

Williams-Cone School
Principal's Newsletter
February 2014
Randa C. Rineer, Principal



WCS-Making A Difference in our Students Lives Everyday

Pictured above are second grade students from Mrs. Kish's classroom actively engaged in independent reading.

Hello WCS Families!

Mid-winter is upon us which also means that we are in the middle of the school year. This time of the year can be challenging for students for many reasons ranging from inclement weather to increasing instructional demands. Given factors like this students may be more reluctant to attend school and/or be diligent with their assignments. However, families make a difference and WCS is filled with wonderful families that make a very positive difference in our community everyday. Here are a few areas that we can all work together to make a difference:

Literacy: Recently Audrey Harlow, WCS Literacy Teacher Leader and I attended an intensive four day literacy institute at Columbia University's Teacher's College in New York City. During our stay we taught and observed in public schools and learned many new strategies and practices. The institute continuously reinforced the importance of students being actively engaged in high volumes of reading at both home and school everyday including weeknights, weekends, and over school breaks. Current reading research demonstrates that kids need a balance of fiction and non-fiction text and the fastest way to move reading rates and levels is to engage kids in high volumes of reading.

This means that the focus should be on the number of pages read instead of the number of minutes read. To put this research into immediate practice the upcoming Winter Break 2 Principal's Reading Challenge will focus on suggested volumes of reading for each of the levels instead of the number of minutes read.

School Attendance: Consistent school attendance directly impacts each student's achievement. Amy Wallace, WCS Social Worker/Counselor, has written an article about school attendance featured on page 3 that includes attendance guidelines and support.

Supporting and Giving Back to Our Community: Receiving the 2013 National Blue Ribbon School Award has given our school a unique leadership opportunity. An important aspect of leadership is building awareness of and responding to the needs in our community. If you look at the statistics it is clear that feeding people in the state of Maine is an area of great concern. The state of Maine ranked 19th in the nation and 2nd in New England in terms of not having enough food to feed families. 1 in 4 children do not have enough food. Additionally, since 2004 there has been a 50% increase in the number of Mainers facing hunger. To respond to this need, throughout the month of February our

school will be hosting a food drive for the Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Program. Flyers were sent home earlier this week. The staff and I ask that you consider how you and your family can help support this initiative if you have not done so already.

There are many opportunities available for our students to grow, expand and develop their talents, interests and skills at WCS. This is because we have a community that values it's children and is dedicated to making a difference in their lives! Enjoy the upcoming break!

-Mrs. Randa C. Rineer, WCS Principal



Important Dates

February 11th: Science & Technology Committee Meeting, 6:00 P.M., Learning Commons

February 13th: 5th Grade Kid's Academy Performance directed by Kurt Dale Clark from Maine State Music Theatre: 6:00 P.M., WCS Gymnasium

February 17-21st: Winter Break 2

February 25th: FOWC Meeting, 6:30 P.M., Learning Commons ***Superintendent Brad Smith will join the meeting to discuss the upcoming 2014-15 budget***

February 27th: Variety Show, 6:30 P.M., Gymnasium

March 5th: Parent/Staff Bullying Education & Prevention Meeting, 6:00 P.M., Learning Commons

March 11th: Parent/Staff STEM Committee Meeting, 6:00 P.M., Learning Commons

March 25th: FOWC Meeting, 6:00 P.M., Learning Commons



JANUARY HIGHLIGHTS

While January began with two snow days and a delayed start, our school was in instructional high gear on the days that followed. Staff completed mid-year universal screenings in math and reading utilizing the AimsWeb assessments that were adopted district wide at the beginning of the school year. Staff engaged in professional development activities that included reviewing, analyzing and interpreting instructional needs based on the individual and whole group data during the January 17th in-service. Staff development activities also included a diagnostic review of opinion and argument writing, team building activities and a review of NECAP data. Based on the student achievement data, Staff are creating and/or revising classroom goals and identifying instructional practices based on this current student achievement.

The Parent/Staff Bullying Education & Prevention committee met in January to continue identifying activities and strategies that will provide support to victims of bullying and help to decrease bullying incidence. Plans include creating Reader's Theatre opportunities for students that will have an anti-bullying awareness. Students will present their Readers Theatre to classrooms and also perform at the yearly Arts Festival.

The Parent/Staff STEM (Science Technology Engineering & Math) Committee were very busy planning and interacting with community supporters including the Cooperative Extension, The Highlands Green and CREA (Cathance River Education Alliance). Partnerships are underway for creating more STEM opportunities including more STEM related KIDS Academy opportunities and a STEM Camp that will be held this summer. The committee is very excited about these offerings and partnerships with our community. Stay tuned for further details!

The FOWC officers met in January to discuss the group's current roles, responsibilities and the vision of the group. The group is in the process of creating a vision statement as well as goals as we begin to plan for the 2014-15 school year. In an effort to provide more efficient and effective support to our school community, the committee will be creating and/or revising leadership roles, committee activities and practices. The committee looks forward to sharing new opportunities and roles with our school community!

From the Learning Commons: Information Literacy and Marvel

Informational literacy is a major component of what we do in school and learning to find resources is part of that process. The Learning Commons Team would like to share a great resource with you! It's called Marvel and is hosted by Maine's Library Network. One resource many of our students have been using is Britannica's Online Encyclopedia, which is nothing like the encyclopedias many of us knew in school! From articles, to videos, to magazines, this interactive encyclopedia has something for everyone. But, there are great gems for parents and community members, too. For example, you can access all Maine newspapers and even world-wide publications through Marvel.

Want to try Marvel at home? This is a free resource for all Maine residents. Visit this link to get started: <http://libraries.maine.edu/mainedatabases/gettingstarted.ht>

Variety Show News

Mark your calendar for Thursday, February 27!! That's the night of the WCS Variety Show. The show begins at 6:30 in the gym. The suggested donation is \$2.00/adult, \$1.00/child or \$5.00/family. There will be a bake sale during intermission as well. We hope to see you at this fun family event.

For cast and crew:

Rehearsals are off to a good start. Please remind students to practice at home and especially during vacation week. This will help to keep the acts fresh. Here is the schedule for what's coming up:

Rehearsals: Wednesday, Feb 12 (3:30-5:30)

Dress Rehearsal: Tuesday, Feb 25 (3:30-6:00)

School Show: Wednesday, Feb 26

Evening Show: Thursday, Feb 27 (6:30)

Snow Date for evening show: Tuesday, March 4

