



McCarthy-Towne Bulletin

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December Changes

by David Krane, McT Principal

The words of the song tell us that all the leaves are brown and the sky is gray... this is what it looks like outside my window today as we look forward to only the second full, five-day week since the middle of October. Now that it is December, we can really prepare ourselves for the real winter. The western Massachusetts hill towns have already had significant snowfall and that means that we are not really far behind...

We are also just about one third of our way through the school year and we are noticing and tracking how the children are changing, too. Conferences are, for the most part, recently completed. Families and teachers have been able to sit down and speak to the learning that is happening in the McCarthy-Towne classrooms. One of the extraordinary parts of this school is the level of respect that develops between student and teacher. For kids to really grow as learners and citizens, the teachers must have a solid understanding of the child as both a person and a learner. Knowing and understanding where a student is as a learner is the critical on-going process towards guiding that child in sustained growth. Mutual respect between teacher and student deepens that understanding and nurtures the growth.

Teachers are also constantly growing as learners and this is all positive change. McCarthy-Towne is one school of five, soon to be six, in our District and we are each

unique in many ways. While we believe in continuous improvement as educators, and that student learning is always first, it is important that we remember and maintain what is most important to us as a school community.

The strength of belief is sometimes not enough to sustain us, and that there needs to be support from other quarters. Soon our district will be six elementary schools; six schools, with six different ideas and philosophies about teaching and learning. I am confident that we will manage to stay strong together and support each other to maintain what is important to each school. That is what school choice represents and it is of critical importance to us all that it be maintained. Families and school faculties and staff together create and sustain community, and it cannot be accomplished with only one of those groups.

Thanksgiving has also been traditionally a time to reflect. As I think back over the first third of our year, I am so impressed with the remarkable way that this amazing faculty has adjusted to so many staff changes as well as to some scheduling and process changes. We are fortunate to have the forward-thinking and flexible faculty that we have. I also think of the generous and giving parent community and how much they, too, support our vision. It is an authentic partnership and for all this we can indeed be thankful.

Mark Your Calendar

DECEMBER

- 12, Thursday**
PTSO Meeting, 9 AM
- 13, Friday**
December Scrip Orders Due
- 18, Wednesday**
Pajama Day
- 23-January 1**
NO SCHOOL, Winter Recess

JANUARY

- 2, Thursday**
School Reopens
- 8, Wednesday**
PTSO Meeting, 7 PM
- 20, Monday**
NO SCHOOL,
Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 30, Thursday**
McT Winter Band Concert

Dressing for Winter

The cold weather has arrived! Our students will continue to go outside for recess unless it is extremely cold or raining. Recess is a very important part of their day and gives them a chance to exercise, socialize and get some fresh air.

Please make sure your children are dressed appropriately for outdoor activity. Coats, hats, mittens, and boots are a must when the weather is cold, and snow pants when there is snow on the ground. If your children wear snow boots to school, please make sure they have either a spare pair of shoes at school or that they pack a pair of shoes to wear inside. Dressing appropriately for the winter months will keep them not only warm and comfortable, but healthy as well. **And don't forget** to take a minute to label your child's outdoor clothing and boots with their first and last name.





from Tracey Smith and Shelley Cole, PTSO Co-chairs

As we head into the busy month of December, we hope you'll be able to carve out an hour to join us at our meeting on **Thursday, December 12 at 9 AM**. With regionalization on the horizon we have invited J.D. Head, the ABRSD Director of Facilities & Transportation, to speak and give us an overview on the proposed and approved changes, as well as things that are staying the same.

We hope that many of you were able to make it to our Fall Social last month. As always, Kat Hudson and Chris Hanlon organized an incredibly fun night for our community. With the help of more than forty volunteers, they made sure there was something fun for everyone. Thank you Chris, Kat and all of our many volunteers! And speaking of the Fall Social, this was the last year for Chris and Kat chairing the Fall Social. We are looking for one or two interested parents to take over the responsibilities for next year. Having also chaired this event, Tracey can tell you that it's a lot of fun and something that you can really put your mark on. If we've managed to entice you, please contact Tracey (tracey@gristmillmedia.com).

Our Book Fair was a great success thanks to Susan Lerner and Mimi Kirkman and all of their volunteers. We know that our teachers and librarian are grateful for the many books that were gifted to classrooms.

We would also like to thank Sarah McBride and all of her Hospitality volunteers for providing an amazing array of food for both the Fall Social and for the faculty luncheon during the November 5th Professional Day.

Thank you to Christine Kobelski for managing our Fall Fundraiser and to all of the parents who purchased gift wrap and other items.

And finally, many thanks to Wendy Schaad and Mimi Kirkman who volunteered to manage our November Scrip Challenge. Families rose to the challenge and because of your purchases, our children earned a PJ day which is scheduled for Wednesday, December 18th. It should make for a fun day just before the Winter vacation.

News from the Sloyd Studio: McCarthy-Towne is now Dinosaur-Towne!

Well, not really, but when you see the parade of 2nd grade dinosaur paintings downstairs and by the office, you'll know what we mean.

Also, be sure to check out the Kindergarten wire sculptures in the downstairs glass display cases, the 1st grade paper neighborhoods in the glass display case outside of the office, and the 5th and 6th grade perspective drawings on the downstairs bulletin boards.

Decluttering for the Holidays?

Please save your old toys, bikes, clothes, sporting equipment, books, furniture and household items for the annual McCarthy-Towne Yard Sale. We have had amazing success in the past and would like to continue in 2014. We will be collecting donations in early May so start a donation pile in your attic or basement.

We need your help! If you have any questions about the sale or are interested in volunteering to help with organizing, pricing, or selling, please contact Julie Weir (julieannweir@yahoo.com).

Scrip Store Card Program



Thanks to everyone who ordered Scrip cards in November, we met our challenge and the McT community will enjoy a Pajama Day on Wednesday, December 18! Thank you for supporting our school—hopefully you have started using your cards to shop, and realize how easy this program is to use, while, at the same time, earning money for McT.

Now that Thanksgiving is over, it only means one thing—it's time to think about holiday gifts! As you begin holiday shopping for your children, nieces/nephews, siblings and neighbors, consider giving a Scrip store card. Don't forget about using Scrip cards for everyday purchases, too. Scrip gift cards also make great gifts for teachers, bus drivers, babysitters, co-workers and those hard-to-buy-for relatives. The gift cards are available in many denominations: \$5, \$10 and \$25 and higher. Please note that teachers' wish lists were just sent home.

The December orders are due on Friday, December 13 by 2:45 PM. **PLEASE NOTE:** We can't accept late orders this month. Understand this date is firm so we will be able to receive the Scrip cards in plenty of time for the holidays. Card will go home (or ready to be picked up) on Wednesday, December 18.

Thank You!

Thank you to all the members of our community who volunteer in so many ways, including (but not limited):

- All the families who contributed to the Student Council *Cradles to Crayons* Winter Clothing Drive;
- Petra Charisse, Fiona Starr, Lisa Petrocchi, Karen Benn, Bridget Chamberas, Jen Nelson, Pam Hippensteele, Shannon Callison, Christine Kobelski, Mariah Straayer, and Kate Hoitt for helping in the office with dismissals and other projects;
- Jody Long, Denise Scott, Kim Beers, Pam Hippensteele and Jen Mabardy for keeping up with all the laminating requests;
- Christine Kobelski, Karen Francisco, and Brenda Viola for assisting Sharon Ryan and our reading program;
- Susie White, Mariya Yevsyukova, Bridget Matz, Karen Benn, Bridget Chamberas, Jen Nelson, Julia Hanna, Shannon Callison, Janet Munson, Kim Hurwitz, Brenda Simpson, Rena Barbieri, Kate Hoitt, Kristi Pucillo, Lena Grant, Liz Dorsey and Alex Mojica for helping with Safe Arrival.

Scholastic Book Fair Thank You!

from Book Fair Co-Chairs Mimi Kirkman and Susan Lerner

This year's Scholastic Book Fair was a tremendous success! Thanks to the generosity of the school community, we generated a nice profit for the McT PTSO, donated many books to the school and classroom libraries, and were able to provide books to children within our school who were otherwise unable to buy books. Thanks to all who shopped and supported the cause!

In addition, we would like to thank the many volunteers who donated their time to make this event so successful; Kenwin Huang, Julie Weir, Denise Scott, Jennifer Lewy, Sharon Metzger, Kim Beers, Rena Barbieri, Tina Connors, Bridget Matz, Jen Nelson, Maura Callahan, Tracey Smith, Latha Murty, Dana Graham, Dani Feng, Abby Gao, Alex Mojica, Karen Benn, Amy Stimac, Grace Watman, Lizzie Kirkman, Emily Richardt and Meredith Kirkman. And, a special thanks to Brenda Simpson, Lauren Richardt, Lena Saetra-Grant, Shannon Callison, Astrid Trostorff and Tracey Smith... we couldn't have done it without you!

Turn Your Holiday Cooking into Art Supplies for McT!



With the upcoming holiday season, most of us will be spending a lot of time and money at the supermarket, buying ingredients for delicious meals. With the *Register Tapes for Education* Program at Donelan's, those groceries can now also help our school! For every dollar spent, McCarthy-Towne will earn points redeemable for free educational equipment, like art supplies and books.

So save your receipts every time you shop at Donelan's! **Receipts dated September 1, 2013–March 31, 2014 are eligible.** Simply send in your receipts in with your child or drop them in the collection box in the office. **Bring the form below into school with your receipts by January 15, 2014.** Enter as many times as you like as long as your entry is submitted with a Donelan's receipt and the entry form is not photocopied. If you want to make copies, copy the entry form first, then hand write your information on each form. They will NOT accept photocopied entry forms that have been filled out. Please leave the "school code" section of the entry form blank. For complete contest rules, visit www.registertapesforeducation.com/shoppercontest.



Register Tapes Entry Form

Please enter me for a chance to win a \$500 grocery gift certificate plus an iPod Shuffle®.

Name _____ School Code

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (____) _____ - _____

Please return to your school by January 15, 2014.

That's a Wrap—McT Fall Social

by Kat Hudson & Chris Hanlon

The Fall Social was a great success! The kids enjoyed games in the gym, getting their faces painted, making rainbow loom creations and getting down to Sue Donahue's dance moves in the cafeteria. The featured prize of the night was a McT engraved mini-flashlight.

The Fall Social is not possible without the many helping hands of the McT community. We would like to thank all the volunteers who made the night such a success: Jen Nelson, Ray Joyce, Bridget Chamberas, Jennifer Beale, Sarah McBride, Heidi Dalaklis, Eve Aronoff, Sue Donahue, Michele Caterina, Jen Mabardy, Josh Spero, Carolyn Dee, Genevieve Poupert, Deb Walz, Lara Maira, Michelle Dawson, Rob Bukowski, Margaret Busse, Franz Busse, Patty Lee, William Garnett, Kelly Simon, Greg Lewis, Julie Maranian, John Aiello, Deb Aiello, Kim Beers, Don Busiek, Marianne Sullivan, Kate Murray, Eric Hudson, Rob Landry, Natasha Venti, Ann Iandiorio, Michele Abroff, Cura Pfefferkorn and Erika Hanley-Onken. We also are very grateful to the high school students who helped as well as the parents that provided baked goods and items for the food table. A special thanks to Tracey Smith in the McT office who helped facilitate many aspects of the night.

We really enjoyed coordinating the Fall Social and creating a fun night for the McT community. This was our 3rd year coordinating this event and sadly, our last. We hope another pair of parents will step forward to commit to planning this event on for the coming years. It's not much work but the reward is great. Please email Tracey Smith (tracey@gristmillmedia.com) if you are interested in planning this event next year.

Hospitality Thank You!

A big thank you to Lara Maira, Sorrel Sammons, Jo Napolitano, Maija Barnett, Lena Grant, Kerry Flatley, Natahsa Venti, Bridget Chamberas, Margaret Busse, Debbie Walz, Karen Silva, Kenwin Huang, Liz Dorsey, Jen Pratt, Janet Munson, Kim Beers, and Holly Lem for all of their help supplying snacks for the Fall Social.

Thanks also to Natasha Venti, Maija Barnett, Ann Iandiorio, Liz Dorsey, Sorrel Sammons, Kerry Flatley, Janet Munson, Dada Graham, Zenwin Huang, Janie Doherty, Margaret Busse, Carol Chytil, Rebecca MacNeill, Cura Pfefferkorn, Debbie Walz, Bridget Chamberas, Karen Silva, Holly, Lem, Sharon Metzger and Tracey Smith for their help providing everything that was needed to make Professional Day a success!

UNICEF Update

Thank you to all the families from McCarthy-Towne who participated in the Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF campaign. **Our school's donation to UNICEF was over \$300!**

Reminders from the Health Office for a Healthy Winter

The CDC recommends reminding children to:

- 1. COVER THEIR NOSE AND MOUTH** with a tissue when they cough or sneeze, and have them throw the tissue away after they use it.
- 2. WASH THEIR HANDS OFTEN WITH SOAP AND WATER**, especially after they cough or sneeze, use the bathroom, and before handling food. If water is not near, use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- 3. NOT TOUCH THEIR EYES, NOSE, OR MOUTH.** Germs often spread this way.

Your child should stay home from school if he or she has a fever, vomits or has diarrhea within the past 12 hours, appears lethargic, or has a persistent cough. If your child is sick and goes to school, you place others at risk for getting sick as well.

Before returning to school after an illness, your child should be fever-free for 24 hours and have enough stamina to manage a full day of school activities including P.E. and recess. If your child is taking an antibiotic, he or she should remain at home for the first 24 hours. Please notify the health office if your child tests positive for strep infection.

All medications should be brought to the health office by a parent. Do not send in medication in your child's backpack.

Check your child for lice once a week, and contact the health office if you find lice or nits. The most effective control is careful, repeated inspection of the child's hair and scalp by parents.

Students need to get plenty of sleep and physical activity, drink water, and eat good food to help them stay healthy in the winter and all year.

Please make sure that your children are dressed appropriately for outdoor activity; our students will continue to go outside for recess unless it is extremely cold or raining. Coats, hats, mittens, and boots are a must when the weather is cold, and don't forget snow pants when there is snow on the ground. Dressing appropriately for the winter temperatures will keep children not only warm and comfortable, but healthy as well.