

# ESTABROOK UPDATE

Joseph Estabrook Elementary School, 117 Grove Street, Lexington, MA

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**A Principal Notes** ...As the holiday season approaches I like to remind myself that this is a stressful and busy time for many families. At school and at home, children can benefit at this time from more structure and predictability, balanced with quiet, reflective family time. It helps to be sensitive to the fact that an increase of tears and squabbles at school is not unusual in December.

It helps to clarify every year around this time how we acknowledge and account for religious holidays and traditions and school. It is important to acknowledge and discuss information about holidays and traditions that are part of our culture and/or significant to particular children in our classrooms. An important distinction we must make as a public school is that we do not CELEBRATE a religious holiday, but we do educate about significant holidays and traditions.

There are some important learnings about celebrations that are essential to understanding the concepts of family, culture, country, or any organized group with shared beliefs.

1. All cultures and groups have beliefs, traditions and celebrations.
2. There are different kind of traditions and celebrations, such as historical (July 4), honoring great people (Presidents' Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday), honoring groups of people (Veteran's Day), old traditions (Halloween, birthdays, Children's Day in Japan), and religious. Sometimes the holiday blends two or more of these categories. For young children, "story" is the best structure for making sense of holidays.
3. Teachers often invite interested parents to come in and share information about a family tradition or read a short story that is developmentally appropriate. As educators, we frame this for children

around the "big ideas" of beliefs and traditions in family and culture. Children often notice that many cultures and civilizations have special celebrations around harvest time and that light is a common thread in many winter holidays. It is also an appropriate time to point out that different people believe different things and as we grow up we learn to understand that we are alike and different.

I thought you would enjoy a third grader's writing about science in his classroom.

## **Water and Surface Tension by Marcus B.**

In our class we are learning about the surface tension of water. The surface tension of water is caused by the attraction of water molecules to each other. The class conducted experiments to see how water reacts to different things. For example, when water is on a flat surface it starts to form a dome shape because there is nothing to pull the water molecules apart. When soap and water mix the surface tension of the water breaks and suds form. Soap weakens the surface tension of water.

The class also conducted experiments to determine how many drops of water could fit onto different surfaces before exceeding the surface boundary and causing the water to overflow. For example, if you drop water onto a penny it forms a dome. If there's too much water then the dome will break. Also the size of the drop makes a difference. If the drops are too big then you won't have much room for more drops. By conducting these experiments the class learned a lot more about water than what we already knew.

**Last Paper Update** If you signed up to receive the Estabrook Announcements electronically, this is the last paper copy of the update you will receive. To subscribe to the listserv, send an email to:

**majordomo@silver.ci.lexington.ma.us**. Send it from the email address that you want to subscribe. In the body of the message, put only the following two lines:

subscribe estabrook-announcements  
end

Please note that the Estabrook Update will be sent via listserv next week. If you have requested a paper copy, the update will be sent home in your child's backpack.

**From the Nurse** PLEASE WRITE YOUR CHILD'S LAST NAME AND "ESTABROOK" ON ALL OUTSIDE CLOTHING INCLUDING BOOTS! We already have received several lost winter clothing items. One of these items still has the initial price tags on it. We always try to identify owner and it is so much easier if the item is labeled. FYI, there are a pair of Pink/Black Totes Winter boots in the lost and found that are not labeled.

### **Coats for Kids**

Estabrook is participating in the *Coats for Kids* community service program sponsored by Anton's Cleaners. The *Coats for Kids* mission is to ensure that anyone who needs a coat gets one. **Now through January 15, 2008**, coats of all sizes are needed ranging from babies to adults. They must be in good shape (a condition you would give a friend) and not needing repairs. They may be dirty Anton's cleaners will dry clean each coat. Please drop your coats in the Coats for Kids box in the front hall. If you have any questions, please contact Pam Hoffman at [pwhoffman@rcn.com](mailto:pwhoffman@rcn.com).

## **Calendar**

### **December**

11 Voting, 7 A.M.-8 P.M.  
14 Report Cards go home.  
24 - 1/1/08 Vacation

### **January**

3 Family Friends  
4 5th Grade Read-a-thon

5th Gr. Math Olympiads every Tues. at 8 A.M.  
4th Gr. Math Olympiads every Thurs. at 8 A.M.

### **MCAS TESTING SCHEDULE 2007-2008**

#### **MARCH 24 – APRIL 4**

March 25	Tuesday	Gr.4 Long Composition
March 26	Wednesday	Gr. 3 Reading Gr. 4 ELA
March 27	Thursday	Gr. 3 Reading Gr. 4 ELA
March 28	Friday	Gr. 3 Reading Gr. 4 ELA
March 31	Monday	Gr. 5 ELA
April 1	Tuesday	Gr. 5 ELA
April 2	Wednesday	Gr. 5 ELA Gr. 4 Long Comp Make-up

#### **MAY 12 - MAY 29**

May 13	Tuesday	Gr. 5 Math
May 14	Wednesday	Gr.5 Math
May 15	Thursday	Gr. 3 Math Gr. 5 Science
May 16	Friday	Gr. 3 Math Gr. 5 Science
May 20	Tuesday	Gr. 4 Math
May 21	Wednesday	Gr. 4 Math
May 23	Friday	Gr.5 History
May 27	Tuesday	Gr. 5 History