



NEWSNOTES

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

March 4, 2011

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

Spring Auction &
Casino Night
Saturday March 19th

MCAS Testing
March 22, 23
Full day Tuesday, early
release Wednesday

Horace Mann Talent Show
April 9

Spring Break
April 18-22

Scholastic Book Fair
April 28th & 29th

"Reading with Sundaes"
Friday, April 29th

Next Edition: March 18

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From Mark's Desk

Dear Horace Mann Families,

Welcome back to everyone from the February break. The Nardelli family spent a few days on the Cape pretending to be on a warm, sunny island somewhere. It worked as long as we were in the pool, but it was hard to convince the girls that shell collecting on the beach in February was tropical. At the very least, I think we all returned feeling rested and ready to take on the next chunk of the school year. As we try to refocus here at school, I also wanted to occasionally offer some thoughts about how to work with your children at home. Today's suggestions focus on the morning routine:

1. **Get a timer (or use one on your microwave or Smartphone).** If you have a child who can easily take five minutes to put on one sock, try using a timer to get your dawdler on the move. Kids naturally love to make a game out of things. If you challenge him to beat the clock, he'll be less likely to daydream and become distracted while getting ready.
2. **Stick to regular morning routines.** Whether you decide that showers in the morning fit better into your grade-schooler's schedule or your child prefers to brush her teeth before getting dressed, keep the order of tasks consistent. Sticking to the same morning routine day after day will speed things up because she will be more likely do what she needs to do without any reminders.
3. **Pack up beforehand.** Have your grade-schooler pack up his backpack the night before. Homework, library books, umbrella -- anything that needs to be taken to school the next day should be in his bag, ready to go. Designate a spot near the door for bags, shoes and jackets.
4. **Make lunches ahead of time.** Sandwiches can easily be made the night before. You can also put fruit, string cheese, box of milk or water bottle, or whatever else will be going into the lunch bag together on a shelf in the fridge. That way, you can save precious extra time by not having to look for each item in the morning.
5. **Make it a team effort.** If you present the idea of making it out of the door on time as a family project, your grade-schooler is more likely to get enthusiastic about getting on board. On mornings that you make it on time, say, "We are a great team." If you end up late, avoid placing blame on your child and say, "I know we can do better tomorrow." (courtesy of <http://childparenting.about.com/od/schoollearning/tp/morningroutines.htm?p=1>)

Dr. Seuss Day and Read Across Horace Mann: On Tuesday, March 1st we celebrated the works of Dr. Seuss with a door decorating contest and an assortment of guests who were invited into classrooms to read one or more Dr. Seuss selection. The guest readers included Superintendent David Fleishman, former Principals Joe Russo and Greg Hurray, Day Principal Brian Turner, and many others. I personally enjoyed my visit to Ms. Olmixon's class where we read *The Lorax* and discussed its implications in the real world. If you have a chance to come into the building this week, be sure to check out the door decorations. They are festive, colorful, and creative! At the end of the day, we also celebrated our own version of Read Across America...the entire Horace Mann student body sat out in the hall at 12 noon and read silently for 25 minutes together. It was a great way to end a fun day!

From Mark's Desk (continued)

Home/School Communication Survey Results: Prior to the break, I sent out a survey asking how families currently keep informed about school events. Overall, 90 people responded to the electronic survey and another 30 responded on paper. I compiled the results and shared them with the school council. If you would like to see the electronic results yourself, click on this link: <http://www.surveymethods.com/Publish.aspx?1fX8TbDfHA%3d> or paste it into your browser. Although there were really no surprises, we did make some decisions about how to move forward. We will continue to offer info about important events in both electronic as well as hard copy versions. We will also increasingly take advantage of our Blackboard Connect system to make automated phone calls when appropriate. Finally, we will place sandwich boards at the front, rear and DAD (side) entrance to relay messages for people who regularly come to HM for drop-off or pick-up.

MCAS: March represents the first round of MCAS testing for students in grades 3, 4, and 5. This round of tests will focus on reading and writing, and our staff members have been thoughtfully working to prepare students to be successful. This includes teaching strategies for extracting important information from text as well as how to write clear, well supported responses in an organized way. While we obviously want students to do well on MCAS, we also want to keep the role of standardized testing in perspective. In addition to MCAS information, our emphasis at Horace Mann has been to use everyday performance on classroom tasks to inform instructional decisions. Unlike MCAS, daily informal assessments can provide timely information that will allow students to make progress on skills each day throughout the school year. MCAS results cannot have the same day-to-day impact in helping children acquire critical thinking and problem solving skills. In light of this, we must collectively strive to convey a message about standardized testing that is balanced and reasonable; one that reduces stress and anxiety and at the same time encourages hard work, critical thinking, and problem solving.

Sincerely,

Mark Nardelli

From the PTO Officers

Welcome back from February break. As you know, the month of March tends to drag by slowly as we anxiously await warm spring days and green grass. We hope that you have marked your calendar for the Horace Mann Spring Auction on March 19th to spice up the month! If you have not yet attended a school auction we encourage you to join other Horace Mann adults for an evening of gambling, dancing, bidding, fun and laughter. Live auction items include fabulous concert tickets, Red Sox tickets, flying lessons and a diamond necklace! You will find a red envelope in your child's backpack today containing your invitation. The silent online auction begins March 7th. Many great items have been donated this year from your every day needs to some really exciting activities/events; camp memberships, restaurants and sports memorabilia. Be on the lookout for your online opportunity to bid for these items through "Bidding For Good".

Earn \$\$ for Horace Mann with every purchase from Amazon.com. We are now linked to the Amazon School Rewards program that will pay Horace Mann 4-15% of your total purchase for everything you buy at Amazon.com. To make it work, go to the PTO web site <http://horacemannpto.org/> and click on the Amazon School Rewards link. Tell your friends and family; anyone can make money for our school by clicking through this link to buy!



Think Spring!

Horace Mann
Spring Auction &
Casino Night
March 19th

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, March 15, 2011.

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