

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



WCS: Counting Down to Summer But Staying Focused & Learning Lots!

Hello WCS Families!

It is June and I find myself asking (like I always do) where did the school year go??? This has been a remarkable school year for WCS. Many great things have taken place in our school community this year including receiving the 2013 National Blue Ribbon School Award, the installation of new playground equipment, the creation of new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) opportunities, Kid's Academy offerings ranging from tennis to theatre as well as the formation of new community partnerships including Maine Pines Tennis, The Highlands, Highland Green and The Maine State Music Theatre. These and many other learning opportunities took place throughout this year which of course would not have been possible without the support of **YOU**-our tremendous community!

As we prepare to end this school year, the staff and I are spending time reviewing and analyzing student data, work samples and student achievement to assist us in making plans and instructional designs for the 2014-15 school year. Included in this information is data from the Governor's Report Card that was released in May 2014 by the Maine Department of Education. Last year WCS received a "A" on the Governor's Report Card. This year our school received a "B" on the Governor's Report Card. The report card grade is based on reading and math achievement for students in grades 3-5. The report card is based on only one assessment measure: the New England Common

Assessment Program (NECAP) that was administered in October of 2013.

The staff and I are highly committed to increasing individual and school wide student achievement. Throughout the year we meet weekly in Professional Learning Groups for the purpose of reviewing , student achievement data, creating, implementing and monitoring individual student action plans that focus on increased achievement levels. Instructional practices are continuously supported and monitored by our school's Data Team, Response to Interventionist, Literacy Teacher Leader and Principal.

As we move into the 2014-15 school year, the staff and I have identified the following additional strategies (including those listed in the above paragraph) for improving student achievement:

- *Increased monitoring and supports for students who have been identified as being in the bottom 25% of student achievement.

- *Greater communication, awareness, collaboration and accountability for student growth and learning between students/parent/teachers. Providing your child with consistent academic expectations and support is more important than ever! This includes ensuring that reading logs are completed daily (including weekends and vacations!), daily math fact practice, and consistent homework completion.

Math: *District will work to have closer alignment between the math curriculum and the Common Core Standards.

- *Increased and strategic Response to Intervention Support for students and teachers.

- *Identify and utilize new technologies to support math skills at school and at home.

Literacy (Reading & Writing):* Continue with and expand differentiated instructional practices in phonics, spelling and vocabulary.

- *Diagnose, Identify and implement research based strategies and interventions that will address specific literacy needs.

- *Provide students with increased opportunities to build their reading stamina and increase reading levels-at school and at home. This will include a more extensive Principal's Summer Reading Challenge. Details will be sent home prior to summer break! Stay tuned!

I thank you in advance for your support as we work together to continue our school's tradition of excellence and high student achievement. The staff and I love our students and sincerely endeavor to provide your children with quality educational programming, opportunities and experiences.

-Mrs. Randa C. Rineer, WCS Principal

Important Dates

June 2nd: Field Day, Grades 3-5

June 3rd: Field Day, Grades K-2

June 4th: 2014-15 Kindergarten Screening

June 5th: Lockdown Drill, P.M.

June 5th: WCS Arts Night, 5:30-7:00 P.M.

June 18th: 5th Grade Farewell Assembly, 2:00 P.M., Gymnasium

June 18th: Last Day of Kindergarten

June 19th: 2014-15 Kindergarten Mini-Day

June 19th: Last Day of School, 11:30 A.M. Dismissal**A bagged lunch will be offered through the school cafeteria program.**

June 25th: Trust for Our Future Golf Scramble, 8:15 A.M., Highland Green

July 15-17th: STEM Camp for Students Currently (2013-14 school year) in Grades 3-5



MAY HIGHLIGHTS

Maine Pines Tennis has been providing opportunities for students to try out tennis during recess over the past several weeks. A Tennis Academy, sponsored by Maine Pines was held for students in grades 2-5. Kelly Anchors, teaching pro at the Maine Pines and Sarah Ackerly, WCS parent volunteer led the academy that introduces and helps students to discover this sport. Book Buzzers led by volunteers from The Highlands were also part of the Kid's Academy line up for May. Many thanks to our volunteers for continuing to provide these wonderful opportunities for our students!

Several classes went on field trips in May. Fifth grade attended a concert presented by the Portland Symphony Orchestra at the Merrill Auditorium in Portland. The students also spent a day at the Chewonki Foundation in Wiscasset, participating in team building and goal setting activities including ropes courses and zip lines. Second grade students visited the Cathance River Education Alliance while kindergarten students attended a KinderKonzert at the Crooker Theatre and also visited Wolf Neck Farm.

Fifth grade students were administered the Science Maine Education Assessment and participated in a Step-Up Day at Mount Ararat Middle School. Several classrooms took walking trips to the Topsham Public Library and learned about the library's excellent resources and their summer reading challenge. Additionally, students in grades 3-5 traveled to Mount Ararat Middle School for the 5th grade band and special chorus concert. Fifth grade band students and fourth and fifth grade special chorus students presented a delightful all district concert on May 14th at Orion. Special thanks to Mrs. Morneau, WCS music teacher and Mrs. Powers, 5th grade band teacher/director for their leadership and support of this concert event.

At the beginning of May the "Tales Preschooler Program", facilitated by WCS parent, Kay Kessler participated in an amazing obstacle course under the direction of Mrs. Martin, WCS Physical Education teacher. The preschoolers came back to WCS at the end of May for a school tour led by Mrs. Rineer and also ate lunch with current WCS kindergarten students. The Tales program is a wonderful introduction to WCS for future WCS students.

Students who completed the spring break Principal's Reading Challenge were treated to a bonus recess and also created murals that will be on display around WCS. Over 100 students participated in the spring reading challenge. Many thanks to the parents and caregivers who supported their students as they completed this challenge!

Mentos, tornadoes, popcorn, chewing gum...what does all of this have in common??? The 4th and 5th grade STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math) Fair of course! These grade levels held STEM Fairs, requiring students to independently complete inquiry based projects based on the scientific method. The projects were a great demonstration of student interest, talent and possibly future careers for some!

From the Learning Commons: Audiobooks

Some people think literacy is all about reading. But guess what? It's about listening, too. A great way to experience literature is by listening to audiobooks. Here are some benefits to listening.

1. Students can listen to books above their reading level. This is especially helpful for those students who have difficulty decoding words, but whose comprehension is fine. By listening, they can experience the same popular books their friends are reading.
2. Audiobooks model fluent reading. Students will hear books read with expression by readers who usually have experience in the theater or film. There may even be a cast of readers who portray the different characters.
3. Audiobooks can help students gain critical listening skills. Listening can increase their attention span and their capacity to focus.
4. Audiobooks help develop critical thinking and comprehension skills. Students may hear new vocabulary and if you listen with your child, you can ask questions, make predictions and discuss the story.
5. Audiobooks may expose you child to different genres. If they read lots of fantasy, try a mystery.

Where can you get audiobooks? Try the public library, download titles from the Maine Infonet Download Library (they have ebooks to borrow also), search Amazon, or take a look at a purchasing service like Audible.com. Even recently released books are available as audiobooks. So this summer, when you're doing your best to keep your child reading, and they are trying not to read and it's just too busy, try listening to an audiobook. They're great for in the car, while weeding the garden, or just during some down time. Give it a try.

First Annual Trust for Our Future Golf Scramble

Trust for Our future, an education fund benefiting M.S.A.D. 75, is a nonprofit organization that expands educational opportunities, fosters partnerships and advances academic excellence for students beyond the general school curriculum. The Trust awards competitive mini-grants to teachers for innovative teaching and learning projects that are designed to engage students in meaningful learning. Projects focus on technology, the arts, science, health promotion, service learning, school and community presentations, career learning and visiting authors. Trust for Our future is seeking to provide greater learning capacity and opportunities for M.S.A.D. 75. The first annual Trust for Our Future Golf Scramble fundraiser will be held on Wednesday, June 25, 2014 at The Highland Greens.

Please join us!

Register online at: www.tinyurl.com/TFOFGolfScramble

Friends of Williams-Cone Updates

Friends of Williams-Cone held it's final meeting for the 2013-14 school year on May 28th. The group reviewed the proposed 2014-15 FOWC budget during the meeting. The budget, created by FOWC leadership, supports many areas of our school including classroom needs, field trips, and school wide events.

As mentioned in the May newsletter a new leadership structure will be implemented beginning September 2014. The leadership structure includes a fundraising co-chair, a volunteer co-chair, two treasurers, two secretaries and a Kid's Academy coordinator. It is anticipated that this new structure will promote greater communication, collaboration and support for FOWC and the WCS community. The following individuals have volunteered to be part of the 2014-15 FOWC leadership structure:

Fundraising Co-Chair: Lori Kane

Volunteer Co-Chair: Diane Bartels

Co-Secretaries: Dana Greenleaf/Devan Bailey

Co-Treasurers: Carey Douglass/Devan Bailey

A new role of "Room Parent(s)" will be added to the volunteer structure during the 2014-15 school year. A "Room Parent's" role will include communicating and organizing classroom (Ex. instructional) volunteer needs and school (Ex. fundraising) volunteer needs to parents. FOWC would like to have at least one Room Parent per classroom, but Co-Room Parents are also welcome too. If you are interested in a Room Parent position please contact Diane Bartels at: joeanddianebartels@yahoo.com.

FOWC would like to say a HUGE thank-you to outgoing co-chair, Mrs. Amber Hemond. Amber's hard work and support for our school is greatly appreciated.

Arts Festival

Our annual Arts Festival will be held on **Thursday, June 5th**. You will not want to miss this wonderful evening of Art and Music. We will begin at 5:30 with a time to see the fabulous artwork that students have created this year.

There will be classroom performances in the music room, opportunities to create art and the Special Chorus will sing. The Book Fair will be open that evening as well. Snacks will be available in the gym. The evening will end at 7:00.

More information will be sent home when we finalize plans and determine the schedule for that evening. We hope you will plan to join us for this wonderful family activity.