

McCarthy-Towne Bulletin

April 7, 2017
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Springing into April

by David Krane, McT Principal

Difficult as it may be to believe, we have had three snow days this year, one fewer than last year. The intensity and timing of the storms this year have been very different, of course, but we are still very fortunate to have not lost more school days. There is still plenty of snow on the ground, though, making for messy hallways and wet children at recess. But the days are warming up, however slowly, and I hear the doves in the morning now, and that's always a positive sign. Even if this winter appears endless, we all know that the arrival of spring is inevitable, even as patience is wearing very thin!

The McCarthy-Towne Auction took place two weeks ago and it could not have been more successful, in my view. The dedication of the parent community to the school is nothing short of remarkable and the generosity allows us, as a school, to make many different choices in terms of classroom support. But the Auction evening itself is also fun; it is a celebration of our community and of the students and teachers and staff that make up our school. Thank you to all of the people who worked so hard to make this event the huge success that it always is. Thanks to the PTSO Co-Chairs Chris Hanlon and Judy Bourdon, the Auction Co-Chairs Cura Pfefferkorn, Alyssa Robinson, and Tracey Smith, who did an absolutely amazing job! Thank you, thank you, too, to the many, many people who worked behind the scenes making this work. Bravo to everyone!

Placement conversation will soon be taking place and I thought I'd repeat what was said last year. As always, our goal is to make the best possible placements for our students. We believe that the best way to do this is to create heterogeneous and balanced classes. Creating these groupings for each grade level is a complex process. Our entire professional staff spends a

great deal of time carefully weighing each student's academic, social, and emotional needs as well as more individual issues such as those regarding particular peer relationships, neighborhood situations, or sibling experiences. The sending and receiving teachers and the special education specialists meet as a team to create three balanced classes. The last part of the process is to assign a teacher to each of the classes that has been created. That is something that I do, late in the summer, after the spate of new families moving in and some current families moving out has ended. It is a numbers game, too, as we seek relative balance in this arena. Each teacher brings a unique style to the classroom, thus ensuring a variety of teaching strategies within the framework of the curriculum and the philosophy of the school. But in recent years a number of parents have chosen to write letters requesting their child be placed or not placed in a specific teacher's room or with or not with particular children. We cannot honor these requests. Families should be also be aware that your letters are always shown to the teachers at both the sending and receiving grade levels. In today's world, it is important that our students learn to relate to many different people. We hope that you will support your child as they discover how to work, and work well, with a broad range of students and teaching styles. We believe that this is an important part of your child's education. If you do choose to write me a letter, please do so by Thursday, April 17, right before the break week.

Please remember, the next time this Bulletin comes out, there will flowers blooming, and the air will be warm and filled with the sound of the peepers! Spring always does arrive, even if it feels unlikely right now...

Mark Your Calendar

APRIL

- 8, Saturday**
Lip Sync Extravaganza, 4 PM
- 10, Monday**
ELA MCAS, Grade 4
- 12, Wednesday**
ELA MCAS, Grade 4
- 14, Friday**
NO SCHOOL, Good Friday
- 17-21**
NO SCHOOL, Spring Recess
- 25, Tuesday**
PTSO Meeting, 7 PM
- 28, Friday**
Mileage Club Starts,
8:30-9:05 AM
Box Tops Due

MAY

- 4, Thursday**
Early Dismissal, 1 PM
- 5, Friday**
Drop-off Goods for
McT Tag Sale, 5-8 PM
- 6, Saturday**
McT Tag Sale, 8 AM-Noon
- 9, Tuesday**
Math MCAS, Grade 4
- 10, Wednesday**
Math MCAS, Grade 4
- 16, Tuesday**
Math MCAS, Grades 3, 5, 6
- 17, Wednesday**
Math MCAS, Grades 3, 5, 6
- 18, Thursday**
Early Dismissal, 1 PM
- 22, Monday**
Science, Tech. & Engineering
MCAS, Grade 5
- 22, Tuesday**
Science, Tech. & Engineering
MCAS, Grade 5
- 29, Monday**
NO SCHOOL, Memorial Day



from Chris Hanlon and Judy Bourdon, PTSO co-chairs

April is a short month, and space is tight, so I will keep the PTSO update brief this month. I want to share a few thanks on behalf of the students, staff, and parents of our school... one looking back, and two looking forward:

Backward Thanks Our Studio 54 Auction was an enjoyable and profitable night, and to scan through the program and see all the names of parents who took on an auction role was really impressive. That evening happens only through willing and talented chairs guiding a large volunteer force of parents, many of whom worked for months in preparation. Much of the financial support we can give our school happened that night. Thanks to the faculty who attended and/or donated their time as some of the most sought-after auction items. And thanks too to our students who helped, donated items, sold raffle tickets, etc.

Forward Thanks In just a week, we will have one of our other major PTSO-sponsored events, the Lip Sync. As in the past nine years, students and staff will have a great time performing to a packed cafeteria crowd. This event also functions a great PTSO fundraiser. Thanks for Deb Verner, Lisa Thermidor, and the other parent volunteers that help make this event possible.

And finally a big thanks (in advance!) to Jen Pratt and Kari James. **They will present at the next PTSO meeting (Tuesday, April 25th at 7 PM)** to help parents to understand Art Integration, which is a predominant theme at McT. They will teach by doing, so come ready to take part in a project as you learn about the process in using art to support the school's curricular goals.

If you have any thoughts or questions about McT PTSO happenings, please contact either Chris Hanlon (hanlonchristopher@hotmail.com) or Judy Bourdon (judyandroland@gmail.com).

Spring 2017 MCAS Dates

Students in grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 will be taking MCAS tests this spring. Please avoid scheduling trips and appointments during the MCAS testing periods. Testing begins at the beginning of the school day, so students should avoid late arrival to school. If they arrive after their class begins the test, they will not be able to take the test that day. The schedule is as follows:

English Language Arts Comprehension

Grade 4: April 10, and 12 (Computer-based testing)

Math

Grades 3, 5, 6: May 16 and 17

Grade 4: May 9 and 10 (Computer-based testing)

Science, Technology & Engineering

Grade 5 Only: May 22nd and 23rd

McCarthy-Towne is on Facebook!

Our McT Facebook page is open to all adult members of our community. We have created it as a "closed" group so that people from outside our community will not be able to see or post to the page. Feel free to post pictures of artwork and grown-ups, but we are asking that you refrain from posting pictures of children. You can search "McCarthy-Towne School" or visit www.facebook.com/groups/1404961776417219 to join.

Save the Date for McT Family Field Day!

Join us on Thursday, June 1st from 5:30-7:30 PM for the annual McCarthy-Towne Family Field Day. Be a part of the McT community of adults, kids and staff members as we play traditional and silly field games. There will be pizza and Kimball's ice cream for sale at the event.

Contact Liz Walker (lizsarawalker@gmail.com) or Maya Minkin (mayaminkin@gmail.com) with any questions.

NOTE: We are looking for new coordinators to run the field day next year. Please email Liz or Maya if you are interested.



2017-2018 School Year Schedule

The first day of elementary school for the 2017-2018 school year will be Tuesday, September 5th. For those making child care plans and/or any plans for next year, here are the elementary school schedules:

Merriam, McT, and Conant (early schedule)

8:20 AM - 2:50 PM

Thursdays 8:20 AM - 12:20 PM

Blanchard, Douglas, and Gates (late schedule)

9 AM - 3:30 PM

Thursdays 9 - 1 PM

The McT Tag Sale is Right Around the Corner!

The McT Tag Sale is scheduled for Saturday, May 6 from 8AM–Noon! We need your donations of gently used household goods, clothing, books, toys, bikes, furniture, baby equipment (no cribs), gardening tools, sporting equipment, and more!

Please drop off items in GOOD and WORKING CONDITION on Friday, May 5th from 5–8 PM. Remember, if you wouldn't buy it at a yard sale please don't make US throw it away.

Want to Help? Volunteers are what make our sale successful. We need help setting up on Friday evening, working the sale on Saturday morning, and cleaning up after the sale on Saturday afternoon. Even if you can only spare an hour, we can use your help. Please contact Becky Barnett (becky@highrock.org) if you have any questions or would like to volunteer.



Shop the Sale! Need a new bike for spring? Looking for some good books? How about some new games for the kids? Come shop the McT Tag Sale on Saturday, May 6th from 8 AM –Noon.

If you have any questions about the sale, or would like to volunteer, contact Becky Barnett (becky@highrock.org). Thank you for your support!

Box Tops Due April 28!

Our winter box top collection earned over \$350 for our school and students. Congrats to Jen Pratt's 2nd grade class for collecting the most Box Tops this winter! Remember, the classroom that brings in the most Box Tops for the 2016–17 school year wins a pizza or snack party. We are nearing the end of our classroom contest **with our final collection date of Friday, April 28th.**

Please clip and send Box Tops in a Ziploc bag or envelope labeled with your child's name, teacher name, and grade. Send them to school with your child or drop off in the large collection box inside the main office. Try to get creative with how you collect Box Tops. You never know who might be looking to unload their collection. Ask family members, coworkers, or neighbors if they would like to help McT raise money through Box Tops for Education. Those who aren't directly associated with the school can drop their collections in the yellow box labeled "McCarthy-Towne Box Tops" at Roche Bros. Remember: Box Tops expire so don't hoard them for too long. Visit www.btfe.com for a complete list of participating products.

If you have any questions about the Box Top program, please contact Julie Weir (julieannweir@yahoo.com).

The 10th Anniversary McT Lip Sync Extravaganza

When: Saturday, April 8th from 4–6 PM

Where: McCarthy-Towne Cafeteria

Cost: \$5 per person.

Join us for one of the most highly anticipated McT community events! Almost 90 students are performing the hottest songs from yesterday and today. All grades are well-represented! Don't miss the Final Act of the Extravaganza: Mystery McT Staff—can you guess who is performing this year?

This is not a drop-off event. All students must be chaperoned.

McT Mileage Club—Beginning April 28th

There is still a bit of snow on the ground, but it is never too early to make plans for the McT Mileage Club. **We will begin our laps the Friday after break, April 28th.** Never heard of the McT Mileage Club... read on!

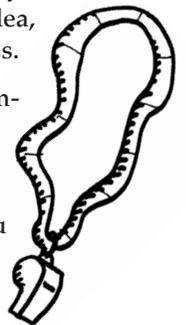
The McT Mileage Club is a morning exercise program for McT students along with any parents and staff who wish to join in the fun. The group is heading into its tenth session (Fall and Spring for five years now!) and is led by Chris Hanlon, McT parent, along with a dedicated group of parent volunteers. Using a measured course in the back playground, McT Milers will log laps by running, jogging, walking, skipping, strolling (or some combination of those). They will also use a chart to track their mileage and will receive an honorary foot token at certain accumulated distances. McT Mileage Club is a free program that operates on a drop-in basis. Come as often as you can, but there does not have to be an "every week" commitment. Here are the other details:

When: Friday mornings, 8:30–9:05 AM, beginning April 28th until the end of the school year.

Where: Back playground, Parker Damon Building

What to bring: Shoes comfortable for activity and a great attitude. A bottle of water is a good idea, and maybe a small snack for the walk to class.

How do I get involved: Parents need to complete a form for each child participating in McT Mileage Club. Forms are available in the office and at Mileage Club meetings. We rely on help from parent volunteers, so if you are available, you can volunteer as often as you like (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, only when the weather is nice!)



Who to contact with questions or to volunteer: Chris Hanlon (hanlonchristopher@hotmail.com). Send an email and your name will be added to our contact list.

Donate a Book for School Library Month!

Help celebrate *School Library Month* in April by donating a book to the McCarthy-Towne library. It's easy to give a new book that will provide years of enjoyment. In recognition of your donation, you'll get a beautiful bookplate in your donated book(s). We will email you for details about the donation inscription.

Our library's "wish list" is available on Amazon. Here's how to donate:

- Go to Amazon.com, click on "Wish Lists", and enter "McCarthy Towne" in the search field.
- A link to the list is also available on the PTSO Book Gifting website (<http://mctptso.org/social-community/#>).
- From Amazon, browse the wish list, make your selection, and purchase the book. Select "This will be a Gift" and enter your name in the "Gift Note" box. Books will be shipped directly to the school library.
- If you prefer, books from our list can be purchased at a local bookseller. If you purchase from a retailer other than Amazon, please go to the Amazon wish list, click on "Buying this book elsewhere" and enter the required information so the book title will be moved to our purchased list. You or your child can deliver books to the library.
- After purchasing the book, you will be contacted for the wording on your donation bookplate.
- If you cannot decide on a book title, you are welcome to send a check (payable to McCarthy-Towne PTSO) and let Donna decide on a book donation for you. You will be notified of the book selection.

Questions? Contact Jen Lewy (jen@zenmarketing.net). Thank you for your support of our school library!

Grade K–5: Not at McT Next Year?

from the office

Are you moving out of Acton this summer or is your child going to a different school next year? Please complete a "Release of Records" form as soon as possible. The school office is open for limited hours during the summer, so call ahead to make sure someone will be available, 978-264-3377. Since the Health Office is closed, health records will not be available during the summer.

Update Contact Information

Attention all parents/guardians... Have you changed jobs? Phone numbers? Moved? Switched your pediatrician? Have a new emergency contact? Please update Powerschool at any time during the school year!

Visit <https://absis.ab.mec.edu/public> and login to update your information. Thank you!

Breakfast is Available!

Breakfast is now available to McT and Merriam students from 8:50–9:20 AM. Options include blueberry muffin, whole wheat bagel with cream cheese, or Multigrain Cheerios. Fruit or milk is included with breakfast. The cost for breakfast is \$1.75*.

*If you are eligible for free lunch you are also eligible for free breakfast. If you are eligible for a reduced lunch you are eligible for reduced breakfast at \$.30.

Tick Facts

What are ticks?

Ticks are bugs that feed on the blood of mammals, birds, and reptiles. **Deer ticks** and **dog ticks** are found throughout Massachusetts and may spread different disease-causing germs when they bite. Ticks are generally found in grassy, brushy, or wooded areas. Ticks do not fly or jump. They attach to animals or people that come into direct contact with them.

How can I protect my family from tick bites?

- The single most important thing you can do is check yourself for ticks once a day. Favorite places ticks like to go on the body include areas between the toes, back of the knees, groin, armpits, neck, along the hairline, and behind the ears. Remember to check your children and pets, too. Remove any attached tick as soon as possible.
- Use repellents that contain DEET on exposed skin and those that contain permethrin on clothing. Be sure to read product labels to ensure safe and proper usage.
- Stick to main pathways and the center of trails when hiking.
- Wear long-sleeved, light colored shirts and long pants tucked into socks. This will keep ticks away from your skin and make it easier to spot a tick on your clothing.

What should I do if I find a tick on myself or my child?

The tick should be carefully removed as soon as possible. The longer an infected tick remains attached to a person or animal, the higher the likelihood of disease transmission. Use fine point tweezers to grip the mouthparts of the tick as close to the skin as possible. The tick should not be squeezed or twisted, but pulled straight outward with steady, gentle pressure. You should not apply kerosene, petroleum jelly, nail polish, or a hot match tip to remove the tick; these measures are not effective and may result in injury. Notify your health care provider if you have been bitten by a deer tick, or if you develop a rash or other flu-like symptoms following a tick bite.

Further information:

www.mass.gov/dph and www.cdc.gov