



NEWSNOTES

Care & Respect ~ Effort & Hard Work ~ Critical Thinking ~ Risk Taking

January 28, 2011

Every Tuesday
Pretzel Sales \$1.00
After school
Front/Back Lobbies

Friday, February 4
Science Night

Wednesday, February 16
7:00 PM
School Council Meeting

February 21-25
Winter Break

Saturday, March 19
School Auction

Saturday, April 9
Talent Show

Next Edition: Feb. 11

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From Mark's Desk

Dear Horace Mann Families,

The depths of winter have arrived, and it seems that we are constantly being barraged by snow, wind, ice, and frigid temperatures. I suppose we could all move to a warmer climate, but what fun would that be? Despite the cold, Julie Ferland made her return last week from maternity leave and is now getting adjusted to life back in the classroom. Welcome back! In a related note, big thanks go out to Annie Mallowney for taking over during Julie's absence. It was a great experience for her and will serve her well as she takes over in Ms. Chatfield's class in a few weeks.

School Council: School Council met last week during one of our snowstorms, yet somehow we managed to have a productive conversation around our goals for the year. Full minutes will be posted to the PTO website, but I wanted to highlight some key points. As a group we reviewed how we currently communicate with families about school related issues, and we decided to create a survey to get more information about how we can better reach out to encourage family involvement. We also will spend the spring identifying ways to support a home/school partnership that offers academic workshops, homework tips, child development tips, etc. Please keep an eye out for a survey sometime in February.

Response to Intervention: Over the past few months, teachers in grades K-2 have begun to implement a relatively new program aimed at reaching the needs of all students. The goal of this program is to provide children with the skills they need early on in the instruction process, in contrast to special education services, which offer remediation in response to a lack of progress over time. The basic premise of RTI (called "mix-up" in grade 1 and "scramble" in grade 2) is for teachers to provide instruction that is truly targeted towards the needs of each child. Here is an overview of how it works:

1. 1st grade teachers identify an important skill like sight word identification. Teachers provide whole group instruction during the regularly scheduled literacy time to help all kids learn how to recognize lists of sight words.
2. After giving students an opportunity to practice, students are then assessed to see how well they have mastered the skill. Teachers look at the assessments and make decisions about which students need support and which students need further practice or even challenge work.
3. Teachers then group children (across the grade level) according to their needs and design activities that will address those needs. By design, groups are not always the same size. Students who need intense instruction might be in a group of 2-3, while a child that needs more practice goes into a group of 12.
4. Groups then meet during "Scramble" or "Mix Up" time, which consists of 30-minute sessions three times per week that have been set aside to do the small group work. In K, the intervention time happens twice for apples and twice for bananas. Classroom teachers each take a group, and rely on other staff to do the same; the literacy specialist, the ELL teacher, and the learning center teacher all come in to work with intervention groups as well.
5. Students spend up to 3-4 weeks in the same groups during this intervention time, hopefully making significant progress towards acquiring the essential skill being taught.

(Continued on page2)

Currently the focus for RTI is on literacy. However, 1st grade teachers have also been able to create a second set of intervention blocks for math in the afternoon. The hope is that this approach will provide students with a solid foundation of skills that will prevent gaps from surfacing in the upper grades. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you have about this approach.

Progress Reports: Progress reports are due to come home on Monday, January 31st. Please take the time to review the scores and comments in the reports. Teachers spend hours providing instruction and gathering data so they can accurately report your child's progress and make thoughtful comments about your child's development. If you have any specific questions, please contact the classroom teacher. General questions about the progress report can be directed to me.

Thanks, Mark Nardelli

From the PTO

Auction: Live Auction Casino Night & On-line Silent Auction!!



Coins for Kids



Science Night



Talent Show



Day-After-Day Fundraiser Reminder



Spring Auction news -- donation request letters have been mailed to local businesses and donations are coming in--we've already gotten some great items for our online silent auction and the live auction to take place during our **Casino Night on March 19th**. Among them--a weekend stay at the Hamilton Princess Hotel in Bermuda, Red Sox tickets, gift certificates and much more. Check out the letter sent home in your youngest child's backpack this week for ways you can help and ideas for items you can donate. And mark your calendar and keep an eye out for invitations to the Casino Night and details on how to bid on items on the online-only silent auction (to be held March 7-18). For questions or to make a contribution, please contact Jennifer Conley at Jennifer@gooddeedsllc.com.

Our ongoing fundraiser "Coins for Kids" ends January 31st--check for loose change under the couch cushions, under the car seats or in old coat pockets. The class from each grade with the most dollars raised will receive a fun prize! Contact ssrusso@comcast.net with questions.

The **Science Fair** is fast approaching--sign up by January 31st for the February 4th evening event. Check out the PTO website and click on the Science Fair link, <http://horacemannpto.org/science-night-2011.html>, to register your child or see the Science Fair "recipe book" for great project ideas. Please email questions to sciencenight@hotmail.com.

Talent Show registration is also in progress--please email MaryBeth DeNucci at mbdenucci@aol.com with your child's name, grade, classroom teacher, contact adult's name/email address, a description of their "talent" and permission to be photographed as the show will be recorded and DVDs of the show will be made available for sale. Each child can only perform in one act - no exceptions. The talent show is scheduled for April 9th at Day Middle School Auditorium--Registration closes on February 11, 2011.

The Day-After-Day Fundraiser is happening February 5, 2011 at the Crown Plaza, 320 Washington Street, Newton. Looking forward to seeing each and every one of you! Day-After-Day loves a party and loves to party! If you plan to attend, please rsvp as soon as possible in person at Day-After-Day, email: dayafterday@att.net, or phone: 617-964-1202.

A special thanks to Mr. Nardelli for a great presentation of the Progress Report Process & Procedures--those who didn't attend missed out on new changes to evaluation scoring guidelines. Mr. Nardelli will present on how to prepare your child for the MCAS in March -- details will be communicated as the evening approaches.

Our friendly crossing guards, Tara and Debbie, would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the PTO and the parents that gave them holiday gifts. Much appreciated!

READ NEWSNOTES, COMMUNITY NEWS AND CLASSIFIEDS ON THE NEWLY LAUNCHED & REDESIGNED PTO WEBSITE:

<http://horacemannpto.org/newsnotes.html>, <http://horacemannpto.org/community-news.html>, <http://horacemannpto.org/community-classifieds.html>.

NewsNotes, Community News and Classifieds are published by the PTO bi-weekly. Please email items of interest to hmnewsnotes@lists.neighborhood.net.

The next deadline for submissions is 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 8.

