

SEPTEMBER 2010

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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.

Club Reminders

Important Dates

Please continue to check the school calendar for changes:

<http://www.localendar.com/public/WindhamMS>

- September 10: School Dance 7-9 PM
- Sept. 14—16: 7th Grade trips to Browne Center
- Sept. 16: 6th Grade parents Camp Bournedale meeting 6:00 PM
- Sept. 16: Open House 7 –8 PM
- Sept. 20: Magazine Drive Kick-Off
- Sept. 23: Health Information Night for 8th grade parents 7:00 PM
- Sept. 24: Student pictures
- Sept. 29: 8th Grade Parent Information Night for Washington DC Trip 6:30 PM
- Sept. 30: Sports Team Photos 1:45 PM
- Oct. 1: 1st Quarter Progress Reports go home
- Oct 8: Early release day

Tennis Club starting 9/7, will run Tuesdays 3:00-4:30 for 8 weeks at Griffin park. Permission slips and info on rack in foyer and should be returned to Mrs. Rawley.

Yearbook Club starting 9/22, Permission slips and info on rack in foyer and returned to Mrs. Rawley's mailbox.

Fitness Boot Camp—Mark your Fall Calendars Look for 5 consecutive Boot Camp sessions to be held at Flex Appeal. Session 1 will begin on Sept 21st and run until October 28th. Bus transportation **TO** Boot Camp will be provided by the school, but students will need to be picked up at Flex Appeal at 4:00. Permission slips will be located just outside the front office. The cost is \$59.00, permission slips and payment should be given to Mrs. Hanlon. The Fitness Boot Camp will run from 3:00 pm until 4:00 pm.

- Session 2 Nov. 9th - Dec 16th
- Session 3 Jan 13th - Feb. 17th
- Session 4 March 8th - April 14th
- Session 5 May 10th -June 9th

Fitness Boot Camp is a great way to get in shape, build confidence and make new friends. Activities include:

Kick boxing, weight lifting, cardio, circuit training and much more.

Eighth Grade News

Welcome back to school!
We hope you had a great summer.

The eighth grade team has been working hard to prepare for an exciting school year. Eighth grade is an exciting year filled with multiple learning opportunities and fun. Fields trips include traveling to Salem, MA, The Blue Man Group, and our famous Washington, DC trip. We have had some changes to our teaching staff. Please welcome Gretchen Williams, James Doneski, and Sarah Fournier. All three of these teachers will be teaching reading and language arts. James Hazlett will be teaching some sections of math. Amy Wagoner is our guidance counselor and Jacqueline Tilly is our grade level assistant. We are all looking forward to a wonderful school year. Join us at Open House on Sept. 16th.

Earth Shuttle: Informational Meeting

The first Earth Shuttle meeting will be on Wednesday, September 22nd @ 7:30PM in the cafe. Anyone who signed up for the trip should attend. Anyone interested in signing up, it is not to late. Earth Shuttle is an educational program for students interested in learning outside the classroom. Students must meet academic and behavior standards to be eligible to participate in the program. This program is not only an academic experience but also teaches students important life skills. We encourage students to participate in fundraising to earn money for their trip. Any questions please email Miss Corbin (lcorbin@windhamsd.org) or Mrs. Pierpont (speirpont@windhamsd.org)

Guidance News

M₂M

M₂M is off to a great start. We held our annual summer training in August and had over 70 students trained and they are excited to start the new school year. We have a lot of new topics and fresh ideas for M₂M.

New Student Orientation

We were very excited to welcome over 25 new students this year. We held a new student orientation over the summer and received very positive feedback from the parents and students.

Guidance

Guidance offers a variety of programs throughout the school year. Some of the programs that are offered are: Social Skills Training, Grief/Divorce Groups, Peer Assistants, Peer Mediators, Peer Helpers, Resources for tutoring, community involvement etc. We provide classroom presentations on Peer Relationships, Peer Conflict Resolutions, Bullying, Friendships, Drug Prevention and various other middle school appropriate topics.

Yearbooks 2011

We are happy to announce that the new Yearbooks will be in full color! The cost of the new book will be \$25.00 if ordered before December 31st. Yearbook order forms went home on opening day. If you need another form please email Mrs. Lichtmann (jlichtmann@windhamsd.org) or Mrs. Rawley. (krawley@windhamsd.org)

Advisory

We are very pleased to once again have Advisory in your student's schedule. Advisory will take place from 10:40-11:00 Tues-Friday and the entire school will be participating. Every staff member will have a group of students (approx. 12) that they will be meeting with students to discuss monthly activities. The goal of Advisory is to make meaningful connections between students and staff. Our Advisory Kick-off was held on Thursday September 2nd.

****** Reminder from school nurse to parents to please send in updated copies of yearly physicals and recent immunizations ******

PTA

Remember it is never too late to join Windham PTA. Check out the website www.windhampta.org to download membership forms and find links to lots of information.

Seventh Grade News

Reading and Language Arts: We will get to know each other this month in reading through the unit: "What Hue Are You." Together, we will read a number of short stories, vignettes, and personal essays based on various aspects of identity. After reading and analyzing these stories, students will complete short writing pieces about themselves. At the end of the unit, students will write a personal narrative which they will take to final draft quality in language arts. Also in language arts, we will review the following grammar topics: types of sentences, types of writing, and parts of speech. Lastly, we will begin work with our Classical Roots vocabulary.

Social Studies: Seventh Grade Social Studies is getting underway nicely. Students are learning a bit about prehistory as a foundation for a brief review of some of the earliest civilizations and how they developed. This will prepare us for a major unit on Ancient Greece, which will be a detailed study of all parts of that culture. We will learn about Athenian contributions in art, architecture, theater, and literature, as well as the beginnings of democracy, important battles, the early Olympics, and other topics. We hope to help students discover the impact that the ancient Greeks still have on our lives today.

Math: Seventh grade math and Pre-Algebra classes are starting the year with a unit on Probability. They will explore the difference between experimental and theoretical probability and then use that probability to make predictions. We will use tree diagrams and organized lists to find outcomes and Pre-Algebra will also create area models to find probability.

Seventh grade Algebra is starting the year reviewing Pre-Algebra and creating sentences and expressions with variables. They will learn about functions, range and domain and some basic logic. Next they will investigate linear functions and graph equations with absolute value.

Sixth Grade News

Welcome sixth grade students and families! The sixth graders are off to a great start! As this point, the students are learning the routines and expectations of middle school. We welcome the following new teachers to our wonderful sixth grade teaching staff: Ms. Emily Rivinius, teaching science; Ms. Tori Wilbur, teaching math; Mr. James Hazlett, also teaching math; and Ms. Melissa Coakley, teaching Spanish. Coming up on September 24th our annual sixth grade only dance will be held. Look for a letter to go home with all of the exciting details. Before long, the sixth grade students, staff, and several parent volunteers will be heading to Camp Bournedale! Parents, please check Moodle for important dates and necessary paperwork. Thank you for all you do to support your child, let's make it a great year!



Online grading programs make the grade

Q Our school is using an online grade book. What is the advantage?

A Many schools have implemented an online grading program that allows parents and students to access the student's test and homework scores any time from home and follow their progress as the school year unfolds.

Access to grades for elementary students are less common because scores are often calculated based on a variety of developmental benchmarks not always calculated through numerical grading scales. For middle and high school students, however, it is becoming extremely common to access grades online, and the ability to track a child's performance is just one of the advantages. Many of the programs also allow parents to e-mail or instant message teachers directly, keep track of attendance records and improve communication about schoolwork with their child.

Get the most out of your school district's online grading with these simple guidelines:

Understand the program. Take time to understand the features and functions of the online grade portal at the beginning of the school year. Take advantage of any parent workshops or online tutorials offered by your district to help you understand how to log in, how grades



will be entered and calculated, and how homework is weighted.

Avoid obsessing. The ability to watch your student's progress can get obsessive—especially if a student struggles or excels—and parents may find themselves addicted to the online grade book. Avoid checking grades on a daily basis. Instead, pick a day once a week and let your child know that's the day you'll be checking in. Make that a day to talk to your child about the week's performance and develop a strategy if improvements are necessary.

Be patient before you panic. Don't panic if you log in and find your child is getting an F in a class. Unlike a traditional midterm or end-of-semester tally, online grades often have a built-in calculator that continuously show a student's average. (If your child received 100 percent on her first test but was absent for the next, she may have

a zero with an average of 50 percent in the class). Many children may miss assignments or fail a quiz early in the semester as they acclimate to a new teaching environment.

Give teachers time to adjust. On top of all the other responsibilities teachers have during the school year, posting and recording grades is just one of those tasks. Some teachers may take more time than others when it comes to scoring and posting grades online. It is not unusual to take a week to post test or project scores.

Encourage your student to check in. Middle and high school students should get in the habit of checking their own grades. Many colleges and universities also allow students to access their scores and communicate with faculty online, so experience can help them learn to take initiative and responsibility for their own performance.

Keep your paper records. Until you know exactly how long grades and scores will be stored in your school's online system, make sure you still keep the hard copy of your child's record as proof of grades in case you need them for camps, school admissions, scholarship or program applications.



Sharon Miller Cindrich is the mother of two, a columnist and the author of *E-Parenting: Keeping Up With Your Tech-Savvy Kids*. Learn more at www.sharonmillercindrich.com or send your questions to Sharon@sharoncindrich.com.