



Ben Franklin Herald

FEBRUARY
2010

Benjamin Franklin Elementary School

Phone: 724 465-5637

Fax: 724 465-1070

From the Principal

Parent – teacher conferences are quickly approaching! Your role as your child's first and foremost teacher underscores the importance of your participation in these. It is for that reason that I welcome and encourage you to attend the upcoming Parent – Teacher conferences. I look forward to seeing you!

Have you ever noticed that public education is full of acronyms? Sometimes they make *our* heads spin, so I can only imagine how confusing these can be for parents. Please take a look at just a few of our favorites ☺ listed below. If by chance your favorite(s) aren't included ☺ be sure to call my office and I would be happy to share any background knowledge or insight that can assist you!

NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association) – this local assessment is being used to measure your child's learning progress in the areas of mathematics and reading. We consider this a local assessment that compliments curriculum-based ones, as well as the PSSA (state level).

OLWEUS (Bullying Prevention Program) – named after Dr. Olweus, this is the most widely used and recognized school bullying prevention program. My core team, is currently being trained on how to effectively launch this program across our school as we prepare to do so for the '10-'11 school year.

PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment) -These annual tests are rapidly approaching and we at Ben Franklin remain steadfast in our preparations for these important measures.

These are just a few of the many things happening at Ben Franklin, as well as across our school district to help us become better educators and your children more successful learners. Your support and encouragement is greatly appreciated and in many ways, a critical element for our shared success.

Please continue to monitor the local news for weather forecasts so that you can prepare for the possibility of delays and cancellations.

Best wishes to you and your family!

- *Michael Minnick*

SPRING PICTURES

Spring pictures will be taken on Tuesday, February 16.

Kindergarten Registration

This year kindergarten registration will be held during the week of April 20. At Ben Franklin specifically, it will take place on Monday, April 20 and the morning of Tuesday, April 21. If you or someone you know needs a kindergarten packet to complete in advance, please stop by the school office and pick a registration packet up, as it will save you time on the day of registration if most of your paper work is complete. The process takes approximately 30-45 minutes. Please be sure to bring the child's birth certificate, something with your address on, the child's immunization records and of course, the child!

CLASSROOM NEWS



KINDERGARTEN

Snow was the theme of January. We read snowman stories, did snowman crafts, and colored snowman pictures while continuing to learn about beginning sounds, rhyming and adding new words on the word wall. The children showed wonderful cooperation as we did our mid-year assessments and are looking forward to the February holidays.

FIRST GRADE

The month of February is very busy in first grade! All first grade rooms will be completing the third reading unit in Treasures. We continue to gain more skills that help us learn to read; skills such as identifying main ideas, plot, context clues, and work patterns. In math we will be working with two digit numbers, place value, addition and subtraction, and number stories. Social Studies are full of learning activities about China, our Presidents, Lincoln and Washington, Dental Health, Black History, and our celebration of Valentine's Day. Your child's first grade year has already reached the halfway mark. Please continue to support and practice reading and math skills at home on a consistent basis.

SECOND GRADE

Second graders will continue with their 4th unit in reading during the month of February. The theme is Land, Sea, and Sky. We will be reading stories about animal needs, animal survival, ways to help our planet, wild weather, and habitats and homes. We will also be reading and learning about the Polar Regions. Hopefully, the children will share some of the information they are learning with you at home.

We will also be studying about important people in history such as George Washington and Abraham Lincoln as we prepare to celebrate Presidents' Day. Our Valentine's Day party will be held on Thursday, Feb. 11. Parent teacher conferences will be held on Monday, February 15. In just a few months, the 2nd graders will take a field trip to the Pittsburgh Zoo and Aquarium. The trip is scheduled for Thursday, May 6. Please mark this date on your calendar. More information about this trip will be sent home in the near future.

THIRD GRADE

January was a busy month for the Third grade classrooms. The students are continuing to discover the power of "Determination" in their reading anthology. The boys and girls also read about that famous American, Martin Luther King, Jr., and wrote their own version of "I Have a Dream..." Math brought the extra challenge of learning the multiplication process and memorizing those facts. They are also beginning the geometry unit, which explores shapes and solids, lines and angles, symmetry, area, perimeter, and volume.

FOURTH GRADE

Fourth grade is happy to welcome Miss Burkey, our student teacher, to room 17 with Mrs. Laverick. In math the students will be working with different types of graphs, finding range, median, and mode for a set of numbers and problem solving strategies. Following the graphing chapter we will move into division problems with remainders. Keep practicing those multiplication and division facts! In reading the students will write book reports for their Newbery books. Also, we will continue to read from the reading book Signatures and complete related activities. Students will complete a mini unit on Helen Keller. In social studies, the students will be learning about the Southeast states. We will be learning the state locations along with their capitals.

FIFTH GRADE

In math classes students will build fraction sense and learn how to simplify and compare fractions. These lessons will include problems using mixed numbers, decimals, and percents. They will also continue to practice and strengthen their use of correct math terminology. During the month of February students in reading classes will be practicing vocabulary strategies including recognition of homophones, context clues, word parts, multiple word meanings, and analogies. Students will also be exploring the lives of pioneers while reading the novels Caddie Woodlawn and Little House in the Big Woods. We are beginning our Food Chemistry Unit in science. The students will be studying and learning about different nutrients. They will also spend time testing different foods for starches, glucose, fats, and proteins.

SIXTH GRADE

February is upon us. The Family History Projects were a treat. It is our hope that the project was a fulfilling experience for all involved. Some important dates for the

month include a visit from the Junior High Guidance Counselors about **Junior High scheduling** on February 9th, the **Valentine's Day Parties** on February 11th starting at 2:30, **Parent-Teacher Conferences** on February 15th, and **Spring Pictures** on February 16th. There will be a **Parent Orientation** at the Junior High on February 17th at 6:30. Finally, the Junior High schedules mentioned earlier are due to homeroom teachers by February 19th.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

February is going to be a busy month here at Ben Franklin. On February 2nd, our 6th grade students will take part in Groundhog Shadow Day. This is a national program that enables students to spend a day with a working professional. Through this experience students will begin to see the correlation between school and their futures in the working world. As a school, we are excited to learn about the various careers that our 6th graders will explore. Guidance lessons for all students will focus on career exploration. During the elementary years, it is important to introduce various careers and the link between career and academics. During lessons, students will examine personal strengths, likes/dislikes, and academics. Sixth grade students will also begin the scheduling process for the Junior High School. Below is a list of some important dates:

Tuesday, February 9, 2010:

Jr. High Counselors visit 6th grade classrooms

Wednesday, February 17, 2010 at 6:30:

Parent orientation at the Junior High

Friday, February 19, 2010:

Schedules due to Ms. Polosky

GENERAL MUSIC

Congratulations to all the sixth graders for outstanding participation in the recent Festival of Immigration held at East Pike Elementary School. Our students joined with sixth grade students from the other district elementaries in a morning of ethnic folk dancing as a culminating activity for the social studies unit on immigration. All grade levels had some mid-winter fun this past week exploring high and low pitches and scale structure by playing boomwhackers. If you're thinking "What on earth is a boomwhacker?", ask your child. The students and I would like to say thank you to the PTA for using some of the food labels and box top points to purchase two guitars for the general music room. We will soon be using them in 5th and 6th grade classes. On a final "note", we recently welcomed a new IUP student teacher, Miss Amy Leonard.

ART

Kindergartners just finished making a wintery friend - a 3-D paper penguin. First graders are hard at work drawing their self-portraits. Second graders used plaster gauze to sculpt a bird, while third graders have been sewing their ugly dolls using a whipstitch. Fourth graders are painting with tints and shades, as fifth graders put the finishing touches on their self-portraits. Sixth graders will begin to sculpt a clay vessel using the coil hand building technique.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

As February arrives, we will be finishing our volleyball/beach ball unit and will begin our climbing and gymnastics unit. Students will be participating in a variety of activities, which include climbing on the traverse climbing wall, climbing on the cargo net, walking on stilts and participating in basic gymnastics rolls. Third through sixth grade students will also be creating their own gymnastic routines in small groups and will then demonstrate these routines to the rest of their class.

NURSE

School Dental Exams: The School Health Law requires that a dental examination be completed for all students in kindergarten and third grade. Individual letters were sent home last month to all students who had not returned a dental card from their private dentist. Please return the bottom portion of the letter indicating whether the exam was completed or if you would like to have your child examined by the school dentist. Dr. Brian Petras will be at Ben Franklin Elementary School on February 10 to perform the dental examinations. This school examination is merely a screening exam and no treatment will be provided.



K-Kids



“We Build”

The K-Kids will be selling Secret Admirer Valentine's in the lobby before school from February 8 to February 12. The Valentine's will be 25 cents each and will be a pencil and an eraser. Students can purchase these for their classmates, teachers and school staff. The Valentine's will be distributed during the Valentine's Day parties on February 11.

Thank you to the many people who contacted Ms. Zacherl and I about the collection of plastic lids being a hoax. Although there are legitimate sources to verify that this has previously been a hoax, the church that we are collecting them for have reassured us that they are truly collecting them. Thank you to everyone who has helped!

Don't forget about the TerraCycle collection! Check in the office if you need a new form for what we are collecting!

Please support our efforts to raise Money for Alex's Lemonade Stand, an organization that raises money for childhood cancer research, by purchasing items from our concession stand during the Academic Project Fair. More information will be coming home soon!



GEO BEE

On Tuesday, January 7th, Ben Franklin held our annual Geography Bee sponsored by the National Geographic Society. Seventeen finalists chosen from the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade-level competitions gathered in the gym to answer questions about physical features, cultures, and locations.

The sixth grade finalists included Jennifer Han, Landon Coy, Joey Cook, Cassidy Mouser, and Brianna Dalessio. The fifth grade competitors were Sadie McQuaide, Reed Harkleroad, Kathleen Tra, Jack Ferguson, Keaton Libengood, and Danyal Bajwa.

Fourth grade contestants included Vince Birch, Tommy Arbuckle, Braden Schrecengost, Tyler Moran, Sebashtian Brown, and Jacqueline Sprenger.

Jacqueline Sprenger and Vince Birch were the finalists who rose to compete in the Championship Round, with Vince emerging as the winner.

Vince will now take a test to qualify for the state competition held in April.

PTA

everychild.one voice.

REFLECTIONS

The Pennsylvania PTA Region judging is complete. The following Ben Franklin students won awards:

Avery Redd--3rd place, Primary Literature
Kara Gibbon--4th place, Intermediate Film Production
Chloe Kocinski--2nd place, Primary Photography
Grace Margita--3rd place, Intermediate Photography
Benjamin Strong--3rd place, Middle/Junior Photography

The next step is State competition!



FATHER/SON BANQUET



Join us for a “Night In The Jungle” on Tuesday, February 23, 2010 from 6-8 pm. Entertainment by Wild World of Animals featuring 14 different animals. Tickets are \$6 per person and will be on sale in the lobby from 8:30-9:00 am on February 9, 10, 11, 16, and 17. Order forms will be sent home with students.

It's Committee Time Again!

The PTA Nominating Committee will soon begin work on organizing the officers and committee chairs for the 2010-2011 school year. These are the individuals who work hard each year to plan the activities and programs for our Ben Franklin children.

If you would like to learn more about becoming a chairperson or have interest in any of the PTA committees, please contact Kelly Corrinne-Thomas at kellycorrinne@yahoo.com.

Letters will soon go out to existing committee chairs regarding interest for next year. PTA committees include: Father/Son, Bloodmobile, Book Fair, Yearbook, Reflections and many more.

Market Day Update

Ben Franklin PTA has made a profit of approximately \$1200 this year from Market Day sales. 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.

February 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8 <i>Market Day delivery</i>	9	10	11 <i>Valentine Day Parties 2 PM</i>	12 <i>Emergency Make Up Day– SCHOOL IS IN SESSION Early Dis- missal 11:45</i>	13
14	15 <i>NO CLASSES Parent Teacher Con- ference day</i>	16 <i>Spring Picture Day</i>	17 <i>6th grade parent meeting 6:30 room 107 at the Jr. High</i>	18	19 <i>6th grade schedules due to Ms. Polosky Battle of the faculties 7 PM at the Sr. High</i>	20
21	22	23 <i>Father/Son Banquet 6PM in the café</i>	24	25	26	27
28						