

PAW PRINTS

CLOVERLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PTA NEWSLETTER
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 WWW.CLOVERLYPTA.COM



January 2010

Volume 21, Issue 5

From the PTA President

I hope that this finds all our Cloverly families relaxed and rejuvenated after a festive Holiday Break. I know our household needed it, even the unexpected extra days of snowy weather! Other PTA members who needed a well-deserved rest were those who made Staff Appreciation, Reflections, the Holiday Music Concert, the Book Fair, and a host of other PTA and school programs and events such successes in December. Thank you so much for all of your efforts!

I would also like to express gratitude toward those members of our community who took the time to weigh in on our new grading and reporting system at the December PTA meeting. A summary of the feedback we received is posted at www.cloverlypta.com, and you will find more information concerning this issue inside of this month's PawPrints. If you are interested in becoming more involved in this and/or other timely matters concerning our school, I would strongly recommend that you attend the meeting being held this month for our newly formed Advocacy committee. Details concerning the committee are also in this month's newsletter.

As we begin 2010, we also have some exciting fundraisers and programs that are looking for your help to be successful. Opportunities in a variety of different forms are out there for you to become involved with the REACH Readathon, our first-ever PTA Golf Tournament and the PTA Variety Show, among others. Please consider volunteering—we need, and so appreciate, your help. We look forward to hearing from you! Happy New Year!

All the best,

Kimberlee Billok

January Calendar of Events (subject to additions/changes)

January 5	REACH Readathon Kick-Off Assembly	2:00p.m.
January 5	PTA Meeting	7:00 p.m.
January 5 & 6	Hearing and Vision Screenings Kindergarten and new students	
January 8	Principal/Parent Coffee (Kinder/staff lounge)	9:30-10:30 a.m.
January 11	Principal/Parent Coffee (1 st Grade/staff lounge)	9:30-10:30 a.m.
January 11-12	Variety Show First Run Sessions (after school)	
January 12	Principal/Parent Coffee (2 nd Grade/ staff lounge)	9:30-10:30 a.m.
January 13	Principal/Parent Coffee (3 rd Grade/ staff lounge)	9:30-10:30 a.m.
January 13	Author Visit – Fred Bowen (Grades 3-5)	
January 14	Principal/Parent Coffee (4 th Grade/ staff lounge)	9:30-10:30 a.m.
January 15	Principal/Parent Coffee (5 th Grade/ staff lounge)	9:30-10:30 a.m.
January 18	Holiday – no school	
January 21	Reading Night	6-7 p.m.
January 28	5 th Grade Musical	2 p.m.
		7 p.m.



PTA General Membership Meeting Dates

September 1st

October 6th

**November 4th

December 1st

January 5th

February 2nd

March 2nd

**April 7th

May 4th

**June 2nd

** Wednesday Meeting

This Month's Green Box Issue is...

As we head back to school after the holiday break, what would you like to see the PTA focusing their efforts on?

We look forward to your written thoughts on this issue! Please place your feedback in the green box at this month's PTA meeting, or e-mail your response to


kbillok@yahoo.com.

800 Briggs Chaney Road


Silver Spring, MD 20905

(301) 989-5770


From the Principal



Dear Cloverly Families:




I am so excited to see so many content, relaxed, and rejuvenated students and staff upon their return to school from winter break. I am certain that 2010 will be yet another productive year and an opportunity to celebrate our successes.



I'm inviting all parents to join me for an open discussion about our instructional program. Grade-level Parent/Principal Coffees will be held from 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. followed by a grade-level walk-through on the following dates:

January 8 – Kindergarten


January 11 – 1st grade



January 12 – 2nd grade

January 13 – 3rd grade

January 14 – 4th grade




January 15 – 5th grade


Bring all of your grade-level concerns and questions. Refreshments will be provided.




The Study Circles program has been cancelled for this school year.



When students are absent, we make every effort to provide missed work. However, please allow teachers **at least 24 hours** to prepare work to be sent home. If students will only be absent for one or two days, they may obtain missed work when they return. If a student is absent for more than 2 days, notify the office so that the classroom teacher may be informed of the extended absence and may collect the work as appropriate. Please be aware that in the case of an extended absence, a teacher may choose to modify and adjust the work to be completed.




Mark these dates on your calendars. The Maryland Schools Assessment (MSA) will be administered to all 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students during March 8-17. Science MSA will be administered to all 5th grade students between April 21 and May 11. Terra Nova (TN/2) will be administered to all 2nd grade students between April 26 and April 30. It is important for all students to be present during the administration of these tests. I am urging you not to schedule vacations or make appointments for your children on these important dates.




May all of our Cloverly families have a healthy, prosperous, and enjoyable new year.



Sincerely,



Melissa Brunson



Paw Prints is a monthly publication of the Cloverly Elementary School PTA. **Submission must be received by the 20th of each month.** Submissions should be emailed to the Newsletter Committee at

newsletter@cloverlypta.com





BOXTOPS – KEEP COLLECTING FOR THE VALENTINE’S DAY DRAWING!!

Keep clipping those Boxtops! Boxtops for Education labels are on General Mills (GM) products like Cheerios, Pillsbury Crescent Rolls, Froot by the Foot, Viva paper towels, some Kleenex products, and many, many other GM products.

More information on when to submit your Boxtops will be coming in mid January 2010 in the Friday Folders!

If you have any questions regarding the Boxtops for Education program please call Nancy Bryant at 301-384-1661. Happy New Year Everyone!!

Volunteers Needed for Celebrate Our World Week!

The Celebrate Our World Committee is seeking volunteers for this year's event taking place in early March. Help is needed in many areas. For example, you can volunteer to cover classes for teachers during lunch, or even help display works of art from our students at Cloverly. This year, Celebrate Our World Week promises to be a fun-filled and exciting event for our students and community. Don't miss out!



PTA Reimbursement Information

For any PTA members needing reimbursement for purchases made for the PTA there will be two deadlines for turning in your reimbursement requests. For purchases made from August until December of 2009, reimbursements need to be turned in by January 15, 2010. For purchases made from January to June of 2010, the reimbursement requests need to be turned in by July 15th. Thank you for your help with turning in your requests in a timely matter.

Jill Wingard, PTA Treasurer

Regarding the Superintendent’s Budget Proposal for the 2010-11 school year....

Our Superintendent, Dr. Jerry D. Weast, has released his proposed operating budget for next school year. The recommended budget proposes no new initiatives but allows our school and our school system to maintain the services and programs we are currently providing. The only increase – about 1 percent – is to help fund MCPS’ continued growth in enrollment.

Given the economic challenges at the state and county levels, the future of Dr. Weast’s proposal is very uncertain and before the budget receives final approval from the County Council and the Board of Education, the district could be forced to make some very difficult cuts. With his recommendation, Dr. Weast and the budget team – which included our employee associations and PTAs – released a list of areas that could be impacted should cuts to the budget need to be made. These are not final recommendations and we are hopeful that we will not need to make any reductions. We want to maintain the high level of service to our students that has yielded such outstanding results in our school and our system. However, we must be prepared.

With all of this uncertainty, it is more important more than ever that our parents and community members are fully informed about the budget and know exactly how to make their voice heard. A budget website has been created that includes a video presentation by Dr. Weast; the full budget book, as well as a summary; frequently asked questions and much more. Please take the time to learn more about Dr. Weast’s proposal and make sure the members of the Board of Education and the County Council know your priorities and your concerns. You can visit the website at <http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/budget/>.



Deposit Your Holiday Money!

This month is the perfect time for students to deposit holiday money in a Young Savers Account!

If your child does not already have an account, applications will be sent home in Friday folders this month. Please complete the application and have your child bring it and the \$10 minimum deposit to school on any Friday. Banking students will be called to the media center during morning announcements.

Parents/guardians may also pick up an application from the Sandy Spring Bank representative on banking Fridays from 8:30 - 9:00 AM, at any Sandy Spring Bank, or by emailing Renee Chen at dauidandreneechen@yahoo.com.

PTA Variety Show



Despite delays with our unexpected December snowstorm, exciting plans are underway for this year's Variety Show, which will be held on Friday, February 12th at the Olney Theatre. If you are interested in participating, you **MUST** have your sign-up form in by Wednesday, January 6th. Please reference the form for any requirements needed. First Run sessions (where acts will have an opportunity to demonstrate what they would like to do for the show) will be held on Monday, January 11th and Tuesday, January 12th after school at Cloverly. The responsible party for each act will be contacted with which First Run session the act is scheduled to debut at. Questions? Please contact Angela Edwards 301-421-5927 / are1000@comcast.net, Jill Doll 301-384-6914 / jilldoll@comcast.net, or Colleen Sullivan 301-879-9346 / colleensuv@comcast.net for more information.

Advocacy Committee News



Many thanks to everyone who attended the December PTA meeting and shared concerns regarding the new grading system. Feedback has been summarized and consolidated into one document, which can be accessed at www.cloverlypta.com. Ms. Brunson has shared these concerns with the Online Achievement and Reporting System (OARS) Team. The Advocacy Committee will meet in early January to discuss our next steps with regard to the grading system. If you would like to attend this meeting or would like more information about the Advocacy Committee, please contact Jenn Gruber at jenngruber@msn.com or 301-879-6028.

It's That Time of Year Again...

...For us to start thinking about PTA leadership for the 2010-11 school year! If you are interested in becoming involved with the Nominating Committee for next year's PTA officers, please contact Susan Quinn at 301-879-7199 / cojana@verizon.net for more information.

GET READY FOR THE REACH READATHON!!

Excitement is building over the return of the REACH Readathon to Cloverly Elementary! A Kick-Off Assembly will be held on Tuesday, January 5th featuring everyone's favorite magician, Joe Romano. Participation packets will be sent home after the assembly, and the program will also be held in conjunction with this year's Family Reading Night on January 21st. Look for more information in the packets, and **GET READING!**



Bingo Night News

Cloverly's 2010 Bingo Night will be held Friday, February 5th at Briggs Chaney Middle School from 7 – 9 pm! Want to help with Bingo Night? We need prizes for all the bingo winners. If you have received duplicate gifts or gifts that you are interested in regifting – donate them to our bingo night for prizes! We could also use any other donations you might be willing to contribute to use as prizes for our event. For more information and to get involved, please contact

Lynette Scaffidi at lynette.scaffidi@comcast.net

Childcare During PTA Meetings!

To reserve a space for your child for childcare for this month's meeting, please contact Jackie Stock by 7pm the evening before the meeting, so that there are enough caregivers on hand for the children present. Children must be out of diapers (3 or above) and although some quiet activities will be available, parents are encouraged to have their children bring additional toys and activities. Parents may provide a nut-free snack, but otherwise, food will not be available. Questions? Feel free to contact Jackie at 301-384-8315 / jackie.stock@jhuapl.edu for more information



Babies, Bosses, Busy Schedules...

5 Flexible Ways This Month to Participate in PTA-Related Activities

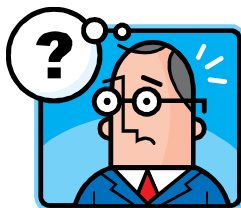
1. Interested in helping out with this year's PTA REACH Readathon and/or Family Reading Night? Contact chairperson Susan Quinn at cojana@verizon.net for more information.
2. Are you available to help the PTA with projects occasionally from home or work? Contact Kim Billok at kbillok@yahoo.com to be placed on an on-call list for tasks and to-do's that come up throughout the year.
3. Are you a business owner or know of a business that might like to sponsor an aspect of our PTA Golf Tournament? Please contact Mickey McLaughlin at mickeymclaughlin1970@yahoo.com or Susan Bossie at SusanBBossie@aol.com to get more info!
4. The Family Programs Committee needs donations of prizes for our upcoming Cloverly Bingo Night! Please see their article in this month's newsletter for more information.
5. Attend this month's PTA meeting on Tuesday, January 5th at 7:00 pm—your presence is greatly appreciated!



Mark Your Calendars:

The First-Ever Cloverly Elementary PTA Golf Tournament is Coming This Spring!

This new and exciting fundraising event will be held on Monday, May 3, 2010 at Hampshire Greens Golf Course. The Golf Tournament Planning Committee is busy making plans for the big event, and registration forms will be available in January. If you or your business would like to sponsor an aspect of the tournament, please contact Mickey McLaughlin at mickeymclaughlin1970@yahoo.com or Susan Bossie at SusanBBossie@aol.com for more information.



Frequently Asked Questions Concerning Grading and Reporting

(This communication is based on parent feedback at the PTA Grading and Reporting meeting on December 1, 2009. Input towards its creation was provided by the MCPS ES OARs team and Cloverly's Core and Leadership teams.)

Grading and Reporting

Q: How are teachers communicating to parents how their children are being graded?

A: By means of parent-teacher conferences, phone calls, individual letters, and monthly grade-level newsletters, teachers communicate to parents how their children are being graded. School-wide communications have already taken place in different venues, including but not limited to, Back to School Night, Academic Nights, and letters to the community.

Q: How are parents able to interpret report card grades?

A: An MCPS developed "How to Read Your Child's Report Card" was included with each report card during the first marking period. Parents can also contact the classroom teacher since they are responsible for reporting grades. The information available on the report card is designed to help parents interpret the information provided by teachers. The county has also provided a parent video on standards-based grading which can be found at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/cloverlyes. Click on the link *Grading and Reporting*.

Q: Are students being given opportunities to earn a rubric score of 4 on their checks for understanding or class assignments in all subject areas?

A: Yes. Students are being given opportunities to earn a rubric score of 4 on their checks for understanding and class assignments in all subject areas.

Q: How is consistency in grading being established and maintained among teachers within the same grade and also between grade levels?

A: There are unique measurement topics and detailed rubrics for each subject being taught at the different grade levels and in the different subject areas. Teachers within each grade level meet weekly to establish common checks for understanding and assignments for students at that grade level. Because students are at different levels of instruction, some of the checks for understanding and assignments are differentiated to meet the individualized needs of the students. Through vertical articulation, teachers at different grade levels collaborated to develop a common understanding of examples of what a rubric score of 4 looks like in each subject area.

Q: How will spelling be graded?

A: Starting third quarter or January 25, spelling tests will no longer be included in the overall writing grade on students' report cards. However, teachers will continue to teach and assess spelling, and test results will be sent home with students. Third and fourth quarter report cards will only reflect how students are spelling words within their writing assignments as a part of their overall writing grade.

Q: How are grades calculated in specials?

A: Grades are calculated no differently than the way they are for core academic subjects. There are measurement topics and rubrics for Art, Music, PE and Instrumental Music.

Q: How will fifth graders adjust to the new grading system when they go to middle school?

A: The middle school staff is aware that Cloverly Elementary School is piloting the new report card. They are aware of our grading system and will communicate with students during articulation and middle school orientation how they will be graded in middle school.

Q: What is the plan for the evaluation of students who apply for middle school magnet programs?

A: As in the past, students' grades in grade 4 will be utilized in the magnet application process for all students, including students from the pilot elementary schools. In previous years, first quarter grades from grade 5 were also utilized in the application process. This year, only students' grades from grade 4 will be included in the process, which ensures that all students' grades from every elementary school in the district are considered in this manner.

~ (continued on page 7) ~



Frequently Asked Questions *(continued from page 6)*



Student Motivation

Q: How are students being motivated to strive to do their best?

A: There are a variety of incentives that motivate students to reach their potential. Super Cubs is a school-wide award incentive program that awards 6-8 students at each grade level per quarter who have demonstrated effective effort, Cloverly C.A.R.E character traits, and progress on learning skills. Teachers promote effort in their individual classrooms in a variety of ways, including but not limited to, communicating praise and effective feedback, providing student examples, sending home weekly progress on learning and academic skills, holding individual student conferences, providing opportunities for students to earn a rubric score of 4 on checks for understanding and assignments, and allowing for students to graph their progress in their individual data notebooks. We believe it is the collaborative responsibility of the entire school community, staff, parents, and students, to promote effective effort and motivation.

Instruction

Q: What is the difference between "BCR" and "extending thoughts to make connections" especially for current 5th graders who will be going to middle school next year?

A: A Brief Constructed Response (BCR) gives students an opportunity to extend and explain their thinking when given a task or prompt which may include an opportunity for students to extend their thoughts to make connections. Students are expected to complete BCRs in all areas of the curriculum and during MSA testing, which is administered to students in grades 3-8. The foundation for student success in writing BCRs takes place in the elementary school. Separate from writing BCRs, students are given opportunities to extend their writing using the writing process.

Updates from the Safety Committee: Checking Sex Offender Registries

It's an ugly subject, and one we don't like to discuss in public, but using the information available to you on the internet could keep our children from becoming victims. What do you know about the people who play a role in the lives of your children? There may be many adults who are in contact with your children on a daily basis over short or very long periods of time. Often times, as parents or guardians, we don't know these people very well, but we place a certain amount of trust in them. "Sixty percent of all sexual assault offenders were classified by law enforcement as acquaintances of the victim."¹

What can you do?

Go to the National Sex-Offender Registry at <http://www.nsopr.gov/> or the Maryland Registry at <http://www.dpscs.state.md.us/sorSearch/> if you click "yes" to agree to the conditions of use, it will direct you to a page where you can search by name or location. You can search your zip code for the sex offenders living in your neighborhood, or you can choose to search regionally or nationally by using the last name and first initial of a specific person.

It is important for parents and guardians to realize that people who would harm children are not monsters hiding in your child's closet. These people can be someone you trust, and even a member of your own family. As a parent or guardian, you can sense when something is wrong with your child. Remember to trust your instincts.

Important tips

- Listen to your children. Pay attention if they tell you they don't want to be with someone or go somewhere. This may be an indication of more than a personality conflict or lack of interest in the activity or event.

- Be sure to screen babysitters and caregivers. Check out references with other families who have used the caregiver or babysitter. Once you have chosen the caregiver, drop in unexpectedly to see how your children are doing. Ask your children how the experience with the caregiver was, and listen carefully to the responses.

- Teach your children they have the right to say NO to any unwelcome, uncomfortable, or confusing touches or actions by others and to get out of those situations as quickly as possible. If avoidance is not an option, children should be taught to kick, scream, and resist. Reassure them you're there to help, and it is okay to tell you anything.

- Be sensitive to any changes in your children's behavior or attitude. Look and listen to small cues and clues that something may be troubling them, because children are not always comfortable disclosing disturbing events or feelings.

- Practice basic safety skills with your children. Make an outing to a mall or park a "teachable" experience in which your children can practice checking with you, going to the restroom with a friend, and locating the adults who can help if they need assistance.

Remember there is no substitute for your attention and supervision. Being available and taking time to really know and listen to your children helps build feelings of safety and security.

Adapted from "Know the Rules - General Tips for Parents and Guardians to Help Keep Their Children Safer." Copyright ©; 2000 National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.