



McCarthy-Towne Bulletin

January 6, 2017
Volume 46, No 5

January is Looking Forward

by David Krane, McT Principal

Happy New Year! Even though it's drizzly, gray, and generally unpleasant outside as I sit and write this, I still remember what happened two years ago when we had so much snow in such a relatively compressed period of time. In that context, I welcome the gray, drizzly day...

January is also a time to think about the upcoming year, especially as we begin to get ready to put our school on display. School communities use the past as a reference and as a preparation for what's next. Here at McCarthy-Towne, we are getting ready to present ourselves to the community at large as we prepare for the upcoming Kindergarten evening and the tours. (Our Kindergarten presentation at McCarthy-Towne will be the evening of Tuesday, January 17). School choice, also known as Open Enrollment, a special component of public education here in Acton, compels all of us to stay mindful of our school mission and of our unique way of working with the children and families who choose our school. Preparing for the tours encourages us to reflect on what has worked so well in the past and also to consider the changes we might want to make in the future to support our mission.

Acton has high expectations for all the schools in town. Each of the six elementary schools works very hard and succeeds in meeting those expectations. Any one of these six schools would be an excellent choice for incoming Kindergarteners and their families. But what we offer here is very different. The integration of the visual arts into the curriculum across the grade levels begins in Kindergarten and becomes a huge part of the student learning process as kids grow through the school. Also, ours is an environment that is about risk-taking, cooperation, and problem solving. The Workshop model supports all of these features in its differentiated approach to teaching and learning. Additionally, these three qualities are what we strive to have

children understand about themselves as learners and as members of our larger community. Our school is also a place that seeks to have families assume active roles in the school. This is part of what makes us unique in Acton and, indeed, in public education.

The pride that the faculty and staff and children take in being part of McCarthy-Towne is apparent everywhere one looks. The walls display student work, completed and still in process. Conversations in the classrooms are as lively and engaging as they are in the staff room! Families are an active part of the school through the School Council and a variety of committees. Active, community and committed are words that describe our school. This is the school we proudly invite prospective families and children to be part of as they tour the McCarthy-Towne School.

Here's to a great year ahead!



**Save the date for
the McCarthy-Towne
Family Movie Night!**

Join us for this school-wide community event on Friday, January 27, at 6:30 PM in the McT cafeteria. Pizza, popcorn and baked goods will be sold.

This is a big fundraiser for the 6th grade trip to Thompson Island. Stay tuned for more details!

Mark Your Calendar

JANUARY

- 16, Monday**
NO SCHOOL,
Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 18, Wednesday**
Scrip Orders Due
- 19, Thursday**
Early Dismissal, 1 PM
- 27, Friday**
Movie Night, 6:30 PM
- 30, Monday**
Winter Band Concert
(Grades 5 and 6), 10 AM

FEBRUARY

- 2, Thursday**
Early Dismissal, 1 PM
- 15, Wednesday**
Pan Choral Concert at
ABRHS, 7 PM
- 16, Thursday**
Early Dismissal, 1 PM
- 20-24**
NO SCHOOL, Winter Recess

MARCH

- 2, Thursday**
Early Dismissal, 1 PM
- 16, Thursday**
Early Dismissal, 1 PM
- 18, Saturday**
McT Auction, 5:30 PM
Devens Common Center



from Chris Hanlon and Judy Bourdon, PTSO co-chairs

There is something oddly exciting for students about coming back to the school when it is dark outside. Now when we hit the winter solstice just before break, it was almost dark when our children went outside at the end of the school day! (Thankfully we are moving away from that a minute or two at a time.) But what I am talking about are those special events that bring students and their

families back to the school in the evening. This often requires changing dinner plans, rushing over to school on the way home from work, possibly skipping a practice or meeting scheduled for that evening. Coming back to the school, at a non-normal time and for non-normal activities, seems to build a sense of community in students. It signifies for them that school can be more than the place where they learn during the day, but also a place that they gather with friends, family, and teachers to learn a little more about who they are.

A few past and coming examples of this:

The Choral Concert in December. If you were there, you have a greater sense of what the words “beyond capacity” mean. (My enterprising son Clark was trying to figure out how he could offer up his seat Stub Hub-style.) But what an excellent set of performances by a wide cross section of the greater McT community. You could sense the pride and joy that our students felt performing before a Standing Room Only crowd.

McT Movie Night coming up on January 27 at 6:30 PM. A simple event, a good cause, but most of all a chance for students to gather together and watch a fun movie... making the cafeteria into the world’s biggest living room.

The Auction coming on Saturday, March 18. Okay, so at night and not at school, but this event will be the high point of the year on two fronts. First, we will raise close to two-thirds of our funds for the year... funds that support our students and their teachers. Second, this event builds a great deal of parent community, because it is just plain fun.

Lip Sync on Saturday, April 8. Technically it won’t be dark when the show starts, but maybe when it is over. Again, a wide cross section of McT either performing or in the audience, and what a well constructed event to encourage our kids to step out of their comfort zone a little.

I would encourage you to attend these special events, and help your child get involved in one or two of them if possible. It will only add to their connection to the place they spend so many daylight hours in!

A final evening event at school—please join us for the first PTSO meeting of 2017, on January 10 at 7 PM in the library. We will be joined by two members of Acton’s Finance Committee who will help make sense of the school budget that is currently being developed.

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

McT Tag Sale is Coming!

Post-holiday clean-out? Please save your gently used clothing, toys, household items, and more to donate to our upcoming school-wide rummage sale! **Stay tuned for our late April/early May date.** Up for helping with this fun and important school fundraiser? Contact Becky Barnett (becky@highrock.org or 617-710-8729).



Calling All 4th, 5th, and 6th Graders!

McT needs you to donate to the Auction to make this a huge success! Here are a few examples of services that you can provide: Babysitting, Pet Sitting, Dog Walking, Weeding, Raking or mowing, Organize a sports clinic for younger students... any talent or service you have can be great idea for donation! Get a group of students together and make it a fun, memorable experience!

If you are interested, fill out the “Student Donation Form” by Friday, January 27th. Physical items should be brought into school by March 10th.

Questions? Or need a copy of the form? Please contact Bibiana Knell (bibianaknell@gmail.com) .



Many of our auction committees are now in full swing and gearing up for a really fun night. If you're planning to attend the auction (and we REALLY hope that you are!) it is never too early to book that babysitter! Here are the details you'll need:

When: Saturday March 18th from 5:30–10:30 PM

Where: Devens Common Center in Devens, MA (a short 20 minute drive, straight out on Rt. 2)

Tickets: Look for ticket order forms to come home in backpacks at the beginning of February.

Volunteers!

We have a large group of people helping with this year's auction, but as our auction is really about building community, it's very much a "the more the merrier" sort of attitude and we will ALWAYS welcome additional volunteers. If you are interested (or just interested in finding out if—maybe—you want to help), please contact Tracey Smith (tracey@gristmillmedia.com).

This Month's Auction Contest!

We've had a couple of trivia questions, but this month we're putting a different spin on the contest! Time to channel your inner mixologist for a chance to win a free drink ticket. At the auction we typically feature two specialty "themed" cocktails for purchase at the bar. The name of the drink should (ideally, but not required) tie into the school in some way and (ideally) tie into the theme of the auction. Our theme this year "Studio 54"—the famous (or infamous) nightclub that existed for a few years during the late 70s in Manhattan.

For the contest this month we will be selecting the two best cocktails to feature at the auction. Each drink submission should include the following:

1. Name of the drink and
2. List of the key ingredients (you don't have to actually create the recipe—just a list of ingredients you think will work well together)

You may submit multiple entries. We will be selecting TWO winners this month! The winners will be announced in next month's Bulletin and the drinks will be available for purchase the night of the auction!

10th Annual Lip Sync Extravaganza

The 10th Annual Lip Sync Extravaganza is scheduled for Saturday, April 8th from 4–6 PM.

For a 10th year, The Lip Sync Extravaganza, a McT community event and fundraiser, will offer an entertaining afternoon of music, dance and fun. The Show 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 parents think songs are okay, but upon reading the lyrics, they realize the words and/or meanings are not suitable for young children. Over the past few years, organizers 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.

Due to the overwhelming popularity in recent years, a few basic rules are set in place for the 2017 show:

- The mandatory rehearsal is scheduled for Thursday, April 6th from 1–3pm.
- 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 Sign-up Form and complete list of Rules and Requirements will be sent in backpacks and made available on the website in February.

The sign-up form, written lyrics and music will also be due in February.

A 2018 Lip Sync Chair is needed to continue this fabulous show next year. We also need a videographer for the 2017 show. If you are interested in joining our 2017 Lip Sync Team to find out more about how the show is run or in recording the show this year, contact Deb Verner (debverner@gmail.com).

We can't wait to see you at the 10th Annual Lip Sync Extravaganza!

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.

Here are some tips to help our school stay healthy:

- 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.

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

Grades 3 & 5: April 3, 4, and 5

Grade 6: April 3 and 4

Grade 4: April 10, 11, 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

Travel with Scrip!

Happy New Year! McCarthy-Towne received a total of \$900 through the Scrip Program from your tremendous support. Thank you for a wonderful 2016!

The Scrip Program will continue to run each month until the end of the school year. Scrips are NOT just for the Holidays. Shopping with gift cards is an easy way to support McCarthy-Towne every time you shop. Scrip offers a great variety of brands in addition to your weekly gas and grocery purchases. From dining and entertainment to home improvement and beyond, Scrip has all your shopping needs covered!

Please keep Scrip in mind as you look forward to upcoming adventures with your family and friends in 2017. Scrip offers a great selection of hotels, airlines, car rentals and restaurants. Here's just a few from the long list of available merchants.

- Best Western
- Royal Caribbean
- Budget Car Rental
- Hilton
- Disney
- Avis Car Rental
- Comfort Inn
- Princess Cruise Lines
- Delta Airlines
- Hyatt

There's so much more! Take a peek in your child's backpack on Friday, January 6th for the current order form. **Orders are due Wednesday, January 18th at 3:30 PM.** If you have any questions please contact Pam (phippensteele@gmail.com).