



McCarthy-Towne Bulletin

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January is Looking Forward

by David Krane, McT Principal

Happy New Year! Although it's been cold and blustery outside during this past break, it's been a perfect time to spend inside with the warmth of gathered family. At our house, this is the time of year when all of us are at home, glad to spend some time catching up and reconnecting.

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 tours. School choice, 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.

This year marks a difference, however. This year we will be welcoming the Blanchard School community to the January tours and to school choice. As we move towards becoming one K-12 Regional School District with the addition of the Boxborough school, Blanchard will become part of the selection process for incoming families.

Acton-Boxborough 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. It is 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!

"Good teachers never teach anything. What they do is create the conditions under which learning takes place."

—S.I. Hayakawa

Mark Your Calendar

JANUARY

8, Wednesday
PTSO Meeting, 7 PM

17, Friday
Scrip Orders Due

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

21, Tuesday
Kindergarten Changeover
(AM/PM Switch)

Priority Kindergarten
Registration at R.J. Grey
Junior High School,
9 AM–Noon and 7–9 PM

22, Wednesday
Priority Kindergarten
Registration at R.J. Grey
Junior High School,
9 AM–Noon

30, Thursday
McT Winter Band Concert

31, Friday
Parent Reception, 9–10 AM

FEBRUARY

17–21
Winter Recess

Parent Reception—You're Invited!

Come have coffee with David! All parents are invited to an informal meet and greet on **Friday, January 31st from 9–10 AM** in the Multipurpose Room. Come join him for coffee and pastries and catch up on what's happening around school. No need to RSVP, just sign in at the office and head down to the Multipurpose Room.



from Tracey Smith and Shelley Cole, PTSO Co-chairs

Welcome back and Happy New Year! January is a nice time for everyone to catch their breath after a very busy holiday season. It's also a popular time with many of the classes to plan potluck gatherings. Potlucks are a great tradition at McT and a wonderful setting for meeting other parents and for catching up with those you already know. If you have one or more scheduled in the near future, we hope you are able to make time in your schedule to attend them.

Aside from potlucks, our next big social event is the McT Auction. The Auction volunteers have been hard at work for awhile now, but I'm sure they'd still love a few extra hands if this is something you've been considering. There are many, many ways to help with the school auction and the best part is that you're sure to meet a bunch of very cool and fun parents in the process. And even if you're not able to help before the event, we hope to see you there —**Saturday, March 22nd!**

Reminders From the Office

Checking in with the Office When visiting the school please remember to stop in the Office to sign-in and take a name tag before heading to wherever you are volunteering/visiting. Staff in the building will send you back to the Office if they do not see you wearing a name tag. Also please remember when exiting the building to use the front lobby doors only.

Front Circle Please remember that driving into the front circle during school hours is strictly prohibited. The front circle is used by both McCarthy-Towne and Merriam children for recess and other outdoor activities in all weather. For the safety of all students and staff, please do not drive into the front circle under any circumstances during school hours, including bus arrival and dismissal.

Priority Kindergarten Registration

The Acton Public Schools offers Early Kindergarten Registration for "Priority Admission Candidates." Siblings of students currently enrolled in Acton Public Schools who will be five years old by September 1, 2014 are given priority registration status.

Early registration will be held at R. J. Grey Junior High School on **Tuesday, January 21 from 9 AM-noon and 7-9 PM and on Wednesday, January 22 from 9 AM-noon**. Parents/guardians must bring a copy of your child's birth certificate/passport and most recent physical examination and immunization record. For more information and registration forms please visit www.ab.mec.edu/kindergarten.shtml.

2014 MCAS Schedule

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. While the specific dates are not yet finalized, they WILL fall during the following periods:

English Language Arts Reading Comprehension (Grades 3, 4, 5, 6)

Week of March 17

(make-up tests given week of March 24)

English Language Arts Composition (Grade 4)

Week of March 17

(make-up tests given week of March 24)

Mathematics (Grades 3, 4, 5, 6)

Week of May 5

(make-up tests given week of May 12)

Science, Technology & Engineering (Grade 5)

Week of May 12

What's in a Name?

Learning in and through the arts has always been an important part of McCarthy-Towne's philosophy. Whether painting scenery, carving wooden owls, composing poetry, or performing in a Greek chorus, students have always been encouraged to find meaning in their creative expressions.

When McT was founded in 1971, students participated in a wood shop class, called Sloyd, which met every other week. Children attended in half-class groups and the program was funded by the PTSO. Throughout the years, various craftspeople were hired as consultants to teach Sloyd. Although skilled as woodworkers, being a certified teacher was not required.

As time went on and our school grew and changed, the community began to understand the importance of art education in the development of the whole child. In 2005, a weekly Visual Arts class was established at McT and the curriculum expanded to include the standards and learning goals reflected in contemporary art education.

Although the program underwent an important make-over, language often takes a bit of time to catch up, and the name Sloyd remained until this year. Today, the full-time Visual Arts program is part of the ABRSD Art Department and is taught by a certified art teacher with a Masters degree in art education. Weekly classes celebrate the wisdom of the hands and nurture the development of an artistic attitude. Children are encouraged to discover their creative capacities, feel pride in craftsmanship, and make interdisciplinary connections in all aspects of learning. In the Visual Arts studio, the hand, the heart, and the head, work together as children manipulate tools and materials, express feelings and ideas, and critically think to solve artistic challenges. Studio habits of mind, such as envisioning, observing, reflecting and persisting are practiced throughout the art-making process. Units of study include sculpture, ceramics, woodworking, drawing, painting, printmaking, weaving and mixed media.

The capacity to create and express ourselves through the arts is one of the central qualities that make us human. Art is uniquely a human language, spoken in all cultures, giving meaning to our lives. At McCarthy-Towne we believe that a child who is literate in the arts is a child eager and ready for a future in the 21st century.

Art and Soul

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Applaud the past, the future too.
Creativity alight in our hearts,
Sloyd class is now called Visual Arts.

Pestalozzi and Froebel
And Dewey, they knew,
With activities of the hands
Kids' minds will grow too.

At the turn of the century
Progressive Ed. led the way,
And shop class took hold
Across the US of A.

Printing, mixed media, weaving, and clay,
Art at McT has come a long way.
What started as wood shop in '71,
Is now an art studio; weekly classes are run.

Bending with wire,
And sculpting with wood,
Our toolbox has grown,
And is now twice as good.

Art colleagues, a department,
'05 was the year
We joined APS,
New goals did appear.

Self-reflection, art history,
Mind habits we explore.
With hands, hearts and heads
Visual Arts is a core.

Farewell to our friend Sloyd
You never were a whim.
We surely always knew
You're not an acronym.

Treasure Island Auction Update



Just before launching 'Auction Season', AKA "Treasure Island" this year, we would like to remind everyone WHY we hold our school auction on an annual basis. **Our auction is THE BIGGEST fundraiser at McT**, and provides 65% of the funds raised for the PTSO budget. What does the PTSO budget pay for? About 90% of the money we raise goes to Contracted Services which includes additional classroom assistants, the Parent Involvement Coordinator, the Art Integration Specialist, and additional Media Assistant and Reading Assistant hours. These all have a direct impact on our children. The remaining PTSO budget is used for Cultural and Performing Arts performances, field-trip funding assistance, and various grade-level needs (for instance, this year, 3rd grade used their money to subsidize the cost of the Eyes on Owls assembly). In a nutshell, all students, families, teachers and staff benefit from the funds raised by the PTSO.

There will be much more information to come. We welcome ALL volunteers from planners to donors, designers to art project specialists! Not to mention the hands-on help we need the day of the Auction for set up AND Auction Night for the back room! Watch for Special Auction Howlers and Friday Flyers for lots of details!

Now let's get goin' on plannin' our Auction. Save th' date on ye calendar now... 'n **come to Treasure Island on March 22nd, startin' at 5:30 PM!**

If you want to get in on the fun, contact Michele Caterina (michelecaterina1@gmail.com) or Jennifer Mabardy (jennifermabardy@comcast.net).

Enter to Win an iPod® Shuffle PLUS \$500 in Free Groceries!



Remember to save your receipts from Donelan's Supermarkets! The *Register Tapes for Education Program* allows us to earn FREE school equipment just by grocery shopping. Send receipts in with your child or drop them at the McT office. Please do NOT cut your receipts. We must submit the entire receipt, showing the store name and location, as well as items purchased. **Receipts dated September 1, 2013–March 31, 2014 are eligible.**

Enter to win a \$500 grocery gift certificate PLUS an iPod® Shuffle. **Send the entry 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 and then hand write your information on each form. They will NOT accept entry forms that have been filled out and then photocopied. Please leave the "school code" section blank. Visit www.registertapesforeducation.com/shoppercontest for complete contest rules.



Register Tapes Entry Form

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

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

School Code

Phone Number (____) _____ - _____

Please return to your school by January 15, 2014.