouch that goes in binder)
- 1 Spiral notebook (for science)
- Tab dividers for binder
- Colored pencils – one box
- Highlighter
- Red pens
- Post-it's for English
- A scientific calculator (put name on it permanently); TI 30 is okay
- Pens-blue, black (erasable for test taking)
- Package of #2 lead pencils & 1 package pencil cap erasers
- Lined paper (please renew when needed)
- 1" binder (French or Spanish) with 5 section divider
- 2 rolls of paper towels for **SCIENCE**
- 2 boxes of tissues for Advisory
- Black 3-ring binder for Women's Chorus
- Green 3-ring binder for Men's Chorus
- Index cards

****NO STRETCH BOOK COVERS PLEASE****

GRADE 8 NEWS

The teachers in the 8th grade want to welcome the 8th grade parents and students who are entering this fall. In order to smooth the transition from seventh grade to eighth grade, we would like to provide you with some information about what to expect this year.

The eighth grade teachers strive to provide a sense of belonging and unity for our eighth grade students. It is important to note that eighth grade is different because it is the transition year to the high school. At Williams we see dramatic changes in students as they mature over the three years. In eighth grade we stress the need for students to take more responsibility for their learning as they head to the high school. In each class there will be an emphasis on learning appropriate study skills as they relate to that discipline. We stress that students must know themselves as learners and are ready to use different strategies until they discover what is the most effective for them.

The team attempts to further support this development of self-discipline by having uniform team policies concerning homework, standards for the work, due dates, make-up work and behavior. As a team, we would like to reassure students that these policies are set up as a way of helping students to make the connection between choices and consequences. It is important that we let our children learn from the "little mistakes" just as we did when we were growing up.

Eighth grade is a dynamite year for all of us. The eighth grade students are the school leaders and should be encouraged to take the lead in all school activities. Many special activities are planned for these students with the expectation that they can respond with enthusiasm and some maturity. We believe that by meeting the expectations we have for them, your children will develop a real sense of achievement and pride in what they have done. In our minds this is how lasting self-esteem and confidence is developed.

Grade 8 Supply List

One – 2 inch 3 ring binder for both math and science
One – 2 inch 3 ring binder for English and history
Black 3-ring binder for Women’s Chorus
Green 3-ring binder for Men’s Chorus
A 1 ½” **RED** binder for French/Spanish
2 packages of lined notebook paper
Tab dividers for each binder
Zippered pencil case to go in each binder
2 packages of 3.5 X 5 inch index cards
Marbleized cover composition book for English
Scientific calculator
1 package of ½” graph paper
Scissors & glue
Ruler (metric measuring) & Protractor
Thin dry erase markers
Pens – blue, black, & red
Package of #2 lead pencils
Highlighters
Thin colored markers/pencils
1 roll of paper towels for **Science** teacher
3 boxes of tissues & 1 hand sanitizer for **Advisory** teacher
Stapler & white-out for home!

Parent Advisory Council (PAC) News

Welcome back to school to all of our new and returning parents. Included with this newsletter are three documents from the Parent Advisory Council; a volunteer sign-up form, a PAC Membership form, and a form to enter your child's information to be included in the student directory. This form also asks for an email address, which will be used for PAC email notices.

WMS PAC has an email account, separate from Alertnow. We use this account to notify parents of upcoming events and projects. If you are new to WMS, or need to notify us of a new email account to include in our distribution lists, please email your child's name and grade and the email addresses to: pac.wms@gmail.com

Below is some additional PAC contact information for our three grade-level parent representatives. Please use this information should you have any PAC related questions. We are looking forward to another great year!

Julie Erwin – Grade 8 representative jterwin33@gmail.com

Debbie MacDonald – Grade 7 representative m1012ac@yahoo.com

Tara Brais - Grade 6 representative braistara@outlook.com

Anne Acquista - Treasurer anneacquista@comcast.net

TEXT BOOK ORDERS/BOOK SWAP

The Williams Middle School and the PAC have compiled the following information and instructions regarding the purchase of discount textbooks. This will allow you to keep a set of books at home so that your child will not have to carry them back and forth to school. At the end of the school year or at the beginning of the next year you can swap them and recoup your investment.

Book Companies:

-**Follet Educational Books** 1-800-621-4272 Website: www.fes.follet.com
(Delivery 5-7 business days) Handling charge 9% of order (\$5.00 minimum)

-**Adams Books** 888-466-3839 Website: www.adamsbooks.com

-**Academic Books** 1-800-466-3839

-**Prentice Hall** Website: www.phschool.com (free shipping if ordered online)

Books ordered through Follet are reconditioned and/or discounted books and therefore all titles are not available at all times. Keep in mind that one or two books at home may be sufficient to alleviate the backpack load.

Grade 6		
Subject	Title	ISBN#
English	Prentice Hall Literature Penguin Ed. (MA)	0-13-165277-X
Science	PH. Weather	0134344944
	Environment-Science	0134344863
Social Studies	Ancient Civilizations	978.015 336822.6
Math	Houghton Mifflin Harcourt <i>Big Ideas Math</i> ©2014 Level Green	978-1-60840-449-0
Grade 7		
Math	(Level 7-1): Glencoe McGraw-Hill <i>Glencoe Accelerated: A Pre-Algebra Program</i> ©2014	978-0-07-663798-0

Grade 7 (con't)		
Math	(Level 7-2): Glencoe McGraw-Hill <i>Math Connects</i> ©2012 Course 2	978-0-07-895130-5
English	Prentice Hall Literature Penguin Ed. (MA)	0-13-165278-8
Social Studies	Glencoe Geography: The World and its People	0078609763
French	Discovering French Nouveau Bleu	0395874831 *2004 edition
Spanish	En Espanol (publisher McDougall-Littel)	0618250573
Science	Note: Books are small and change throughout the year, probably not necessary to purchase.	
Grade 8		
Math	(Algebra): Glencoe McGraw-Hill <i>Glencoe Algebra I</i> ©2014	978-0-07-663798-0
Math	(Pre-Algebra): Glencoe McGraw-Hill <i>Math Connects</i> ©2012 Course 3	978-0-07-895139-8
Social Studies	American Nation – yr. 2000	0134349024
English	Prentice Hall Literature Penguin Ed. (MA)	0-13-165279-6
French	Discovering French Nouveau Bleu 1	0395874831 *2004 edition
Spanish	En Espanol	0618250573
Science	Note: Books are small and change throughout the year, probably not necessary to purchase.	