

McCarthy-Towne Bulletin

November 2, 2012
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November Days

by David Krane, McT Principal

For the second November bulletin article in as many years, I am writing from home, school cancelled because of a weather related event. This year it's not snow that keeps us all from school, but a late season hurricane, with high winds and rain. It feels, though, that it is way too early in the school year to have a no-school day because of seasonal events. It feels like we've just gotten started!

Last week at the School Committee meeting, I spoke about the variety of ways that we look at student learning and student growth. One of those ways is, of course, MCAS. This test, however, is a summative assessment, one that looks at a broad array of learning categories. In school, teachers use and look at more specific assessments for learning, indicators that can guide instruction. These indicators have more day-to-day impact on individualized instruction, something that is essential in elementary school. Just as teachers gather in grade level teams to more closely analyze the results of these kind of assessments to see how to make changes and improve instruction, so will we do with MCAS results. They are simply one more piece of information, one more tool to use in looking at student and teacher learning.

Last year, in this space and at this same time, I wrote that we are continuing, among the faculty, a professional development effort

begun last year exploring how to deal with different behaviors in the classroom. Based on the tenets of the Responsive Classroom, this work was done to encourage civility and respect among and between the students in order to foster and sustain a more positive learning environment. We believe that these teachings are as important for our students as the academic components are. Understanding the critical importance of civility and respect in all the interactions that we have, not just those within the classroom walls, make for a citizenry that improves the lives of all of us. Polite discourse and seeking an understanding of different ideas develop critical thinking skills for our students that are essential in our shrinking world. This is no less true of adults, too. It is important that children see us working with others in a way that is positive. After all, schools offer the models for expected behavior out in the world, and children will always be making comparisons between their experiences at school and at home.

Schools teach about the critical elements of being part of a community as well as the important academic elements across the content areas. McCarthy-Towne has always been proud of the way that we make this clear to children and of our successes in both arenas. Thanks to all of you who are part of this wonderful school community and for your support!

Mark Your Calendar

NOVEMBER

- 2, Friday**
McT Fall Social, 6-8 PM
- 5, Monday**
Pick up Genevieve's orders, 2-8 PM at 10 Sandy Dr.
- 6, Tuesday**
NO SCHOOL, Professional Development Day
Pick up Genevieve's orders, 8 AM-8 PM at 10 Sandy Dr.
- 8, Thursday**
Community Assembly
- 9, Friday**
Picture Retake Day
Winter Clothing Drive for Cradles to Crayon ends
- 12, Monday**
NO SCHOOL, Veterans Day
- 14, Wednesday**
Early Dismissal (1 PM)
No PM Kindergarten
Scrip Orders due
PTSO Meeting, 7 PM
- 21, Wednesday**
Early Dismissal (1 PM)
No PM Kindergarten
- 22-23, Thursday/Friday**
NO SCHOOL
Thanksgiving Recess

DECEMBER

- 13, Thursday**
PTSO Meeting, 9:30 AM
- 24-January 1**
NO SCHOOL, Winter Recess

..... McT Annual Fall Social-TONIGHT!

The Fall Social is tonight, Friday, November 2 from 6-8 PM. There's something for everyone to enjoy and the whole family is welcome. The night holds lots of fun, games with prizes, crafts, tattoos, face painting, and the annual book sale too! This is not a drop-off event so please make arrangements to attend with your child(ren) or have them chaperoned. It's a great opportunity for children to play with old friends and make new ones and for parents to get to know each other. Admission is free for adults and \$5 per child. There will be pizza for sale and complimentary baked goods and refreshments.



from Kate Murray and Tracey Smith, PTSO co-chairs

With the worst of Hurricane Sandy behind us, we look forward to the wonderful traditions in November: Backyard football games, Election Day and fun and festive Thanksgiving celebrations. The PTSO has a new fall tradition: PTSO Forums. The forums will take place during regularly scheduled PTSO meetings throughout the year and we will use this opportunity to discuss topics that are of interest to our parents and school community. **Our first one is taking place this month, on November 14, at 7 PM in the 2nd Floor Staff room when we welcome Kirsten Nelson, Director of Food Services to our meeting.** Please join us as Kirsten outlines the new food/dietary requirements and how this impacts our children's school lunches. All are welcome. Some other planned topics include: McT Assessment and Special Education, so stay tuned!

On another note, you may be receiving an invitation to attend your child's classroom "adult" potluck. These evening events are great opportunities to meet other parents outside the school setting and we encourage you to attend if you are able to. As we like to point out, these gatherings are just part of what builds the strong community and parent fabric that make McT so unique.

Have a great month and enjoy each moment!

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 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 equipment, like art supplies and books.

So every time you shop at Donelan's, save your receipts! Simply send in your receipts in with your child or drop them in the collection box in the office. **Receipts dated September 1, 2012–March 31, 2013 are eligible.**

Thank you for your support! Questions can be directed to Kate Hoitt (kjoitt@verizon.net).

School Picture Retakes

School picture retakes are scheduled for Friday, November 9. If your child was absent on September 10, they will have their picture taken on November 9. We have extra order forms in the office if you misplaced your original. For families who are not satisfied with the original picture, please send the entire package back to school on November 9 and have your child give it to the photographers for a retake.

Pick Up for Genevieve's Fall Fundraiser

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Genevieve's Fall Fundraiser. **Orders will be available for pick up at 10 Sandy Drive in Acton on the following dates and times: Monday, November 5 from 2–8 PM and Tuesday, November 6 from 8 AM–8 PM.** The garage doors will be open and boxes will be arranged alphabetically. If you cannot make the pick up dates or have questions, contact Lara Maira (laramaira@yahoo.com or 978-496-5969).

Sloyd Happenings

McT students have been quite creative this past month building, painting, sketching and sculpting. Please take a moment to enjoy the artwork displayed in the hallway galleries around school. You will see:

- Kindergarten puppets in the library
- 1st and 2nd grade oil pastel animals outside the office
- 3rd grade geometric tempera paintings outside the sloyd room
- 4th grade Mars Rover sculptures in the downstairs glass cases
- 5th and 6th grade pop-art self portraits in the downstairs hallway

November Scrip Challenge!



Thank you to everyone who ordered Scrip in October—it really makes a financial difference for the school. Never tried the Scrip Program? Well, HERE IS YOUR CHANCE! We are challenging YOU, the McT Community (students, parents, teachers, and school staff), to buy Scrip (store cards) this month. The goal is for the school to reach a total of 600 cards for the month of November (we can do it; we have met the challenge the last three years!). So, plan ahead for the holidays and help us meet our goal!

If we, as a community, reach our goal, the teachers have promised the children a school-wide pajama day in December. All the details on this program, with order form, are attached to this bulletin. You can also visit www.mctpto.org/fundraising/scrip for additional order forms.

The next order deadline is Wednesday, November 14 at 3:30 PM. Cards will be sent home before the Thanksgiving break.

2012–13 McT Directory

By now you should have received the 2012–13 McT Student Directory. The information included in the Directory comes from the PowerSchool website and the information you provided when completing your on-line emergency cards. There is a lot of information in the Directory like the AB School District Calendar and the McT School hours (including the timing of lunch periods).

As in years past, we rely on advertising revenue to cover the costs of producing the Directory which are given to all McCarthy-Towne families and staff free-of-charge. This year, after covering our costs, we received an additional \$1,400 in revenue—all of which goes directly to the McT PTSO! Please be sure to check out all of our loyal and new advertising contributors and mention that you saw them in your school's Directory. We would also like to thank the parents who sent in advertisements for their children. These ads also help raise our profit, along with being a nice way to recognize your child—this is especially true for 6th graders.

If you have any questions about the Directory, please contact the school office. Additional copies are always available in the office at a cost of \$3 per copy. Please see Patty Lee (plee@abschools.org) for further information.

McT ROCK 'N' ROLL AUCTION 2013

Dust off your "pleather" and get ready to rock out! The McT Rock 'n' Roll Auction will take place on **Saturday, March 9, 2013**. This year's event is at an amazing new venue—The Stow Acres Country Club in, you guessed it, Stow, Massachusetts.

More details about this great event will be coming soon but we'd like to take this opportunity to announce our new co-chairs: Jennifer Mabardy and Lauren Richardt.

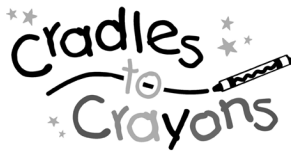
We have a great group of people who work tirelessly to make this event happen, but we still need YOU! Have you ever dreamed of being a roadie? Now's your chance! There are many ways to get involved! And although it is a critical part of our auction planning process, there are many opportunities that do not require soliciting businesses for donations.

Why is our auction important? The auction is our biggest fundraiser of the year. The McCarthy-Towne PTSO, which is composed of all student families as well as teachers and staff, works hard to raise funds to supplement the school budget. The PTSO underwrites the funding of contracted services, such as classroom assistants, Sloyd and humanities consultants.

Descriptions of some volunteer positions are on the PTSO website—www.mctpto.org/auction. Hard copies of the volunteer form will be coming home in your child's backpack this week! Please keep an eye out for them.

For more information about the auction, please contact Jennifer (jennifermabardy@comcast.net) or Lauren (laurenrichardt@yahoo.com).

Clothing Donations for Cradles to Crayons



The McCarthy-Towne Student Council is once again sponsoring a “Winter Clothing Drive” for Cradles to Crayons (C2C) of Massachusetts. **The collection of donations is ongoing and will run through Friday, November 9.** Collection bins are located in the school lobby near the front entrance.

Cradles to Crayons is a Massachusetts charitable organization that provides basic essentials to low-income and homeless children age 0–13 throughout Massachusetts. More than ever before, communities like ours, have a vital role to play in helping children in low-income families stay safe and warm during the cold winter months. With your help, Cradles to Crayons can equip them with the everyday essentials they need to thrive in the coming year.

The following gently used items are desirable donations for this organization: clothing (size 0–Adult S, M, L), winter coats, jackets, sweaters, winter boots & shoes (infant sizes 0–13 and Youth/Adult sizes 1–10), gloves, mittens, hats, and scarves. All of the items should be clean, serviceable, and complete such that a child receiving the item would feel valued. C2C also appreciates new items in the original packaging such as: underwear, socks, and pajamas and is always in need of boys pants. For more information on this organization, please visit their web site at www.cradlestocrayons.org.

So please gear up for winter by “clearing out your closets” and identifying those items that you and your children can donate to Cradles to Crayons! Also, Thank You to Viking Moving Services of Acton (Vikingmovers.com) who has generously agreed to transport all donated clothing items to C2C’s Giving Factory in Brighton.

Thank You

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

- Lena Saetre-Grant for ordering, sorting and distributing the McT T-shirt orders.
- Nisreen Harianawala, Christine Kobelski and Rebecca MacNeill for labeling and sorting all the McT Directories for delivery to our families.
- Sylvie Aguilar, Carol Chytil, Sorrel Sammons and Wendy Schaad for organizing and stapling all the Book Fair flyers.

USDA Meal Changes

from Food Service

In the Acton Public Schools and the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools, as well as all school cafeterias across America, we are doing things a little differently this fall, as we strive to meet new federal nutrition standards for school meals. The new USDA standards are required by the *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act* of 2010, and are based on research and current understanding of human nutrition, and prevention of diseases and health conditions including obesity. The last update to school meals standards was over 15 years ago.

We have been working to provide healthy lunches to students for many years. These new national changes will cause everyone across the country to comply with a uniform set of high standards for school meals for all children. Based on these new regulations we will change some food items and practices, menus will not look terribly different, a few entrée portion sizes may be slightly smaller.

The major USDA meal pattern changes:

- A. All students are required to take at least 1/2 cup of fruit OR vegetable as part of their meal.
- B. Portions of fruits and vegetables offered are larger and the menu must have minimum amounts of vegetables in five different categories due to their richness in different nutrients:
 1. dark green
 2. red/orange
 3. legumes
 4. starchy
 5. “other” vegetables.
- C. Meats and “meat-alternate” have minimum and maximum portion limits per week and per day.
- D. Grains / breads have minimum and maximum portion limits per week and per day, and at least half of grain products offered must be “whole grain rich” (which means at least half of the grain in a product has to be a whole grain). In two more years, all grains offered in the school meals program must be whole.
- E. Of the five food groups offered (meat, vegetable, fruit, grain, milk) students must take at least three food groups (and one has to be a fruit or vegetable) in order for it to be considered a complete meal. Students are welcome and encouraged to take all five food groups.
- F. Meals have a slightly lower calorie range, are taking graduated steps to lower sodium levels, limit saturated fat to 10%; and are trans-fat free.

Food Services staff will be encouraging and reminding students to take their required fruit or vegetable if they haven’t already.