

ESTABROOK UPDATE

Joseph Estabrook Elementary School, 117 Grove Street, Lexington, MA, (781) 861-2520

Principal: Martha Batten

Volume 2 Number 4

Friday, October 5, 2007

A Principal Notes... Have you thanked a custodian today? We are proud of the quality of work and the upbeat approach of our custodial staff, led by Head Custodian Joe McLaughlin. It is not easy to clean an elementary school building that has staff in it from 6:00 a.m. until early evening on a regular basis, and children from 7:45 until 6:00 daily. And it is harder to make a worn out space sparkle. But that is what our crew achieves, every day. We also value teaching children to contribute to the care and maintenance of their classrooms. They have jobs at the end of each day and periodically they wash and dust surfaces, without using toxic cleaners. Families volunteer to maintain gardens and pick up the grounds and our local cub scouts and brownie groups do community service at Estabrook. Being responsible for chores, at home, at school, and in the community, is a life lesson about responsibility and even organization.

Teaching to Standards: one of the buzz phrases you may read is "Standards Based Education." Our state and district has clearly defined standards and expectations, some of which you received before Back to School night. This approach moves the conversation from a focus on, "What did we teach?" to "Did students learn?" We are no longer satisfied with the Bell Curve and the idea that some students will fail and some will excel. We want to raise the bar for everyone.

Last year we experimented with school based action research, identifying areas of weakness and designing teaching strategies to improve student learning. For example, at Estabrook, the third grade team taught the writing of open response answers, a genre that happens to be on the MCAS...and on every test, essay exam, job application, and other kinds of writing we do all of our lives. The results showed that students improved on this valuable writing skill. The fifth grade team used intervention strategies to improve student performance in mathematics.

The gains on one of the measures, the MCAS, showed significant individual growth for many students and moved that class to fifth in the State. The librarians studied explicit strategies in reading expository text (informational writing, like textbooks and encyclopedias). The kindergarten faculty used storytelling and other experiential activities to build an understanding of mathematical problem solving.

When I visit classes and specials, formally or informally, I am looking at standards based instruction and evidence of collaboration. Clearly, teachers are sharing their best practices and raising standards for all students. I am in awe of the energy and passion our faculty brings to these daily challenges.

And not one of us could do what we do without the level of support we receive from you. You do so much for our school and you so often go out of your way to compliment us. That is special, and not so typical. Thank you.

From the Nurse's Office: As you may be aware, there have been ten known cases of pediculosis (head lice) in 8 classrooms at Estabrook this autumn. The students in each of these classrooms have been checked and notification was sent home. Unfortunately, I have discovered that sometimes parents are aware of children who have had pediculosis but have chosen not to notify the school for various reasons. I want to encourage all families to notify the school if their child has head lice. The duration of pediculosis can be indefinite if not identified and treated properly.

It is important to remember that head lice do not discriminate. Anyone can be affected. Infestation occurs not as a result of poor hygiene, but simply by contact. This could happen on an airplane, in a movie theatre, while on a vacation, by sharing a batting helmet or a hairbrush. As a school community we all want to do our best to reduce the occurrence and spread of pediculosis.

Families who have experienced having pediculosis in their home become concerned when they hear of new cases at school. People begin to panic at the thought of dealing with the time consuming tasks of treating, nit-picking and continual cleaning. Families also experience the inconvenience of having to bring their child to school each morning for five consecutive days after treatment to be checked and found to be nit-free in order to return to the classroom. The identification of nits (eggs from which the lice hatch) and lice (the actual parasite) is a challenge. Once families know what they are looking for, the intervention can begin. Because of this, all families are encouraged to frequently check their children's hair thoroughly. Any changes from the child's normal hair status should make you suspicious. A sudden increase in head scratching, particularly progressive, intense scratching is reason to carefully check. The following descriptions of and information about lice and nits are given to assist in their identification.

Good web sites:

www.headlice.org

<http://www.cdc.gov/Ncidod/dpd/parasites/lice/default.htm>

Professional nitpickers are also available to help families for a fee. Both parents and students within the Estabrook community have found the following nitpicking services to be helpful.

The Nit-Picker (Helen) 781-449-2283

She comes to the home

Nit Wits 617-816-9487

22 Notre Dame Ave.

Cambridge, MA 02140

Will see you in their office

If you would like more information, please leave a message with Nurse Johnson.

Big Backyard Training:

The training dates for parent volunteers leading Big Backyard Walks have been set - below are the training dates for the upcoming walks by grade. Fourth grade does not have a Fall walk so expect info on the Winter walk some time in December. If you have not previously received training for your grade's walk, please plan to attend the relevant training session. Meet in the front lobby and be ready for a walk outside!

Thursday, October 4, 9:15-10:15 AM

2nd & 3rd-Linda Arnow & Fran Ludwig

If you missed this and would like more information please contact the chairs below.

Thursday, October 11, 9:15 – 10:00 AM

K & 1st -Linda Arnow & Fran Ludwig

Thursday, October 11, 9:15 – 10:15 AM

5th- Kathy Lobuglio

Any questions? Call Jennifer Breen @781-274-0702 or Maria Cue @508-641-7433 or email us at

estabrookbby@yahoo.com

Art Room Volunteers Needed: Mrs. Durrell is looking for parent volunteers to help out during art classes. She especially needs first and second grade parents during classes for those grades. If you would like to come in and help during your child's class, please go to the Art Room and sign up on the schedule.

CORI Checks: We would like to remind everyone that if you want to volunteer at Estabrook (whether during the school day or at a PTA event), you must submit a CORI Form, which activates a criminal background check on volunteers. This year, the form must be filled in with either Martha Batten or Terri Carfagno. Please bring your current driver's license or passport to the office when you come to fill out the form. A completed CORI form is valid for three years.

Box Tops Contest Raised \$192

Many thanks to all who participated in the Box Tops Contest, which raised \$192 for Estabrook PTA activities. Congratulations to the third grade who won with 638 Box Tops submitted. The PTA raised \$550.00 from Box Tops for Education since last April. We collect all year so please keep them coming and if you want them to count towards the next contest label them with your grade.

MCAS and MEPA Information Please note the following dates:

1. 10/ 22-31: Fall MEPA Administration for ELL Students.
2. 3/10-19: Spring MEPA Administration for ELL Students
3. 3/24-4/4: April MCAS Test Administration, English Language Arts
4. 5/12-23: May MCAS Administration, Math, Sci. & Tech./Eng., History & Social Science
5. 5/27-29: U.S. History, Grades 3-8

Estabrook Calendar

October

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|---------|---|
| 8 | Columbus Day - NO SCHOOL |
| 9 | Math Olympiads, 5th Gr., 8 am |
| 10 | Estabrook Picture Day |
| 15 | Antibias Meeting, 6 pm |
| 16 | 4th Grade Field Trip - Group 1- Taddeo & Catalano
Math Olympiads, 5th Gr., 8 am |
| 17 | Site Council, 4-5 pm |
| 19 | 4th Grade Field Trip - Group 2- Bourret & Lee
2nd Grade Field Trip - Drumlin Farms, 11:30 am - 2:30 pm |
| 22 - 31 | Fall MEPA Administration for ELL Students |
| 23 | Math Olympiads, 5th Grade, 8 am |
| 24 | International Potluck, 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm |
| 30 | Math Olympiads, 5th Grade, 8 am |

November

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| 2 | 4th Grade Pyramids & Pharaohs Presentation, 1:30 pm |
| 6 | Math Olympiads, 8 - 8:30 am |
| 7 | Lextended Day unsure if opened will let us know. |