

Hollis School Newsletter

February, 2012

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Believe it or not, the halfway mark of the school year has come and gone. Your children are working as hard as ever to be the best students they can be. They have also been terrific “bucket filers”! We hope this program can transfer to the home too.

January was an exciting month. Everyone got back to work after enjoying the holiday vacation and really focused their energy on learning. Don't forget that since we are in the last half of the school year, our assembly times have changed. For the next four months, grades K-2 will have their program from 1:30-2:00, and grades 3-5 will conduct their assembly from 2:00-2:30. Our February assembly is scheduled for Friday the 3rd.

February is an especially exciting month due to the kickoff of our Read-A-Thon program. The Read-A-Thon begins Tuesday, February 28th and ends Tuesday, April 10th. Each student is asked to read a certain number of minutes per night (depending on their grade level), and then return a slip signed by their parent every Tuesday. Students can still turn in their slips after Tuesdays. Every child that does their reading each night will be rewarded with a trophy at our assembly in June. The minimum number of minutes to read (15 for grades K – 3 and 20 minutes for grades 4 & 5) is **in addition** to the required reading from the Braintree Schools Homework Policy. Don't forget to continue bringing in those pennies for **Penny Power Plus** each Wednesday. These pennies pay for the trophies that so many of our students earn. A big thank you goes out to Mrs. Kennedy and Mrs. McPhail for all their work with Penny Power Plus. Students are working hard to win one of our two Hollis Hawks mascots!

Also this month, we are scheduled to celebrate our **100th day of school**. Typically this is a day that our younger students celebrate. This year, with the original portion of the Hollis School building turning 100 years old, we are having a whole school celebration. February 8th is slated to be our 100th school day. On this day we are asking students to decorate any t-shirt they have at home (with parent permission!) in a way that demonstrates 100 and wear the t-shirt to school on the 8th. We hope to honor the 100th day of school, celebrate our school's birthday, and foster some more positive school spirit.

Please be sure to look at the enclosed newsletter. Pay careful attention to the dates of the annual Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exams given to students in grades 3-5. It is imperative that your child be present during these dates. Hollis students always perform well on these tests and I am sure that this year will be no different. ***A program will be offered to students in grades 3, 4, and 5 who need a little extra help for these upcoming MCAS tests.***

Don't forget to fill out the “Hollis Street Sign” raffle form that was sent home. Students have the chance to have the circular drive in front of the school named in their honor. The winning student also gets to keep the sign!

We have had several successful fundraisers this year. Our monthly “Dine Out” nights have been quite successful. Thank you all for your continued support. Our second annual “Camp Hollis” during February vacation is a terrific way to get your children out of the house and into some fun activities.

Enjoy the month, and remember... **Together Everyone Achieves More—TEAM!**

Sincerely,

Tim MacDonald
Principal

HOLLIS HAPPENINGS

Kindergarten Korner

We have been introduced to many of our sounds and are having a great time manipulating these sounds to read and spell consonant vowel consonant words here at school. We are also working really hard here in school on our high frequency or "sight words". When introduced to our high frequency words we discuss how important it is to learn these words by remembering the letters and not sounding these out. The kindergarten team wants to thank all of the parents for continuing to reinforce these words at home. It is so important for our students to be able to read these words fluently prior to first grade! We continue to practice rhyming, listening for sounds at the beginning, middle, & end, segmenting & blending words. Please take advantage of opportunities to practice in the car, on the sidelines, at the dinner table, etc.

In mathematics we are currently focusing on addition. We are using many different strategies such as combining sets of objects or manipulatives, drawing pictures, using illustrations and acting it out to solve addition problems. We really want our kindergartners to understand the concept of addition as joining sets or groups together. We have also started to send home addition flashcards for addition facts to five. This is a new expectation for our kindergartners this year and we want to make sure they have plenty of opportunities to practice facts both at home and in school. Our 100th day is fast approaching. We can't wait!

Our exciting new science theme is "*My Five Senses*." We are learning that through seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, and tasting, we learn about the world around us. With your child, try naming the senses that you use at a given time.

This month we will explore the themes: Groundhog Day, Valentine's Day, Chinese New Year, and President's Day. What a special and busy month!

Snow-filled Fun in Grade One

Even though January seemed to go by so quickly it was fun and filled with snow activity!! We even had a little bit of the real stuff, finally! On Reading Street, we enjoyed learning about what a community is and who our community helpers are. We focused on some amazing words like Respect, Citizen & Cooperation! With phonics, we continue to practice our phonics patterns to include words that have digraphs (ch, th, wh, sh, ph, -ck), blends (sp, sk, br, fl, etc...) but have now learned patterns for long vowels (vowel-consonant-e). We are reading up a storm in all classes and are so excited with how many phonics rules the students are applying in everyday reading. Please help your child be detectives looking for these patterns in everyday reading at home. We are looking forward to our Read-a-thon coming soon in March!!

In math, we are practicing many strategies to make addition facts more automatic. You are encouraged to build memorization of facts as well by using flashcards at home or visiting thatquiz.org at home. We are using number lines, visualization, and counting up methods to make addition more understandable. We will be using fact families and turn around facts more this month. And...subtraction will be formally introduced as well. Any extra support at home to build these concepts and memorization is so appreciated!

In writing, we practiced writing friendly letters and we wrote animal riddles for our Animal Tracks project in Lit Lab. Finally we will be culminating our communities theme with a combined writing and social studies project.

In Science, be on the lookout for many fun experiments. Remember: wear comfortable clothes on Thursdays in February and March...we might get dirty!

We just can't wait for February...Valentines, Presidents and a bit of vacation!!!!

Grade 2 Getting to the Root of Learning

February certainly is a fabulous month! We have the 100th Day of school, Valentine's Day, President's Day and let's not forget "Winter break" will be here soon! There is much learning to do in this short amount of time.

Please remember no food of any kind may accompany your child's Valentine card when presenting to their classmates. Be cautious when buying as many products sell them together.

Our reading anthology has exposed us to many different types of literature. We have been reading fantasy, realistic fiction, a folk tale, and even a biography. We will be wrapping up Unit 3 "Creative Ideas" very soon. Our comprehension skills, grammar skills and phonics skills continue to grow with new concepts being introduced this month. Author's purpose, drawing conclusions, compare & contrast, sequencing, and fact & opinion have been the focus of our comprehension skills with this unit. Verbs, verbs and verbs have been the grammar skill that has brought us to learning many different rules of the past, present and future along with introduction of irregular verbs. Make sure to review all those papers coming home. We continue to work on fluency and expression. Keep practicing at home.

In math, our demonstration of understanding the various meanings and applying those different strategies of addition and subtraction with and without regrouping is keeping us on our toes. Money, money and more money keeps us working hard with adding, subtracting and even trying to make change. Time will be introduced so practice at home and not with the digital clock. Problem solving all those equations keep us busy on a day to day basis.

We've traveled to "North America," and learned about the three countries that make up NA. Also, we learned about the largest mountain range, mountains and rivers.

In Science we will learn about "New Plants." Students will develop a curiosity and interest in plants and living things. They will experience some of the diversity of forms in the plant kingdom. Students will observe and describe the changes that occur as plants grow and develop. Those are just some of the experiences that students will explore. Brassica seeds, grass, and grain seeds will be planted. Stems will be discovered in planting them to re-grow into a new plant. In Bulbs and Roots, students will

initiate the growth of a new plant from a bulb and root. There will be a lot of recording of information in their science journals as to how they grow.

Mrs. Martin will conduct the students in a musical titled "*Going Buggy*" in March. We have worked very hard to prepare for this, so check out the calendar to see when we are on stage with our live performance. A big thanks to "*Mrs. Dunford*" and "*Mrs. Mirabile*" for the scenery. It's going to look fantastic. Enjoy your February Vacation!

Grade 3 Students are One of a Kind

Term 2 is over, and we hope students and families are ready for a new and exciting term to begin! We enter our fourth reading unit, with the theme, *One of a Kind*. We will explore Big Questions such as "*How Do Talents Make Someone Unique?*" and "*Why is it valuable to Have Unique Interests?*". Students will use their own experiences and ideas, as well as a variety of texts to come up with answers to these questions. Classes will read their biographies, expository texts, and folk tales to connect to their own unique personalities. Please keep reviewing spelling words nightly to give your children a boost for the spelling quizzes!

Ms. Giacomozzi and Ms. Burke's classes will switch back into Science, and begin their studies and observations of the water cycle. Using text and hands-on activities students will begin to understand the water cycle and how it works. Mrs. Bourget and Mrs. Lauria's classes have been studying animals and their adaptations. They will now continue learning about Massachusetts and our state's history, delving into the worlds of the Pilgrims and famous state heroes.

Mastering multiplication facts is an important skill for your child. Knowing these facts will make other more complicated operations much easier. We will be beginning our units on Geometry this term.

The English Language Arts MCAS test is right around the corner for our third graders. This will be their first experience in taking this test. When it comes time for the test, we will be confident, prepared and successful.

We wish everyone a safe and relaxing February vacation and look forward to the start of spring!

Grade 4 Starting Off on the Right Foot

"*May the Force Be With You!*" In Science, we are excited to begin the Magnetism & Electricity unit. Meanwhile, we have been visiting many wonderful geographic locations in the Northeast Region of the United States.

"*Starting Off on the Right Foot*" is one way our fourth graders are beginning their narrative essays. Story beginnings are designed to grab the reader's attention and make the reader want to read more. All students are eager to become wonderful writers.

In Math, students did a great job with double digit multiplication. There were two methods that could be used - decomposing, where students break apart a number and the traditional method, which is the way most of us learned how to do it.

Before we delve into long division we will explore the area of geometry. Students will enhance their knowledge of lines, angles, two and three dimensional shapes, perimeter, area, and volume. Please continue to review the facts with your child. Also, we would like to say a special THANK YOU to the Hollis PTO for the Cultural Arts presentation, "The Native American Perspectives". The students learned about Native American life in America.

Grade 5 Steps Into High Gear

The entire fifth grade will be "stepping into high gear" over the next few months as we incorporate more MCAS preparation into our existing curriculum.

In Science, we will continue with our Matter and Energy unit. Be sure to ask your child about some of the exciting experiments that have gone along with this unit.

In ELA, we have been working hard on our 2012 resolution writing and look forward to moving onto a poetry unit. All of our reading classes will be continuing to prepare for the ELA MCAS as we work on writing skills in response to reading. Be sure to keep an eye out for the dates that our students will be testing.

In Math, we are developing our skills with fractions. This will involve converting decimals to fractions, fractions to decimals and many more operations with fractions.

In Social Studies, we will find ourselves learning about the thirteen original colonies and people such as Roger Williams, John Winthrop and William Penn. February is busy month for our fifth graders. We thank you for your continued support at home and have a happy and safe February vacation!

COMING SOON

Hollis Book Fair

March 12, 13, 14

School Committee Meetings

Mon, Feb. 13th - Colbert School

Mon, Feb. 27th - Ross School

Mon, March 12th - Colbert School

Mon, March 26th - Liberty School

Mon, April 9th - Colbert School

Mon, April 23rd - Flaherty School

May 7th - Colbert School

May 21st - South Middle School

June 11th - Colbert School

The agenda for each meeting
may be viewed 2 days prior to the meeting
date at www.braintreeschools.org

PE WITH MR. GRAVELINE

This month in physical education kindergarten and first grade will be working on basketball skills such as dribbling, bounce pass, chest pass, shooting, and learning new basketball terms and vocabulary.

Health Room Notes

February is **Dental Health Month**. During this month, the third graders will have a visit by a local Braintree dentist. They will be learning about proper dental health and will receive a quick examination by the dentist. The majority of third, fourth and fifth graders are participating in the weekly fluoride program. We're hoping for a great dental report. If you do not want your child to have this screening - please contact Nurse Jane at 781-380-0149.

Absenteeism - Please send in a note if your child is absent. It is very helpful to know the nature of your child's absence, especially if contagious.

Fourth grade physicals are mandatory in Braintree. Please submit your physical to Nurse Jane.

There are still several fifth graders who have not submitted their grade 4 physical. Your health record cannot be forwarded to the middle school unless it is complete. Please feel free to call me at 781 380-0149 if you have any health concerns.

Nurses are needed to join our substitute nurse pool. If you are interested in putting your name on the substitute nurse list, please call the Director of School Nurses, Paula Dowd, at Braintree High School 781-848-4000 Ext. 2224.

We're on the WEB!

This newsletter is available for viewing on
the web at

www.gpvillage.com/hollisschool

Check Us Out!

Sepac Meeting

Mass Sibling Support Network

Sib Workshop for Parents

Presented by Janet Thibeau

Wednesday, Feb. 15th

6:30 - 8:30

Thayer Public Library

This workshop is designed to help parents understand the sibling experience after suggestions for supporting their child throughout their life, and provide an overview of growing sibling movement. The primary audience for this workshop is parents who have multiple children and would like information about how to support their child who has a brother or sister with a disability.

Translation Announcement

If parents and/or guardians need this notice or other school notices translated into another language, please contact Elise McHugh at Hollis Elementary School 781-380-0120.

PENNY POWER PLUS UPDATE

Thank you thus far for all the coins brought in every Wednesday for Penny Power Plus! At the half-way mark we have the following grade leaders: Kindergarten is Mrs. Kendrick's AM, 1st grade - Miss Tobin, 2nd grade - Mrs. Bowes, 3rd grade is Ms. Giacomozzi, 4th is Ms. Terrill and the 5th grade leader is Mrs. Newton's class. Mark your calendars for the February PPP dates: 2/1, 2/8, 2/15 and 2/29.

2012 MCAS TESTING SCHEDULE

Mark your calendars for these
Important dates:

Grade 3

ELA Reading Comprehension

March 29th & 30th

Math

May 8th & May 9th

Grade 4

ELA Long Composition

March 20th

ELA Reading Comprehension

March 27th & 28th

Math

May 15th & May 16th

Grade 5

ELA Reading Comprehension

March 21st & 22nd

Science & Technology

May 17th & May 18th

Math

May 10th & May 11th

Hollis PTO News - February 2012

***Dine Out** - Celebrate Valentine's Day early with an "adults only" Dine Out. Come and enjoy the fine dining at *Granite Grill* on February 10th from 5pm - close, and 20% of the total bill will be donated to Hollis!

***Providence Bruins** - February 12 game. \$15/ticket, and every kid gets a hat. For more information or to order, contact Tina O'Brien (781)356-1469.

***Camp Hollis** - February 22nd - The deadline to sign up your children for Camp Hollis is Feb. 14th. This event is a 10AM-3:00PM drop off day of activities at the Sons of Italy in Braintree. The cost is \$30 per student with a \$75 max per family. Sign up now! Last year sold out! Volunteers are needed for this event, and donations of bottled water are also appreciated. For more information and to sign up, go to www.gpvillage.com/hollis, or contact Geralyn Lannon (781)843-0098 or Deirdre Eschauzier (781)356-1940.

***Read-A-Thon** - program will begin after February break. More details to come...

***Scholastic Book Fair** - March 12-14. Stock up on books your children can read during the Read-a-thon! Check the March newsletter for the day & time your child(ren) are attending.

***Next PTO meeting:** March 8th at 7:00 - Hope to see you there!

***Thank you to Kelly Cobb-Lemire for organizing the School Mall Program, and Thanks also to all the families who participated and sent in their postcards!**

***Many thanks to Chris McIntyre, Jane Barney and all the volunteers who organized an awesome Second Annual Trivia Night!**

Happy 100th Birthday Hollis from the PTO!

CULTURAL ARTS NEWS - FEBRUARY 2012

We started off 2012 by inviting Dan Cripps with **Native American Perspectives** back to Hollis. Mr. Cripps presented his wonderful program that focuses on Native American life to the students in the second, third and fourth grade classrooms. The fourth grade students enjoyed the experience of assembling an actual tipi. The second and third grade students were invited to sit inside the tipi while Mr. Cripps discussed life and culture with them; using many real artifacts and props. This program tied in nicely to the curriculums of these grades and was enjoyed by all the students and teachers.

February will be a quiet month on the cultural arts front. We are looking forward to welcoming spring in March with more exciting programs for the students. Once again, thank you to all of the PTO members and volunteers. The continuous effort to support the funding of these wonderful programs is greatly appreciated by all!

Steps to Respect - 2011/2012

Ms. Melonie Bennett, the Director of Physical Education and Health, has been teaching the Steps to Respect program to grade 4 students. The Steps to Respect program is an anti-bullying program that is researched based. Students learned about **RESPECT** and what it means to be respectful. In addition, they discussed what respectful behaviors are and how those behaviors should be used every day. They also discussed conflict, bullying, how to recognize bullying, how to refuse bullying, how to report bullying, bystanders and cyber-bullying. The program is completed and students were sent home with their Steps to Respect Folders. We encourage you to ask your students what they learned in the Steps to Respect program.

Vocabulary and Definitions:

- **Respect** - Treating people the way you want to be treated.
- **Conflict**- A disagreement that happens when people want different things. The people involved in a conflict have equal power to solve the problem.
- **Bullying** -Bullying is unfair and one-sided. It happens when someone keeps hurting, frightening, threatening, or leaving someone out on purpose. One or more is the bully (aggressor) and the other is the victim (target).
- **Bystander**- Someone who knows that bullying is happening. That includes people who witness bullying. A bystander can find out about bullying in two ways: Seeing or Hearing.
- **Cyber-Bullying** - Is being cruel to others by sending or posting harmful material or engaging in other forms of social aggressions using the internet or other digital technologies. For example, cell phones.

If you have any questions about the curriculum, please do not hesitate to contact her for more information. Thank you for supporting your student(s) in learning the skills that leads to success in school and in life. Ms. Bennett's contact information is (781) 848-4000 ex.2235 or mbennett@braintreema.gov.

Physical Education Notes

Self -directed Movers In Learning Experiences

The second term continued with keeping a safe learning environment, following directions, rules and routines.

We're halfway through the year, and really getting down to business!

Topics Covered:

Grade 1: Locomotor Supplements: Saying Hello in Several Languages, we finished Chasing/Fleeing & Dodging Skills, which are great lead-up skills for most *Team Sports*. Dribbling as in Soccer, Dribbling as in Basketball.

Grades 2-3: Finished their Jumping & Landing Unit with w/ Grade 2 doing "*Chinese Jump Rope*" and Grade 3 focused on *Turning a Long Rope* both are great "Recess Links!" We also covered: Soccer & Basketball Lead-up Skills.

Grades 4-5: Finished Sport Concepts: Reaction Time, Agility & Directionality and Recognizing Space a.k.a. "Getting Open," plus Speedball and Angle-ball. These two games really work on the concept of *Keep Away*. Finally, we are just lessons away from starting our Basketball Tournament. Students will not only take on the role & responsibilities of a player, but also that of scorekeeper & referee. Not only did they get a physical workout this term, we also kept mentally sharp as well, with a Bones & Muscle Quiz, respectively.

Our *Play 60 Campaign* is rolling right along. We are at the mid-term point, and those students with the most badges at each grade level will get an opportunity to earn an additional Physical Education class!

~ Thank you for doing a SUPER job of helping your child be prepared ~
for both Music & P.E.

February 1, 2012

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As you may know, part of our school building is turning 100 years old this year. We are planning a school-wide celebration that occurs during our 100th day of school on February 8, 2012.

Students are being asked to pick a t-shirt from home (with parental permission) and decorate that shirt in any creative manner representing 100. We are hoping to give the students a chance to help celebrate these two important events in a fun way.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Tim MacDonald
Principal