



McCarthy-Towne Bulletin

December 4, 2015
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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. I was on the Cape for our family Thanksgiving and it was in the low sixties for much of Thanksgiving Day. After last winter, however, I will not be tricked into thinking that those temperatures are any kind of predictor for the coming winter.

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. We all need to be continually reflective about what we are doing in our practice, how we are interacting with colleagues, and to be mindful of the importance of history and

tradition. While schools cannot be absolutely bound by what has preceded us in time, we can be respectful and aware that what was important in another time can be equally important today. Art Integration is a fundamental part of the identity of McCarthy-Towne and we, as a school, need to think about the history. We are a school with a significantly different and younger staff, and so it's a good time to take a closer look at what we are doing with Art Integration. On the December 3rd Professional Learning time in the afternoon of the early release day, the staff will be treated to a history lesson with hands-on learning around this essential topic. This will be the beginning of a close look at the past and how the connection should be strengthened, always, of course, in the service of our students. It will be an affirmation of what is important to us as a school community but also an acknowledgement of how to support diverse learning styles through art and through process.

As I mentioned earlier, we have made some significant changes in our staff over the past few years. That kind of change happens to all schools as people retire. The trick is to make those transitions successful for both new teachers and all of our students. The way that this community has come together to support our fabulous new teachers as well as those with just a few years of experience has been remarkable. This is an invested learning community, one that cares about kids and about each other. That is important and necessary, and it is an illustration of what makes our school a community.

Mark Your Calendar

DECEMBER

11, Friday
Food Drive for Acton Food Pantry Ends

14, Monday
PTSO Meeting, 9:30 AM

17, Thursday
Early Dismissal (12:20 PM)
Winter Choral Concert,
6-8 PM

24-31
NO SCHOOL, Winter Recess

JANUARY

4, Monday
School Reopens

7, Thursday
Early Dismissal (12:20 PM)

18, Monday
NO SCHOOL,
Martin Luther King Jr. Day

21, Thursday
Early Dismissal (12:20 PM)

STOP!

**Please read through the important safety reminders
flyer attached to the back of this Bulletin**

In our continuing safety effort, we have attached information regarding parking lot restrictions during arrival and dismissal times, as well as during school hours. Please read the attachment carefully. Thank you.



from Julie Weir and Julie Hobbs, PTSO co-chairs

Happy Holiday season to all! The weather is getting colder by the day and before you know it winter vacation will be here. December is upon us!

Last month we held our first parent forum of the year and it proved to be a big hit. David, Matt and several teachers provided discussion on the Responsive Classroom model in practice at McT. The program is benefiting teachers and students alike and if you would like to learn more visit the tab "Responsive Classroom" on McT's school website. Another forum is scheduled for late January.

It's not too late to donate to the McT Annual Appeal. Anything you can give makes a difference and goes a long way to making your students school experience special! Make sure to send in your donation before winter break so you can claim it on your 2015 taxes next April. Visit www.mctptso.org to donate online or send a check (made out to McT PTSO) into the office with your child. Please include your name and address so a tax receipt can be sent for your tax records. Thank you to those who already donated, we appreciate your quick response.

Scrip Gift Card order forms are due back on Friday, December 4th. These cards are great for holiday gifts, or to do your own shopping with, and the school gets a percentage back on each card purchased, at no extra cost to you! Don't you love a win win? So get your form in, and we'll get the gift cards to you in plenty of time for your holiday shopping.

Another way to help our school out without spending any extra is to shop Amazon through our affiliate link on the PTSO web page—www.mctptso.org. To find the link, scroll down on the right side of the home page. To make it easier you can bookmark your click through. McCarthy-Towne gets a percentage of what you buy!

Our next PTSO meeting is scheduled for Monday December 14th at 9:30 AM in the faculty lounge. Everyone is welcome!

Health Office Reminder

Please remember to notify the health office if your child has an illness or injury that will impact them during the school day: surgery, concussion, potential communicable illness, fractures etc. All information will remain confidential and is important to keep your child healthy and safe during the school day. For any injury or illness requiring an activity restriction for your child (PE, recess) please obtain a note from your health care provider.

Scholastic Book Fair Success!

The McT Book Fair was a BIG success again this year thanks to the many volunteers who made it happen and the countless McT families, teachers and students who purchased books. **Our total profit was \$2,500 for McCarthy-Towne!** Once again, our McT families made the teacher Wish List program a great success and teachers are already enjoying new books in their classroom libraries. Many thanks to all the teachers for bringing their classes to the Book Fair and to all of the parents who stopped by to shop. Thank you, also, to all the fantastic volunteers who ran registers, stocked shelves, reordered favorite books and helped to set-up and clean up. We look forward to holding this sale again next year!

News and Notes

Please check out the "News and Notes" column on the home page of the McCarthy-Towne School website—www.mct.abschools.org. We regularly update this section with important information for McT families.

New McT Office Email

When emailing the school office, please use the following (new) email address—mctoffice@abschools.org. If you are emailing a bus pass or dismissal change, you will receive a return email saying "Got it" from Astrid, Carol or Tracey.

Spring 2016 MCAS Dates

Grades 3–6 MCAS ELA testing is scheduled for March 28–April 12. Tests will likely be administered during the first two weeks, 3/28–4/1 and 4/8.

Grades 3–6 MCAS Math testing is scheduled for May 9–24 and Grade 5 STEM tests for May 10–25.

Please avoid scheduling vacations, doctor appointments, etc. during those weeks. We hope to have specific dates developed by January.

Lip Sync Extravaganza Save the Date: March 19, 2016

The Annual Lip Sync Extravaganza is scheduled for **Saturday, March 19 from 4–6 PM**. Due to the overwhelming popularity in recent years, a few changes are in store for the 2016 show:

- The mandatory rehearsal is scheduled for Thursday, March 17th at 12:15 PM.
- Songs will be limited to 2 minutes.
- Each student is limited to ONE act.
- Show has a limit of 45 acts.
- Songs may be performed once, accepted on a first-come first-served basis.

The Lip Sync is open to all McT students. Participants choose a song, determine to perform individually or with a group, create choreography, and perform their act on stage at McT. Now is the time to start thinking about songs and whether to perform individually or in a group. Be creative with song choices and choreography! Introduce your kids to different musical genres—they might enjoy music from the 60s, 70s, and 80s, or genres such as Country, Broadway musicals or international hits. PLEASE check the lyrics before students start practicing to make sure they are family-friendly and elementary school appropriate. Sometimes we think songs are okay, but when we read the lyrics, we realize they are not suitable for young children. Over the past few years, we have said no to a few songs and asked the participants to choose a new song. Lyrics can be found for free at www.metrolyrics.com.

The Lip Sync Sign-up Form and Rules and Requirements will be sent in backpacks in late January. The form, written lyrics and music will be due in mid-February. Hope to see you at the show!

Turn Your Holiday Cooking into Art Supplies for McT!



The holiday season is in full swing and many of us will be spending lots of time and money at the supermarket, buying ingredients for delicious treats to share with friends and family. 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 supplies.

Every time you shop at Donelan's, save your receipts! Simply send in receipts with your child or drop them in the collection box in the office. Receipts dated **September 1, 2015 through March 31, 2016 are eligible**. Questions can be directed to Sarah Burianek (sarahburianek@msn.com).

McT Tag Sale "Save the Date"

Are you cleaning for the Holidays? Save your toys, bikes, clothes, sporting equipment, books, furniture and household items for the annual McCarthy-Towne Tag sale. Last year, because of your amazing donations and efforts, we raised almost \$2,500 and thousands of items found new homes!

Donations for this year's Tag Sale will be collected and sorted on Friday, April 29th for the sale on Saturday April 30th. We need your help to make the Tag Sale a success! We are still looking for a couple of people to run the tag sale. All posters, articles and documents are ready to be passed on and volunteers for the sale itself are in abundance. If you would like to help out in any capacity or want to learn more about the co-chair positions contact Julie Weir (julieannweir@yahoo.com).

Updated Dismissal Procedure

Dismissal is a very busy time at school. To alleviate some of the last-minute chaos, we are introducing new pick-up/d dismissal procedures.

For full days (2:50 PM dismissal) the timing is as follows:

- If you plan to pick up your child at the very end of the school day, please send in a Dismissal Form and discuss with your child whether you will pick them up in the car line or meet them in the lobby. (Reminder that Kindergartners must always be signed out in the office for dismissal.)
- If you plan to pick up your child close to dismissal time, we ask that you send in a Dismissal Form with a pick up time no later than 2:30 PM. Parents/guardians who arrive after this time will need to wait until walkers are dismissed (2:45) to meet their child.

For Early Release days (12:20 PM dismissal) the timing is as follows:

- If you plan to pick up your child at the very end of the school day, send in a Dismissal Form and discuss with your child whether you will pick them up in the car line or meet them in the lobby. (Reminder that Kindergartners must always be signed out in the office for dismissal.)
- For a pick up close to dismissal time, we ask that you send in a Dismissal Form with a pick up time no later than 12:00 (noon). Parents/guardians who arrive after this time will need to wait until walkers are dismissed (12:15 PM) to meet their child.

McCarthy-Towne Auction 2016!

The McCarthy-Towne "Roaring 20's" Auction is scheduled for April 9th and we still need your help! There are jobs big and small and we welcome anyone and everyone who wants to get involved.



Business Donations! Parent Donations! Student Donations! Art Projects! Day of prep! We need you! After the holiday break there will be lots of exciting auction news coming out in the McCarthy-Towne Bulletin and Howler and if you haven't already signed up for the Howler, it's not too late! Simply visit www.mctptso.org and click on the "Sign up for the Howler" link.

Congratulations to last month's winner of the trivia question: Kerry Lewis who won by a mere 12 minutes! Answer: On January 29, 1920, the 18th Amendment officially took effect marking the start of prohibition. Amendment 21 marked the end on December 5, 1933.

This month's trivia question: The lingo of the roaring 20s is full of colorful commentary on the times. I bet you already know what a dame or a big cheese are. In the 1920's what did it mean to be spifflicated? The first person to email Julie Weir (julieannweir@yahoo.com) with the correct answer wins an auction drink ticket. Good Luck!

Donation Excitement has Begun! Donations are already rolling in! The majority of donations will be sold at the auction on April 9th so don't forget to book your babysitter now! Stay tuned for early item postings via the Howler and Friday folders.

We still need a Junior Chair! Your job is to shadow the current Chairs and learn the ropes of the auction. This year of following prepares you better for taking over as Chair next year.

If you are interested in helping out with the McCarthy-Towne Auction in ANY way, please contact either of the Auction Co-Chairs—Christine Russell (qofhearts@gmail.com) or Samantha Valente-Phillips (luvbgnamom@gmail.com).

Student Council Food Drive

Student council is running a food drive to benefit the Acton Food Pantry now through December 11. There is a box in the main lobby of the school for dropping off donations.

Current needs include soup, cereal, spaghetti sauce, rice pilaf, canned fruit, canned meats and fish, peanut butter, and jelly. Baby wipes and diapers are also needed.

Safe Arrival

If you are traveling over the holidays, please remember to contact the Safe Arrival hotline at 978-264-4098 with your travel dates so that we don't worry about your child(ren). Even if you have emailed your child's teacher, you still need to contact Safe Arrival. This hotline is on 24 hours a day so you can leave a message at any time. You can even call far in advance of your vacation if you know the dates that your children will be absent. Thank you for your continued cooperation.

Many Thanks To...

...all the families who contributed to the clothing drive. The coats, gloves, hats, etc. you donated will help keep many families in our community warm this winter.

...all the families who contributed to the Student Council food drive for the Acton Food Pantry.

...our office volunteers who help the school day run smoothly by processing bus passes and dismissal forms; checking on absences; and laminating special projects for teachers. Our wonderful volunteer roster includes: Cinnamon Blair, Martha Brandt, Jessie Busiek, Shannon Callison, Petra Charisse, Tracey Estabrook, Pam Hippensteele, Bibiana Knell, Christine Kobelski, Bridget Matz, Alex Mojica, Jen Nelson, Kim Northcutt, Cura Pfefferkorn, Erin Pittorino, Shilpa Raiker, Jenny Reynolds, Nicole Sheehan, Fiona Starr, Jennifer Stolz, Mariah Straayer, Marianne Sullivan, Julie Weir, and Susie White.

...parent volunteer, Jenny Reynolds, as well Callie's and Laura's classes, for collating our November and December Bulletins, and Rebecca MacNeill for editing the Bulletin every month.

School District Calendar for 2016–2017

The AB School Committee has voted on the school calendar for the 2016–2017 school year. It is available on the ABRSD web-site: www.abschools.org/district/calendar

Please note that the first day of school for students will be Wednesday, August 31, 2016.