



Ben Franklin Herald

April 2010

Mr. Michael Minnick, Principal
Benjamin Franklin Elementary School

Office: 724 465-5637
Fax: 724 465-1070

From the Principal

Greetings parents, guardians and community members! Indiana Area School District is committed to excellence in educating each student to become a self-directed lifelong learner and a responsible citizen in a changing global society. As we set our sites on this mission, we continually strive to improve the safety and culture of our school.

School Safety

Our students deserve to feel safe when they come to school. Here are just a few measures we are taking to improve our learning community from the perspective of school safety:

OLWEUS: The Ben Franklin Core Team meets regularly as we prepare to launch this *bully prevention initiative* at the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year. For more information on how IASD defines "bullying" and what our Bullying Policy is, go to the district website @ www.iasd.cc/

Safety Drills: Ben Franklin will practice our *Tornado Drill*, as well as our *Shelter-in-Place* drills later this spring. *Parking/Drop-offs:* I appreciate your efforts to adhere to the recommended traffic direction when dropping-off your children. Our parking lot and the student drop-off area in particular are much safer as a result. I do ask that if you sit and watch your child until he or she is all the way in the front door, that you pull all the way forward so that others can continue the flow of traffic through the lot. Thank you! *Cell Phones:* Although cell phones are permitted in the school, they should be kept out of sight, preferably in the student's book bag/locker and turned "off"; they are not permitted on the person of the child and are not permitted on field trips.

Assessment

We are entering a critical time of the year with PSSA tests beginning April 7th and running through the following week. I ask that you do your best to have

your children adhere to the start of the school day, as well as arrange any appointments that are not of an urgent nature to later in the day. Thank you for your support!

My closing thoughts...
"Effort Grows Ability" -Author Unknown

Michael Minnick

Kindergarten Registration

Kindergarten registration for 2010-2011 school year will be held at Ben Franklin, Monday, April 19 from 9 AM to Noon and 1 PM to 3 PM., and the morning of Tuesday, April 20 from 9 AM to Noon. Please bring proof of birth (birth certificate, VISA, or passport), current immunization records, proof of address, (driver's license, rent agreement, lease or deed). Copies will be made for your child's school file. Children must be 5 years of age on or before August 31, 2010. You will receive a registration packet when you arrive and your child will be screened for speech and readiness at that time. There will be an orientation program for parents on April 28 at East Pike School at 6:30. You may pick a packet up before registration to bring with you completed the day of registration. Packets are available in the main office.

CLASSROOM NEWS

KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten has been living in the world of dinosaurs! Our spring topics include plants and the farm, which will culminate with our field trip to a working dairy farm in May. A special thank you to all who helped with our spring party. We are so glad spring is here!

FIRST GRADE

First grade welcomes spring as we enjoy our science unit, "Organisms." We will be studying a variety of living things, including plants, freshwater organisms,

and woodland creatures. In Reading we will be in our fifth unit, Information Finders. We continue to work on basic addition and subtraction facts. Practicing with flashcards at home is a wonderful way to practice these important facts. In second grade, the students will be expected to show knowledge of the basic math facts. Please continue to listen to your child read at home. We will again test his/her reading level in May. We are working to make our last quarter in first grade a good one!

SECOND GRADE

April is an exciting month because 2nd graders are beginning their study of animals. The children will learn the various classifications of animals and the traits within each classification. Students will also become familiar with the natural habitat of various animals. Projects, activities, and research will be included in this unit. This study leads to a May field trip to Pittsburgh Zoo and Aquarium.

THIRD GRADE

Third grade has worked through the month like the March wind! The students have explored probability, investigated units of measurement, compared parts of a whole with fractions, and discovered the basic concepts of geometry. The students were actively preparing for the PSSA testing, with the testing to be completed in the middle of April. In Social Studies, our focus has been on the Eastern Woodland Native Americans and our Pennsylvania Unit. We completed our units just before our field trip to the Senator John Heinz History Center.

FOURTH GRADE

Fourth Grade students will be completing PSSA Reading and Math Assessments beginning April 7 and the PSSA Science Assessment on April 27. Students have begun Basic Aid Training with Mr. Cadile, a program that focuses on basic first aid and safety through the American Red Cross. In Math the students will be reviewing topics and concepts in preparation for upcoming assessments. Following testing they will be focusing on fractions and decimals in Math class. In reading class the students will be completing book reports for the required March animal book. They will also review concepts for the PSSA Assessment. Miss Burkey will be a guest teacher for the story "Adelina's Whales." In science the fourth graders will be working on the solar system unit. They will be researching a planet and presenting the facts to the rest of the class. In social studies, the students will be starting the final section of states and capitals.

FIFTH GRADE

In math classes students will study the units of linear metric measurement and learn how to find the perimeters and areas of various two and three dimensional geometric shapes. The students will also measure solids and shapes, as well as weight, mass, temperature, volume, and capacity. In reading classes students will practice making inferences, identifying figurative language, and recognizing plot, character, theme, and setting. Students will also read and classify various genres of literature.

After PSSA testing, students will begin the Living Off the Land unit in science. We will explore different topics about our environment starting with the relationship between plants and insects.

SIXTH GRADE

The students are scheduled for the Junior High and one quarter of their Ben Franklin Elementary School experience remains. The focus this month will be on mastery of the many skills and concepts that come with this final elementary year. We will continue to stress the importance of good work habits and organizational skills. Homework completion is always important both for practice and preparation for the next class. After a long awaited spring break with their families, the students will return refreshed for PSSA testing. Testing will be done April 7-9 and 12-13. The remaining days will be busy and productive.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Tips for Helping Children Prepare for the PSSA Tests and Dates:

Students in grades 3 through 6 will participate in the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA). The following subject areas will be assessed:

April 7-16: Reading and Math (Grades 3 through 6)

April 19-23: Writing (Grade 5)

April 26-30: Science (Grade 4)

These tests show how your child and all the students in their school are doing toward becoming proficient. Parents play an important role in getting students ready for tests. Here are some suggestions for how you can help your child prepare for these tests.

- Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep the night before the test.
- Make sure that your child eats a healthy breakfast the day of the test.
- Make sure your child wears comfortable clothes.

- Let your child know that he should take the test seriously and do his best.
- Talk to your child about what to do while taking the test, including:
 - Paying attention to directions
 - Asking questions about the directions if they are not clear
 - Reading each question carefully
 - Eliminating wrong answer questions right away, then concentrating on the remaining choices
 - Checking answers

MUSIC

A "note" of thanks goes out to the Ben Franklin PTA for the generous donation of box top and food label points for the purchase of two guitars for the music room. Each fifth and sixth grade student has learned to play at least two chords as an accompaniment to several of our music class activities. The fourth graders will get an opportunity to play the guitars in the very near future. Thank you to all the students and families for saving the labels and to the PTA for supporting music education in our school!

ART

Kindergarten and first grade are working on ocean paintings based on the books *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni and the *Rainbow Fish* by Marcus Pfister, respectively. Second and third graders are sculpting animals and bowls for their clay projects. Fourth graders are completing a printmaking project based on Ancient Greek art. Fifth graders are creating a clay project based on an item they would take on their social studies travels (*Westward Expansion*). Sixth graders designed computer graphics which will be added to their clay project.

PLEASE SAVE THE DATE: The Ben Franklin Student Art Show will be the evening of Tuesday, April 27. Every student at Ben Franklin will have at least one project on display. Enjoy an evening with your family and friends at this celebration of the arts! (Students who attend the Art Show may take home their clay project that night.)

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

As the weather gets warmer, we will start to take classes outside again to use the Project Fit Equipment. We will be working on improving our fitness levels by using the various stations. This equipment can also be used by families in the evenings. Feel free to come use the equipment with your children and they can show you the exercises that we are working on in class.

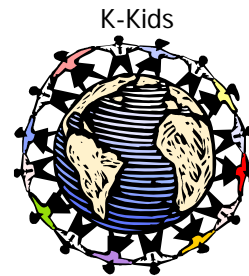
ESL News

TESTS! TESTS! TESTS!

All ESL students have now completed the annual English Language Learner Assessment (ACCESS). This test was required by law. Results in listening, speaking, reading, and writing of English should be received by June 31.

In April, grades 3-5 ESL students will also be required to take the PSSA test. Students who are in the first year of our program will not take the reading and writing sections of the test. All second year students (and above) must take the entire PSSA.

Get lots of rest to be ready for the PSSA test!



"We Build"

Thank you to everyone who attended the Academic Project Fair! The K-Kids concession stand was a success and we raised over \$60.00 for Alex's Lemonade Stand!

The 1st Annual School Carnival will be on Friday, April 9, 2010 from 6-8pm! It is free to attend! Bring your spare change to play the carnival games and eat popcorn, snow cones, and drink some lemonade! Or you can buy an All-Game pass for \$3.00 and play as many games as you want! Childcare is available for free for children under the age of 5.

Win or purchase raffle tickets to enter the drawings for great prizes from local businesses and Ben Franklin Teachers and Staff!

Please bring your family for a fun evening of laughter, games, and prizes!

PTA[®]

everychild.onevoice.[®]

Scholastic Book Fair

The Scholastic Book Fair will be held in the Ben Franklin School Lobby starting Tuesday, April 27th through Thursday, April 29th during school hours. Family and friends are invited to shop the Book Fair during our Special Family Event Night on Tuesday, April 27th from 6:30-8pm. Don't miss this opportunity to purchase books and visit the Art Show.

Academic Fair:

A huge thank you to all the students who participated! We had 32 projects entered this year! The projects were all amazing and well done. Thank you to our judges for the evening: Karen Lowman, Meryl Stillwell, and Steve White. They did a fantastic job discussing the projects with our kids. Thank you to all of the parents that helped as well!(Rita and Mark especially.)

Spring Spirit Sale:

Order forms are due no later than April 9th. Make checks payable to Ben Franklin PTA. All money is due in with the order forms! The logo will be the feather with the I for Indiana. Items will arrive the week of April 30th. Contact Jaime Kunselman with questions.

Blood Drive

The American Red Cross Blood Drive was held on March 15, 2010. We would like to thank the following people for all their support, help and donations that made this event special including Candace Adamson, Jamie and Mark Kunselman, Lynn Simmerman, Rita Schreckengost, Melissa Ryan, Dana Smathers, Stacy Kovalchick, Stacy Simmons, Kelly Mouser, Michele McGarvey, Jodi Semone, Melinda Juart, Mr. Minnick, Kathy Bruner, Mr. Cadile, Mr. Stanek and all the Pint-Size Heroes. A very special thank you to all the Donors who came and gave so generously.

Joan Moran

Christine Slupek

Blood Drive Committee

Market Day Update

Congratulations to Miss McCutcheon's Kindergarten class in Room 12. They are the winners of the Dessert Fundraiser contest held last month with a sales total of \$108.00. Their class will receive a snack party presented by Market Day and the Ben Franklin PTA. All Dessert sale totals are posted on the bulletin board outside the office. Many thanks to everyone who participated in the contest.

The next Market Day sale will take place on Monday, April 12, 2010. The cut-off date to order for this sale is Tuesday, April 6, 2010. Thank you to everyone who purchases Market Day and also to all the volunteers who help with delivery every month. If you haven't tried it, please take a minute to look over the order form. There are many quality items for you and your family. Ordering Market Day is easy. You can order every month or only when you choose to. There is no pressure to buy something every month. Ways to Order Market Day:

1. Fill out Market Day flier that is sent home with your child & send it back to school.
2. Order on-line (www.marketday.com) and pay on-line.
3. Order on-line (www.marketday.com) and pay in person on the day of the sale. Cash, check, EBT, money order, and VISA/MC accepted.

An advantage to ordering on-line is the ability to order clearance items. Every month Market Day offers many items marked down to great prices as clearance. These items are only available on-line. Anyone having questions about Market Day please call Stacy Kovalchick at 724-354-4629.

Spaghetti Dinner

The 5th graders are hosting a Spaghetti Dinner on Thursday, April 15 from 4-7pm in the Ben Franklin Cafeteria. The tickets are \$5 for students and \$7 for adults and can be purchased now from any 5th grade student or in the lobby April 6,7,and 8 from 8:30am-9am. The deadline for ticket sales is April 9th. Please look for a flyer to come home with your Ben Franklin student the week of March 25. If you have any ticket questions you may contact Carol Harkleroad (724) 463-3873. Each 5th grader is excited to have an opportunity to take an active role in this event which is designed to help defray the cost of their 6th grade field trips. We hope to see you there!

ATTENTION 6TH GRADE PARENTS:

Monday, April 12th is the next planning meeting for the sixth grade activity. We will meet at 6:30 pm in the cafeteria.

The Sixth Grade Activity is planned for Friday, May 7th from 6-9 pm in the gym. In preparation of the sixth grade activity, the food committee will be asking for donations to make this an enjoyable evening for our children.

Homeroom 22/Mrs. Beard – a gallon of spring water and tortilla or potato chips

Homeroom 24/Miss Palya – container of lemonade and pretzels or brownies

Homeroom 26/Mrs. Horvath – container of fruit punch and 1 dozen cookies

A letter will be sent home a couple of weeks before the activity for you to fill out. Please watch for it in the backpacks.

Yearbook Committee – is still looking for school related pictures of this year's sixth grade class from their kindergarten to sixth grade year. Please send them into the office as soon as possible. Please put them on a cd or send in copies. We cannot

guarantee that originals will be returned. Thank you.

The Think Spring Concert held on March 13th was a fun and successful evening! The Ben Franklin PTA and Ben Franklin Technology Club raised a total of \$4000. Thank you to all Ben Franklin parents and PTA members for their support. We couldn't have done it without the help of the following people: Mike Minnick, Kathy Bruner, Kelly Thomas, Chris Slupek, Melissa Shanshala, Stacy Kovalchick, Mark Swatsworth, Lynn Simmerman, Andrea & Eric Ebeling, Joan & Steve Moran, Nancy Geary, Michelle Boston, Dana Smathers, Jaime, Jacob & Brody Kunselman, Terri, Ed & Danny Williams, Stacy, Casey & Jamie Simmons, Kacey Raible, Erica Connell, Ellen Werner, Jason Olear, the Ben Franklin Singers and the Ben Franklin Jazz Band. Special thanks to Sean Moran, Mark Garrick, and The Vogues for a great concert.

Thanks to the many PTA members and local businesses who aided in basket donations for our Spring Concert:

Jake Davis - State Farm Insurance

Penny Zimmerman - Zimmerman International

Stephanie Drahnak - Indiana Sportscards

Office Outlet

Lisa Wymer - Mary Kay

S&T Bank

Lynn Simmerman

Market Day

D's 422 Salon

PTA Officers 2010-2011

Election of PTA officers for the coming year will be held at the next PTA meeting on Tuesday, April 13. A list of officer nominees will be posted outside the office on April 1, 2010.