

Around the Courtyard

Williams Middle School
410 Williams St., Longmeadow, MA 01106
October, 2014



*WILLIAMS MIDDLE
SCHOOL
NEWSLETTER*

OCTOBER, 2014

Upcoming School Events

October 13 Columbus Day—No School
October 15 Magazine Drive Begins
October 16 Longmeadow Historical Society meeting—6:30-9:30 p.m.
October 17 Pumpkin Carving Party – 3:00-4:00 p.m.
October 21 Picture Retake Day/Gr. 8 Photo
October 23 Parent Conferences—Gr. 6-8 afternoon & evening ½ Day – 11:30 a.m. dismissal

October 24 **Grade 6 Parent Conferences—11:30 a.m. dismissal (Grade 6 only)**
October 28 Gr. 7 & 8 Band Field Trip
October 30 Annual Pasta Supper—5:00-7:00 p.m.
October 31 Halloween
November 3 Early Release Day—1:30 p.m. Dismissal
November 10 Professional Development Day—No School
November 11 Veterans' Day—No School
November 26 ½ Day—Thanksgiving Recess—11:30 a.m. Dismissal
November 26 End of Trimester 1
November 27-28 Thanksgiving Recess—No School
December 23 ½ Day—11:30 a.m. Dismissal
December 24-Jan. 2 Holiday Break
January 5, 2015 School Resumes

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FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

Hello WMS Families,

September is always a very busy month in schools. Welcoming students back, students getting to know their new teachers, teachers meeting their new classes. Here at Williams, our opening went very smoothly.

Early last June, we were able to purchase classroom libraries for our English classrooms in all three grades. These many boxes of books were opened and organized in classrooms over the summer and we opened school with these new libraries available for students. Having seen these new libraries in use during this first month, it has been amazing to see the impact these libraries are having on our students. Allowing students to have so many choices of what to read right in their classrooms has already had a positive impact in our overall school culture. Observing students talking excitedly to each other about what they are reading and recommending books to classmates is great to experience.

While these new libraries include many books covering many genres, our grade 6 classrooms received a more limited selection. I raised this concern at our first Parent Advisory Council (PAC) meeting in September. As is always the case here, our PAC stepped right in and allocated \$2,000 to supplement these libraries. This kind of support is one of the many things that make Williams such a great school community!

A few weeks ago, I sent out a message about student biking and my concern with the number of our students who are biking to and from school without wearing a helmet. I was so encouraged as almost immediately, the number of student not wearing helmets decreased dramatically. Unfortunately, as I stood at dismissal yesterday and watched many of our students bike by me, I noticed that the number not wearing helmets is back up again. By far, our largest group of students not wearing a helmet is in our eighth grade. While I don't want this helmet issue to be my one and only focus this year, it is a tremendously important one.

Below is a link to an article, which appeared in the Daily Hampshire Gazette on Thursday, September 25, 2014. As you will read, the article describes a very serious bike/car accident in which a 14-year-old girl was struck by a car. When you read the details of what led up to the accident, you will quickly realize that the scenario is one that any one of our kids could experience on any given morning. Please take a minute to read this article and please continue to support/require helmet use...

Thank you!!

<http://www.gazettenet.com/home/13709230-95/mother-credits-helmet-with-saving-life-of-14-year-old-girl-in-northampton-bicycle-accident>

GRADE 6 NEWS

Social Studies

The sixth grade historians are making great progress this year. For the first chapter of their textbook, they did activities such as an archaeological dig and cave etchings. They also worked hard on class notes. Please check www.quizlet.com, and search Williams Middle School, Longmeadow, MA. The vocabulary for each chapter will be posted.

Math

Students are currently learning about problem solving, powers and exponents, order of operations, prime factorization, as well as greatest common factors and least common multiples. It is important that the students practice their multiplication facts! Flashcards are a great help! Your child will soon be starting Chapter 2 (working with fractions and decimals).

English

Students in grade six are currently reading the novel, Tangerine, by Edward Bloor. Some of the skills we will focus on are point of view, characterization, irony, figurative language and symbolism. We have just completed our first common writing assessment from their summer reading novel, Scat. Every Monday through Thursday, your child should be reading at least 15 minutes and responding to what they read in their spiral notebook. See the inside cover of this notebook for criteria. In English extension, we have started our book choice unit. Students will soon be writing in their Reader's Notebook and conferencing with their teacher about what they've read. We will also be working on test taking skills.

Science

Science is off to a good start in our study of the environment. In chapter one, students created a Keynote or Power Point on levels of ecological organization using the Chrome books or MacBook Airs. We were impressed with their ease in using technology as well as their final product. Ask your child about the various hands-on activities that we've done to help them understand how scientists determine population size and how animals' needs are met.

GRADE 7 NEWS

English

In seventh grade English classes, we have been reviewing the basic literary terms with our summer reading books and the books we are presently reading. We are so excited to have our wonderful new classroom libraries and we have begun to use our Reader's Notebooks to write

about our reading and thinking. We look forward to working with our social studies classes to integrate some of our learning. For example, when we study Africa we will read the novel, [A Long Walk to Water](#). In addition, some of our work will link with studying about water in science.

Science

We are starting Earth's Water, where students are learning the appropriate names of lab equipment and using the equipment in lab settings. Students have begun keeping track of their daily water use for us to calculate a class average. Students will begin to use Discovery Education to supplement their class work with videos, lab simulations and reading materials.

Social Studies

In 7th grade social studies, students have spent the first weeks of school looking at how we study geography. They have learned map skills, information about climate, and have now started looking at culture and how geography shapes people and countries around the world.

Math

In 7.1 math class we started our year by covering numerical expressions, algebraic expressions, reinforcing the concept of order of operations and exploring domain and range. In our current chapter, we have delved into integer work. We'll cover all operations with integers as well as graphing in all four quadrants. Finally, our upcoming chapter will cover operations with rational numbers. We've been working with clock buddies to share math ideas and work together. Also, our math mornings on Tuesdays and Thursdays have been a success.

In 7.2 math class, we began the year with a review of decimal operations, discussing variables, expressions and order of operations. Chapter 2 deals with the coordinate plane and the integer rules with that chapter, Mrs. Lawson's class is creating a coordinate plane drawing project. After integers we will move on to rational numbers.

GRADE 8 NEWS

English

In 8th grade English, we are busy exploring our new classroom libraries and using our Reader's Notebooks. We are reviewing basic literary vocabulary as we discuss and write about our reading. We've completed a number of assessments to begin to get a real picture of our literacy skills as we move forward into our year.

Science

We are beginning our Chemistry unit and starting our density labs. Students will be working to gather data using scientific tools like the triple beam balance, graduated cylinders and rulers to

determine the density of solids and liquids. Students will use this data to compile a lab report on density.

Social Studies

In 8th grade social studies, students spent the first month of school examining the causes of the American Revolution and overall life for the colonists during this time period. The 8th grade field trip to the Freedom Trail in Boston allowed the students to see, firsthand, much of the history they had learned about in class. We are now exploring the Revolutionary War itself, looking at specific battles, historical figures, and founding documents, like the Declaration of Independence.

Math

Algebra:

We started the year with the nuts and bolts of higher math - underlying properties of numbers, solving linear equations, function notation and graphs of functions, with an emphasis on precise language to describe how they look, behave and work in graphical, numerical, and verbal form. This provides the basis for analyzing how graphs and equations change under various conditions, a key theme for the rest of the year and beyond.

Pre-Algebra:

Ms. Lawson's pre-algebra classes began this year with a review of integer rules, mathematical concepts with rational numbers, and order of operations. We will be learning scientific notation, and roots in chapter 2 then move on to more algebraic mathematics with solving equations.

Mr. Scanlan-Emigh's pre-algebra classes started the year with skills and applications in the area and volume of 2- and 3-dimensional shapes. This gave us an opportunity to practice organization of multistep work and see a use for the all-important Pythagorean Theorem. We are continuing with the mechanics of writing and solving equations, as well as underlying skills in the arithmetic of positive and negative numbers, fractions, and exponential expressions, all as a precursor to the algebraic core of the course, linear functions.

Other Grade 8 News

Students and teachers enjoyed a wet, but fun day in Boston on October 1st. We started our "Old Towne" trolley tour at the site of the original meetinghouse in Faneuil Hall where costumed guides told us the story of the beginning of the American Revolution. We toured Boston by trolley, stopping at sites along the Freedom Trail like the Boston Common, the Capitol building, and the Granary Burial Ground where we learned some of the more gruesome details of the Boston Massacre and the revolution. We then circled Bunker Hill and ended our trolley tour in Quincy Market, where everyone enjoyed lunch. In the afternoon, we took a walking tour of various historical sites in the North End including Paul Revere's House, Old North Church and Mike's Pastry Shop.

Notas de español

Students in 8th grade Spanish are starting their next unit which focuses on Puerto Rico. We will be talking about the geography and history of the island, and discussing what it means to be a Commonwealth and why many Puerto Ricans prefer that status.

Yearbook

The Yearbook committee is now forming. Students will be involved in the organization and publication of the yearbook. The first meeting is October 8th. The adviser to the yearbook is Dr. Gelinas.

RELATED ARTS NEWS

Technology:

6th Grade: We've created our MS portfolios in Google Sites. We are busy learning technology vocabulary, creating a sales brochure for our job interview and are increasing our typing accuracy and speed.

7th Grade: We've organized our portfolios to reflect our new school year and organized our drive to reflect the new school year's work. We are continuing to expand our knowledge with technology terms. Our work in Typing Web is progressing well. In addition, we've started learning how to budget our money in spreadsheets by planning a "dream vacation."

8th Grade: We've organized our portfolios to reflect our new school year and organized our drive to reflect the new school year's work. Our word knowledge continues to expand with our technology terms. This is our last year to solidify our typing skills. Accuracy is the key to speed! In addition, we are learning how to format cells in a spreadsheet in our "stock market challenge." The students were given \$100,000 to invest in the NYSE for ten days. Stay tuned, there will be a winner in each class.

Health:

In sixth grade our focus has been on learning about the health triangle and self-concept, self-image and self-esteem. Our next unit will be on communication, decision making and goal setting. In seventh grade students are learning about mental health and stress. Our next units will focus on the digestive system and nutrition. Eighth grade students have started out the trimester learning about first aid and that will lead into CPR and using an AED. The second unit in 8th grade focuses on relationships with a unit called "Flirting or Hurting".

Visual Art:

The sixth grade students are working on decorative boxes, and are emphasizing line (four types of lines). They are using clay and the slab technique. They are learning to roll, cut, score, adhere and blend clay to create geometric and organic slab forms.

The seventh grade students are working on animal sculptures, and are also emphasizing the four types of lines. They are also working with clay. Most of them are using the pinch technique to create their sculptures; while others are using scoring, attaching and blending techniques to add limbs.

The eighth grade students are building animal sculptures using cardboard, masking tape and newspaper. Once they build muscle mass on their animals, then they will use paper mache techniques to complete the sculptures. Then they will paint and varnish them, with an emphasis on line.

Physical Education:

The weather this month has been fantastic enabling us to stay outside while enjoying our Ultimate Frisbee and Soccer units. 8th grade got out of their comfort zones with the introduction to Ultimate Frisbee as many of them have never played it before. Many of enjoyed the simplicity of the sport even though some have fought through the difficulty of the throws.

7th grade is finishing up their 8 v 8 soccer unit with an emphasis on spatial/positional awareness of a larger field. 6th grade is wrapping up their 4 v 4 soccer unit where the focus is more on individual technique on the ball.

The FitnessGram testing will begin during the week of October 6th. For those parents who are new, the FitnessGram is 6 fitness tests that measure each student's cardiovascular endurance, muscle strength, muscle endurance, and flexibility. We emphasize individual growth with each student each time he or she takes each test. The end goal for each student is to be in the healthy zone of other boys and girls their age. Please make sure those who need to use inhalers during either the mile run or pacer has them when they take their test. Test dates will be posted on my website ([WMS PE](#)) or on Twitter [@WilliamsPhysEd](#).

Band:

6th grade Concert Band: We are making progress on the Essential Elements Band method book and will begin learning our concert band music. We have been building our musicianship skills by learning to read music notes quickly.

7th & 8th grade Symphonic Band: Both grade levels have been working on sight reading skills by reading 2-3 pieces since the beginning of the school year. We are currently in the process of rehearsing Creed and Stars and Stripes Forever March to prepare for our Winter Concert. The 7th & 8th grade band students and I are very excited for our field trip to New London, CT on Oct. 28. We will be leaving WMS at 7:45 am, please have students arrive to school by 7:35 am.

Parent Advisory Council (PAC) News

The WMS student directory will be available by the end of the month. Please don't miss out! The directory only goes to those families who have paid their PAC dues. Also, if you haven't sent in your directory contact information, please do so immediately. The PAC is also selling Taste Books. Please order yours today. All the forms are available on the WMS website under the PAC link.

STUDENT COUNCIL NEWS

We started the year with a hat day, and we're happy to report that we raised \$470.00. The money went to the 529 college fund for the Fontenot sisters. The student council is in the process of ordering WMS sling bags. They will be sold at school soon.

Please save the date for our 14th annual pasta supper. It will be held on October 30 from 5:00-7:00. There will be great food, live music, and a bake sale. Please let me know if you'd like to provide treats. All proceeds will go to Hero Dogs, an organization that provides service dogs for injured veterans.

Thanks for your support,
Ms. King

Math Counts

The Math Counts club works together to solve challenging and fun national math-counts problems. We meet every Friday from 2:50-3:30. All are welcome!

Magazine Drive

The 2014 -2015 annual fundraiser **Magazine Drive** is upon us starting October 15th!! The students will be coming home with packets of information with the three turn-in dates and directions to complete the order forms. This is how Williams Middle School raises money to pay for important programs such as, homework room, field day, Drama Club, Intramurals and all of our after school activities.

Please help us by renewing all your existing subscriptions, ordering new magazines as well as checking with any family members or friends willing to renew or buy new subscriptions through this fundraiser.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact either one of us at school. Thank you in advance for your help with this important fundraiser.

Kathy Lawson

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Kathy Russotto

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Middle School Cross-Country

The middle school cross-country team ran the Carl Walker 5k in October at Forest Park. We will be participating in our first 2-mile meet with Mabelle Avery Middle School in Somers, CT.

WILLIAMS MIDDLE SCHOOL DRAMA CLUB



Sept. 30, 2014

Dear Parent/Guardian,

This is the eleventh year of Drama Club and we are going strong! Each year I have about 35-40 students involved so your cooperation is VERY important;-) Your child is extremely important to our production no matter what role they play or job they carry out. We want to build a team of actors and support staff that are dedicated to putting on the finest performance for you and their peers.

The commitment to achieve this will be extensive. Rehearsals will be every Thursday (excluding non school days such as vacations or religious holidays) from 3pm to 4pm from now until December, then after vacation from 3 to 4:30. In addition, several weeks before our performance, rehearsals will be more often and from 3 to about 5:30/6pm. Our evening performance for family and friends is Friday April 10th at 7pm. Our performance for the student body will be Friday, April 17th. This is the Friday before April vacation, so students must commit to attending school that day.

I am writing this before our first meeting, SO I AM NOT SURE OF THE PLAY WE WILL BE DOING. The cast will have some input into our production so, I am sure your child will let you know once we make a decision. Any materials you can contribute for costumes, sets, and/or props would be greatly appreciated; I will send home a list as soon as we settle on a play. I am also looking for volunteers to help with program design/copying, and refreshments for our late rehearsals and a bake sale for the performance night. **MOST important of all we want to have fun:-)**

Please take a moment and sign the permission slip on the bottom of this paper and return to Mrs. Lawson at the next drama club meeting.

Thank you,
Mrs. Lawson

.....
Child's Name _____ Your Signature _____

I am aware of the commitment to the rehearsal schedule for the drama club. My child will be at school the weeks before April vacation and present for all the performances.

I am willing to volunteer for/contribute _____

Name _____ Phone # _____.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH:-)