



McCarthy-Towne Bulletin

December 1, 2017
Vol 47, No 4

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...” While it has been unseasonably warm, sunny, and pleasant as I write this on Thanksgiving weekend, there are still harbingers around us of the coming winter. Yes, the leaves are brown and vanishing and the sky is a very different one than early fall, even when sunny. Darkness falls earlier, and that changes the way that we look at time. But now that December is fast upon us, we can really begin to 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 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 there needs to be support from other quarters. Since Boxborough joined with Acton to become a regionalized district of six elementary schools with different ideas and philosophies about teaching and learning, there has been much conversation about school choice. I am confident that we will manage to stay strong as an individual school community to maintain what is important to our school community. That is what school choice represents and it is of critical importance to us all that it be sustained. Families, students, and school faculties and staff together create and sustain community, and it cannot be accomplished with only one of those groups.

Traditionally, Thanksgiving is 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.

- David

Mark Your Calendar

Early dismissal every
Thursday 12:20 PM

December

8, Friday

Unicef Boxes Due

14, Thursday

Winter Choral Concert,
7-8 PM

15, Friday

Scrip Orders Due

19, Tuesday

PTSO Meeting, 7 PM

22, Friday

Lost and Found Donated
Pajama Day

25, Monday

Winter Recess Begins

January

2, Tuesday

Winter Recess Ends

15, Monday

No School
Martin Luther King Day

16, Tuesday

PTSO Meeting, 7 PM

19, Friday

McT Movie Night, 6:30 PM

News and Notes

Check out “News and Notes” on the McT School website, mct.abschools.org. We keep this section updated with important information for McT families.

McCarthy-Towne Auction 2018!

Mark your calendars for the biggest night of the year! The McT Auction will be held at the Devens Common Center at Springhill Suites on **Saturday, April 7**. This adults-only event is a great way to enjoy a night out, connect with friends, and support our school.

The theme for this year's auction has not yet been revealed. We'll be posting clues in the Bulletin, the Howler, and on Facebook until someone guesses correctly.

Your first clue: This year at the auction, we're going to party like we're in Shermer, Illinois. Email your guesses to mctdonations2018@gmail.com. The first person to correctly guess the theme will win a free drink ticket for use at the auction.

We Need You! If you are interested in helping out with the auction in any way please contact one of our Auction Chairs: Cura Pfefferkorn at cmpfeff@comcast.net and Alyssa Robinson at lyssar@yahoo.com. We have many areas where you can help. We are especially interested in finding volunteers who want to help with class projects or setup and cleanup, and we're still looking for a junior chair.

Students can help! Fifth and sixth grade students can help support the auction by donating their time and skills as auction items.

PTSO Update

by Judy Bourdon, PTSO chair

As we enter the busy month of December, the only PTSO event scheduled this month is our monthly meeting on **Tuesday December 19th at 7 PM**. We hope to see you there!

There are a number of events in 2018 to look forward to, including Movie Night, International Night, the Auction, Yard Sale, and Family Field Day. Keep an eye on the Bulletin and Howler for details.

Parent potlucks for each grade are underway. They are a great way for parents to meet each other and socialize.

We've had a good start this school year with our PTSO events and fundraising. Thank you to all who have supported MCT and the PTSO this fall by attending and supporting events, or participating in the fundraising through the Fall Catalog, Annual Appeal, or Scrip orders. As we close out the calendar year, remember your donation to our Annual Appeal may be tax deductible.

Scrip Card order forms will be coming home this month in time for holiday gift card purchases.

We had two PTSO events in November:

- **Family Game Night.** Thank you to those who attended Game Night and to the volunteers who helped teach the games and sell games and pizza. I hope everyone had fun with family and McT friends. The event was well attended and the number of different games being played all at the same time was quite amazing. It was a great to be able to learn new games and stock up on some fun games for gifts or for playing during the cold weather. Families were also able to donate games on the teacher's wish lists.
- **November PTSO Meeting.** The Acton Town Finance Committee presented their Points of View and answered questions on a variety of topics. We had a chance to hear updates from our principal David Krane, and hear financial summaries from our fall social, book fair, annual appeal, scripts, and fall catalog sales.

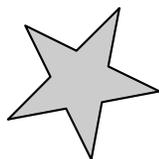
Volunteers are always welcome for the McT PTSO.

Visit www.mctptso.org for an overview of our plans for the year, as well as specific events on our calendar. If you have any thoughts or questions about PTSO happenings, please contact the PTSO chair, Judy Bourdon, at judyandroland@gmail.com.

McT Office Email

Use the following address to email the school office: mctoffice@abschools.org.

If you're emailing a bus pass or dismissal change, you'll receive a return email saying "Got it" from Christine, Maryanne or Tracey.



McT is on Facebook

Join the McT Facebook page! Facebook, more than any other source, enables us to inform our community of late-breaking news and issue timely reminders. It's also a great place to share news and pictures of school events. Anyone is free to post news, pictures and questions. We just ask that you refrain from posting identifiable pictures of children. Our Facebook page is open to all adult members of our community. It is a "closed" group, which means that people from outside our community are unable to see or post to our page.

To join: Search "McCarthy-Towne School" or visit www.facebook.com/groups/1404961776417219/.

Donelan's Register Receipts



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. Save your receipts when you shop at Donelan's! Send in receipts with your child or drop them in the collection box in the office. Receipts dated **September 1, 2017 through March 31, 2018** are eligible.

322.6

That's how many miles the McT Mileage Club has logged this fall! We have had 45 different McT Milers help with that great total, and we plan to keep meeting as long as the weather allows. **Friday mornings, 7:40 - 8:05** in the Parker Damon back playground area. New milers are always welcome! For information, contact Chris Hanlon at hanlonchristopher@hotmail.com.

Lost and Found

Lost and Found is overflowing! Unclaimed items will be donated on **Friday, December 22**, before Winter Recess.

Please check now for missing items.

Tip! The Winter Choral Concert is a great time to check Lost and Found.



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 start 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 and 4: April 2, 3, and 4
- Grades 5 and 6: April 9, 10, and 11

Math

- Grades 3 and 4: May 8 and 9
- Grades 5 and 6: May 15 and 16

Science, Technology & Engineering

- Grade 5 ONLY: May 21 and 22



News from Physical Education

by Peter Knowles, Physical Ed. Instructor



As it starts getting colder, more and more students will be wearing boots to school. If students wear boots to school on the day they have physical education, please bring a change of sneakers. In Physical Education, it is very important to wear sneakers in the gymnasium to avoid slipping and falling, and to keep the gymnasium dry. Sneakers in the gymnasium are the proper footwear for students to wear for participating in physical education. If there are any issues or concerns you may have, please contact me at pknowles@abschools.org.

Unicef Boxes!

Last Call! If your child collected for Unicef during Halloween, please have them bring their orange box into the school office no later than **Friday, December 8th**. Thank you!

Safe Arrival

If you're 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.

Script Card Program

The McCarthy-Towne community is amazing. We reached our goal for the November Scrip Challenge, and McT received **\$270.00**. Your continuous support is greatly appreciated.

The McT community will enjoy a Pajama Day on December 22nd.

If you didn't order in November, don't worry. There's still time. 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 your 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, \$25, and higher. Please note that there are limited-time-only cards on the order form. Some include \$5 Barnes and Noble, Panera, and Starbucks cards, and \$10 Amazon, AMC, and Target cards. **These make great stocking stuffers!**

The December order form will be sent home with your child on Friday, December 1st. **Orders are due Friday, December 15th by 2:50pm.**

Please Note: We cannot accept late orders this month. This date is firm so we can order and receive the card in plenty of time for the holidays. Cards will go home (or be ready to be picked up) on **Thursday, December 21st.**

Questions? Please contact Pam Hippensteele at phippensteele@gmail.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. This is a great chance to raise money for our school while also helping thousands of items find new homes!

Donations for this year's Tag Sale will be collected and sorted on **Friday, April 27** for the sale on **Saturday, April 28.**

Volunteers needed! We need your help to make the Tag Sale a success. If you would like to help out or want to learn more, please contact Tag Sale co-chairs Erika Hanley-Onken at erika.hanleyonken@gmail.com and Becky Manseau Barnett at becky@highrock.org.

Dismissal Procedure

Dismissal is a very busy time at school. Please help reduce some of the last-minute chaos.

If you plan to pick up your child at the very end of the school day, on either Full or Early Release Days:

- Send in a Dismissal Form.
- 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.

The Office Would Like to Thank . . .

Our Office Volunteers who help the school day run smoothly by processing bus passes and dismissal forms, copying and laminating for teachers, and pitching in with many special projects. Our wonderful volunteer roster includes: Bibiana Knell, Martha Brandt, Jesse Busiek, Aditi Chandra, Pam Hippensteele, Ashlee Kim, Bibiana Knell, Christine Kobelski, Jen Nelson, Cura Pfefferkorn, Erin Pittorino, Jenny Reynolds, Sara Russell, Courtney Smith, Mariah Straayer, and Julie Weir.

We want to thank and welcome our new Bulletin editor, Sara Russell AND our new Howler editor, Diane Randolph. We'd be lost without these two primary sources of school information so a huge shout out to Sara and Diane for taking on these positions, making the transition seamless and keeping us informed!

Many thanks to all those who played a role in getting the School Directory into the homes of our nearly 400 families: Christi Andersen-Smith and Martha Brandt for doing yet another wonderful job selling ads and editing the book; Signature Printing (owned by McT parents, Brian and Julie Maranian) for printing and partially donating the printing costs of the directory; and our crew of Pinch Hitters - Jennifer Beale, Heather Burke, Bibiana Knell, and Chad Kroll - who rushed into school to help label and distribute the books.

Finally, thank you to all of our Pinch Hitters who have been working to collate, stuff and label the auction business solicitations: Claire Abely, Emily Blumberg, Chad Kroll, and Romelia Pershouse.

Thank You!