

APRIL NEWSLETTER

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We encourage you to utilize the District and Middle School Web sites to obtain information. By going to the district site at www.windhamsd.org, you can link to all of the Windham Schools.

Important Dates in APRIL

April 5—Washington, DC Parent/Student Meeting 7 PM
April 7—School Dance 7-9 PM
April 10 and 11—Parent Conferences
April 19 -Spring Band Performance 7 PM
April 20—Spring Choral Performance 7 PM
April 24– 28—Spring Vacation
May 1-5—Washington, DC and Earth Shuttle Trips

Congratulations to the new parents at Middle School. Mr. and Mrs. Bairstow welcome Jackson Crawford and Mr. and Mrs. Hunter welcome Elizabeth Grace. All are doing well!!

6TH GRADE NEWS

Our sixth graders kicked off the month of March by participating in our International Unit. During this unit, students had the opportunity to select their own learning groups, sixth grade wide. Each group was responsible for determining the methods and strategies that ensured successful research and project completion surrounding the essential question “What makes your country important to the world?” Student culture groups demonstrated “expert” knowledge regarding their country through seven different projects such as data graphs representing monthly temperature, precipitation and average annual income and travel brochures of their country. Finally, after over two weeks of intense study, the sixth graders celebrated their learning in the form of two culminating events, the International Expo and International Banquet.

In Language Arts, classes are at various stages with their research and writing of their Immigration Paper. This report consists of seven paragraphs, each designated to a specific part of the immigration process. During this unit, students will learn many new skills from writing an outline to creating a bibliography. Students will also need to assimilate writing skills they have learned throughout the year such as thesis statements and Smiley Face Tricks.

As an extension to our Immigration Paper and upcoming water unit, our sixth graders visited the Lowell Cotton Boot Mills. There they participated in the “Power to Production” Program. Students built and tested water wheels and turbines. Next, they designed and built canal systems. After that, they traced the manufacture of cotton cloth from power to production using interactive power train exhibits. Lastly, they explored Lowell’s historic canal system and visited the Boot Cotton Mills Museum with its operating power looms.

SEVENTH GRADE

Science

Seventh grade Science classes are continuing to study genetics and have recently started to discuss human genetic disorders. The students enjoy the glimpse into their heredity and learning how traits are passed on from parent to offspring.

Math

The seventh grade Math classes are completing a unit on percents. They are discovering how percents are used in everyday life, including discounts, commissions, taxes, interest and percent change problems. The next unit will be Statistics.

The Pre-Algebra classes are completing a unit on multiplying and dividing signed rational numbers, including solving equations and inequalities. Next they will be exploring ratios, proportions and percents.

Reading

Reading classes are beginning to read the novel *Tangerine* by Edward Bloor. This award-winning story is one students are sure to enjoy. Active Reading Strategies will be used as we read the book. Also focused upon will be: theme, symbolism, vocabulary in context, elements of plot, characterization and figurative language. Mrs. Greenleaf will be visiting our classes to show students how to construct ‘Found Poetry’ and Cinquains.

Language Arts

The Language Arts classes will be focusing on grammar throughout the month of April. Students will be putting the grammar rules to good use as we continue to practice essay writing. Mr. Bairstow will be returning to his classroom the week of April 17th.

Spanish

Students had the opportunity to practice their oral skills through the use of microphones in the computer lab. They recorded information about themselves and their friends, such as name, age, physical characteristics, likes and dislikes.

French

Grade 6 students are finishing their quarter in French and are studying the vocabulary for animals. I hope this has been a fun quarter for them, and look forward to seeing them in my class next year.

Students in Grade 7 completed their comprehensive exam on Units 1-4 and are now beginning a unit on describing friends and everyday objects. Looks like lots of adjectives!

Eighth graders have also recently finished their comprehensive exam and now begin a new unit that will focus on some new vocabulary and the use of verbs in the past tense.



GRADE 8

LANGUAGE ARTS/ READING

It was an inspiring month in Language Arts, as we continue to explore this year's overarching theme of "tolerance" with a look at the Holocaust. An interdisciplinary unit designed to coincide with the World War II unit in Social Studies, students were able to "bear witness" to the topic through a variety of activities spread across the humanities. Students read the play "The Diary of Anne Frank," enjoyed a first-person narrative of a survivor's story in a performance in the oral tradition by Judith Black, and viewed a vivid and deeply moving "story with movement(aka Holocaust Ballet)" by the New England Dance Ensemble. Students were clearly inspired by the topic, as evidenced by the some of the stunning archival projects exploring the Holocaust.

MATH

Students in Algebra showed off their technology skills at the Curriculum Fair by demonstrating the graphing calculator, CBR motion detector and using the Palm Pilots to graph equations of lines. They have been working with this technology during their linear equations unit. The final assessment for this unit will be to develop an experiment to check for a linear relationship between two variables.

In Pre-Algebra, students solved real world percent problems involving discount, inflation, and interest. Students will begin their exploration into geometrical concepts, including surface area, volume and the Pythagorean Theorem.

SPANISH

In the final quarter of the school year, Spanish students in grade 8 will read about how Hector's friends give him a surprise graduation party. The timing seems appropriate since many of the 8th graders may very well have their own graduation parties. Students will learn the names of the various holidays that are celebrated during the year. Students will learn to talk about what they are doing right now using the present progressive verb tense. Students will offer their opinions about the choice of gifts. Students will command others to do things, and describe what they did in the past. Spanish students will use the computer lab to record their written descriptions and will listen to receive important feedback on their work.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Eighth grade Social Studies students have been studying WWII, the causes and war itself. A guest speaker, Mr. Paul Lavoisier, spoke to all the classes on the role of the soldier, and demonstrated his clothing and equipment. The students completed archives projects which were displayed for classmates and parents at the Swing Dance on Monday evening, March 27.

SCIENCE

Science 8 is conducting a unit on simple machines, which will include a Rube Goldberg project and a trebuchet made out of oaktag.

LE CAFE ROSA

On Wednesday, March 29, French and Spanish students in the 8th grade hosted Le Café Rosa for the Curriculum Fair. This café simulated an outdoor eating experience very much like the sidewalk restaurants found in many foreign countries.

The students provided all of the food and service in the café. There were waitresses and waiters, cooks, and hosts and hostesses. Some of the foods that were served included quesadillas, tacos and burritos, all forms of desserts, cheeses, and fruits.

The entertainment this year was provided by the school Jazz Band, the school percussion group, the select chorus, student rock bands, and others. Thank you to DJs Brendan Nesheim and Justin Wood for providing the music for the evening. In the past, this activity has been rated one of the favorites by the students and patrons alike.

Thank you to everyone who made this event possible.

Guidance

Ignite News

The Mentor of the Month for the month of February was Greg Scherer. Great job Greg.

The Theme for March was **Respect**. Our objective was to increase awareness of others and build the value of treating others with high regard apart from one's perceived status at school.

We are in the beginning stages of giving our mentoring program a new look. We have started by giving the program a new name. The students voted and M₂M was the winner. M₂M stands for Mentor to Mentee. We will be looking at new monthly themes and activities to introduce to the incoming 6th grade class. We are currently recruiting for new M₂M Mentors. Applications have been pouring in and letters will be going out announcing the new M₂M team shortly.

In April we will be having our end of the year celebration for all mentors. We had another great year of connections and look forward to all our new changes for the year ahead.

Physical Education News

Karate International demonstration/lesson in schools:

Joe Costa, owner and instructor of Karate International was very successful at Center School – He gave two lessons, to all students, through Phys. Ed. Classes. Now, he is graduating to the Middle School. Due to the schedule of Middle School Unified Arts classes, he will teach one class on Wednesday March 29, 2006 to half of the school population. The other students will have a lesson during the fourth quarter. Our hope is to have him back later in the year for a second lesson, maybe during Field Days. The goals that Joe and the Physical Education staff have for this event are as follows:

-To introduce a life-time activity, to students, in which they can participate for physical health and psychological benefits.

-To enhance the message of self control and good decision making that is taught by the guidance department and reinforced by all staff members. When dealing with stress, peer and social difficulties, or temptation to violence, students can learn to maintain their composure and use more effective methods to solve a problem.

The martial arts are often misunderstood and children especially are prone to think that it is a skill to be used for aggression and physical dominance. Rather, it is self disciplining, both physically and emotionally. The philosophy is to use one's mind rather than one's strength in dealing with problem situations and interactions.

Band and Chorus

Windham Middle School's Spring Band and Chorus Concerts will be on Wednesday, April 19 (Band) and Thursday, April 20 (Chorus) both at 7:00pm in the WMS Gymnasium. Please come and enjoy music performed by the many talented students that have participated in this year's music ensembles. They have all worked exceedingly hard and we are extremely proud of what they have accomplished this year!

7th & 8th grade Band & Chorus members: The second payment for the Great East Festival is due no later than April 12th. Students who paid the entire \$40.00 in February are considered paid in full. Parents who signed up to be chaperones will be notified shortly. Not all those who volunteered will be contacted as we have a limit to the number of tickets available for chaperones. All parents are welcome to attend the festival however. Any questions should be directed to either Mr. Cassidy or Mrs. Cuneo.

CURRICULUM FAIR

Many thanks to everyone who helped create a wonderful event. Café Rosa was exceptional, with creative French and Spanish cuisine. The High School Integration Committee presented excellent information about Windham High School. Extra events throughout the evening, including handhelds, online portfolios and technology in math, made for an informative evening for all.