



WILLOW HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Diversity & Creativity in Action

PARENT INFORMATION BULLETIN THIRD EDITION 2011-2012

Principal

Welcome Back

It is my hope that your winter recess was peaceful and productive. I would like to thank everyone for their support during the first marking period. I am very pleased with the strides we have made academically and behaviorally. However, during this time of the year it is easy to lose momentum due to increased expectations and a developed sense of complacency. Therefore, I ask that you join me in challenging and inspiring our children to continue to put forth the effort that will produce positive results. I believe that creating an ongoing sense of urgency will pave the way for a productive and successful second marking period.

PTO Meetings

As we continue to strengthen to bond between home and school, I ask that you make every effort to attend our PTO meetings. Of particular importance is the next PTO meeting scheduled for January 19 at 6:30 where we will begin the election process regarding next year's PTO Board.

Extended Day Instruction: Cycle 2

The second cycle of our Extended Day Instruction Program is underway. We are currently offering the following programs:

- **Homework Clinic**- Focus: homework review and completion for select students in grades 1-6.
- **Literature Club** – Focus: reading, discussions, and enrichment activities and is offered to all students in grades 3-6.

- **Silver Pen Writing Club-** Focus: creative writing and is offered to select grade 6 students.
- **Extended Library-** Focus: computer-based mathematics and reading instruction, as well as guided book selection for Title 1 students in grades 4-6.
- **Study Buddies-** Focus: individualized tutoring for select students in grades 5 and 6 in the area of reading comprehension.
- **Lunch Bunch-** Focus: individualized tutoring for select grade 6 students in the areas reading comprehension, test-taking strategies, and work habits.

Arrival

You are reminded that there is no student supervision prior to 8:30 AM. Therefore, please do not send your child to school prior to 8:30 AM.

Attendance

Parents should make every effort to schedule appointments for their children outside of the instructional day.

Early Dismissal Procedures

The winter months are upon us. Please review with your children what they are to do in the event of an early dismissal.

Black History Month

In the spirit of celebration of February as Black History Month, the International Reading Association has endorsed the Twentieth National African American Read-In Chain, sponsored by the Black Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English. On Monday, February 6, the entire school community will participate in the African American Read-In Chain by gathering in our hallways to read and share books authored by African American writers.

In addition to implementing the prescribed district African American curriculum, we are in the process of exploring some other creative and unique ways in which we can celebrate Black History Month as a school community. If you have any ideas and/or suggestions, please contact the main office. More details regarding Black History Month will be communicated to you as we develop and institute a variety of learning activities.

Interim Reports

Interim reports will be sent out the week of January 30, via U.S. mail.

Report Card Conferences

Conferences will be held on March 6, 7, and 8. Students will be dismissed at 12:20 PM on conference days. Please note that lunch will be served to students. Classroom teachers will soon contact you to schedule a conference time which best suits your needs. Below are some suggestions as to how to prepare for your child's conference:

1. Think of the traits about your child that make him/her unique.
2. List in your mind your child's strengths.
3. Consider those areas where you think your child needs to improve.
4. Think about the feelings and attitudes your child has shared about school.
5. Be ready to share any problems or concerns you or your child have.
6. Approach the conference with an open mind. Be receptive to any suggestions the teacher might have.
7. Be prepared to listen carefully to what the teacher shares with you about your child.
8. Come to the conference with a positive feeling, knowing that this is another opportunity to learn about your child's growth and development from dedicated professionals who truly care about your child's welfare.

PSSA Assessments

All school districts in Pennsylvania will participate in the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA). Students in Grades 3-6 will take PSSA Math and Reading assessments from March 12-19, 2012. Writing assessments will be administered to grade 5 students during the week of April 16. In addition, Grade 4 students will participate in the PSSA Science assessments during the week of April 23, 2012.

Please help your child to prepare for these tests by making sure they are well rested the night before the tests and eat a regular breakfast the day of the tests. Also, be sure that your children are on time and kindly refrain from making routine doctor and dental appointments during testing windows. If possible please do not take your children from class early, as it may disrupt the testing environment.

With the “No Child Left Behind” legal requirements, it is imperative that all students take the PSSA assessments during the testing window. If you would like to review the assessments, prior to it being administered to your child, please contact the main office.

Parents/Guardians will be sent the results of their child’s performance. Copies of these test scores will also be placed in the student’s cumulative file. Please see information from the Pennsylvania Department of Education on the reverse side of the letter that will be mailed to your home.

Thank you for your assistance in making this a purposeful learning experience.

Dates to Remember

- 1/24 School Board Meeting @ 7:30 PM – Admin. Bldg.
- 2/1 Kindergarten Registration- A-M 9:15 to 11:15 AM; N-Z 1:15 to 3:00 PM
- 2/1 Taste Testing - Cafeteria
- 2/6 African-American Read-In
- 2/7 Sp. Ed. Parent Advisory Council @ 7:30 PM Copper Beech
- 2/14 Valentine’s Day Parties
- 2/14 School Board Meeting @ 7:30 PM- Admin. Bldg.
- 2/16 PTO Meeting @ 6:30 PM- Library
- 2/17 Inservice Day- No School
- 2/20 Presidents’ Day- Schools & Offices closed
- 2/23 Platinum Card Night @ 6:00 PM
- 2/24 Black History Assembly
- 2/28 School Board Meeting @ 7:30 PM- Admin. Bldg.
- 3/1 to 9 CogATs- Grades K-2
- 3/5 Reading Night @ 6:00 PM
- 3/6 Parent Advisory Council for Gifted Ed. @ 7:30 (Copper Beech)
- 3/6 to 8 Parent Conferences- **Dismissal 12:20 PM**
- 3/6 to 8 ASD 2012 Art Fest
- 3/9 Spring Picture Day
- 3/12 to 30 PSSAs- Math & Reading- Grades 3-6
- 3/13 School Board Meeting @ 7:30 PM – Admin. Bldg.

- 3/20 Sp. Ed. Parent Advisory Council @ 7:30 PM (Copper Beech)
- 3/22 PTO Meeting @ 6:30 PM – Library
- 3/27 School Board Meeting @ 7:30 PM – Admin. Bldg.
- 3/30 Hawk & Honors Assembly

Kindergarten

Language Arts: During the months of January and February, Kindergarteners will complete two more reading units; Animals and Neighborhoods. Unit 5, we will learn about animals. The class will read aloud Mama Cat, Animal Babies ABC, and Mole and the Baby Bird. The stories are about pets and animals in nature. Unit 6: Neighborhoods will have us reading, Russ and the Firehouse and Bus Stops. We will learn about neighborhood members and their jobs. In addition to the unit’s stories, we also read folktales, nonfiction selections, a variety of leveled readers, and poetry that reinforces letter and high frequency word recognition.

Skills to practice at home:

- Answering questions about how animals are alike and different
- Answering questions about the setting in a story
- High frequency words: is, play, are, you & for. Word families: ap, (cap, rap, tap etc), at (cat, bat), an (ran, tan), & am (ram, Pam)
- Phonics: the sound of short and long o and the sounds of **f, h, & r**.
- Printing: children need to practice writing short sentences.
- Concept words are position words: under, behind, down, up, next to, off, on, right, left, & around.
- Comprehension: classifying and categorizing, make predictions, and identifying the main idea.

Math: We are really looking forward to our 100th day of school which we will be celebrating on February 9th. We will read books and do activities that emphasize the number 100. In preparation of our celebration, everyone will be asked to make a poster that represents the number 100. On the 100th day, the children will present their projects. More details about this project will follow.

We will continue to reinforce and extend our skills in number recognition and counting by continuing with our daily practice of counting by 1’s, 2’s, 5’s, 10’s, and counting down from 50-0. Math lessons will continue to focus on exploring measurement and extending our geometry skills by working with attribute blocks. We will also conduct class surveys to promote our knowledge of graphing, data collection, and counting with tally marks. Mathematical skills are

extended by the continuous use of games and by integrating children's literature. We are always looking for ways to make learning fun.

Skills to practice at home:

- Counting games: I am thinking of a number, you choose a number without revealing it. Then give clues to help your child identify the number.
- Estimation games: place a handful of pennies in a baggie and ask your child to estimate (make his best guess) how many coins are in the bag.
- Measuring: make a cut out footprint or handprint and have your child measure the length or width of objects around the house. Reinforce the idea of "marking off" by placing a craft stick (pencils, or crayons would also work) at the end of the hand or foot before moving it for the next measurement.
- Practice identifying coins by separating a handful of mixed coins.

Social Studies: In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., we will read about his life and his contributions he made to the Civil Right movement. During February, Black History month, we will learn many facts about notable African Americans and their contributions to America.

Science: Our new topic for this marking period is Weather. We will be identifying four types of weather that we experience here in our region. We will also learn about the four seasons. Our last thing to study will be Air, Sun and Clouds.

As we mentioned in the previous issue, some websites that provide fun activities while promoting learning are: <http://www.apples4theteacher.com/math.html> offers geometry and geometric shapes games, money games and an assortment of interactive number charts. You may want to explore: <http://www.funbrain.com>. This site has language arts and math games for children to choose from. *Math baseball* is just one way to help your child learn addition and subtraction facts. <http://www.moneyinstructor.com> offers activities that are free, and higher level learning games that require a membership fee. **Parental guidance is always recommended when your child uses the web.**

Kindergarten registration for the 2012-13 school year is Wednesday, February 1st.

We hope everyone had an enjoyable and relaxing winter break.

The Kindergarten Team

First Grade

The first graders are busily reading stories and writing about making connections with friends and families.

Please continue to study the spelling words each night in order to be ready for the test on Friday. Also, please continue to review the high frequency words with your child each evening.

In math, our classes are practicing the basic addition facts in a variety of ways. Please continue to use your flash cards and other math games you have at home to help your child practice the facts. Knowing those facts will help them throughout their lives. Let's really help them get those facts under their belts! We are also beginning to make up and solve a variety of word problems. You may help at home by using everyday events to pose problems for your child to solve. In our next math unit, students will work on attributes and geometry. Please continue to practice at home and don't forget about counting money when you go shopping. We've now added quarters to the mix of coins we are counting.

Please remember to make sure your child has 2 pencils, a good eraser, a glue stick and crayons at school. Many of these items were used up, lost, or broken and replacements are needed. Also, remember to review and sign the homework every night. Additionally, reading stories with your child should be incorporated into the homework routine. Please remember to read each night, record the pages on the Reading Log Calendar, and return it to school at the end of the month. All three first grade classes have been awarded a beautiful hand-painted chair with an author of our choice for reaching our goal. We would like to have 100% homework participation each month. We need and appreciate your help!

Thank You!

The First Grade Team😊

Second Grade

Language Arts:

We are continuing to work very hard and are learning many interesting things. Unit 3: "Better Together," comes to a close the week of January 15th with a unit test. Please be sure to **review** the spelling and vocabulary words in their spelling and grammar books. "Land, Sea, and Sky" is our theme for Unit 4. We will compare and contrast, understand cause and effect, and use text descriptions to better comprehend what we are reading. Students will also continue to make predictions and read to confirm them. Research and writing informational summaries will provide the students with an opportunity to demonstrate article writing. Please **encourage the nightly reading**.

Math:

Students will begin Unit 6 in early January. We will focus on Whole-Number Operations and Number Stories. Please feel free to practice simple multiplication with them (for example: “What are 2 sets of 3 equal to?”) The Unit 6 Math Test will be given in early February. Unit 7 will focus on data collection and analysis, including frequency tables, medians, line plots, and bar graphs. Students will sharpen their measuring skills to find more accurate measures by doing standing long jumps and comparing arm spans, etc. These activities are a lot of fun! We will also begin our fraction lessons using many hands-on activities in Unit 8. Meanwhile, the students will continue to increase their mental math skills through daily problems and drills. We ask that you **continue** to “drill them” on simple addition and subtraction when you are waiting at the traffic lights, dentist/doctor’s office ... the possibilities are endless.

Science:

We are enjoying the interesting lessons in our “Balancing and Weighing” Unit. Ask your children about it. Can they explain how structures stay balanced? Can they tell you what a fulcrum is?

We are planning our 2nd grade Field Trip for March 14th. We will visit the Franklin Institute. Letters will be sent home asking parents/guardians to act as **chaperones**. The cost for this trip will be approximately \$10.00. The trip is scheduled to leave Willow Hill at 9:10 A.M. and return by 2 P.M. Please check your work schedules.

Please remember to check homework each night, including the Reading Logs. We have quotas we are encouraged to reach each month. Please make sure the weekly pages are tallied and recorded on the sheet at the end of each week. Also, please remember to send in the completed log with a **grand total** at the bottom right-hand corner of the page.

Please keep the new pencils coming!!!!!!! Ask your child if they need any new supplies. Consideration, kindness, and sharing are great topics for conversation at home.

Yours in teaching,
Ms. Herrmann, Ms. Shorday and Ms. McDevitt

Third Grade

Can you believe we are approaching the midpoint in the second marking period? Be on the look out for progress reports for behavior and academics. If you have a concern, please speak to your child's teacher before the close of the marking period. The best way to be proactive is to review homework and sign the homework book each night. This task will keep you abreast of what is being taught in class. You may also want to make a note of test scores before signing them and returning them to school.

Language Arts

The Discoveries Theme is coming to a close. Students will be assessed on the skills taught over the past several weeks. These skills include: summarizing, making inferences, using context clues, and writing.

Theme 4 is called Determination. This theme will focus on stories where characters persevere to meet goals and the challenges they face while doing so.

Math

Third grade is currently working on Unit 5 Place Value in Whole Numbers and Decimals. The three main areas of focus are to extend previous lessons on the base-ten place-value system to whole numbers through millions and to decimals through thousandths; apply these concepts to reading, writing, comparing, and ordering whole numbers and decimals; and use whole numbers and decimals in real-life contexts.

In Unit 6 geometry, students will explore lines, rays, and angles. Help students discover geometry in things around the house such as a box of tissues, an orange, or the corners of a room. We will also review each concept taught so far this year with a mid-year review. This test makes it possible for parents and teachers to examine the concepts that are difficult for the children and review and/or re-teach when needed.

Social Studies

Unit 4 in social studies is titled Communities at Work. We will read about and discuss different jobs in our community and around the world. Each lesson will focus on a different aspect of work. One lesson in particular teaches students how to make a budget and save money. Maybe you could show your third grader your family budget. This would reinforce the idea that money really doesn't grow on trees!

Science

Our students will get in touch with the Earth through the exploration of Rocks and Minerals. Ask them if they can tell the difference between a rock and a mineral? Can they tell the difference between metamorphic, sedimentary, and igneous rocks?

Supplies, Homework, and Reading Logs

Please continue to help us maintain your child's educational needs by making sure they have all of the needed school supplies. This includes pencils, pencils, and more pencils. Also, continue to sign homework assignment books, reading logs, and tests.

Reading is a part of daily homework, but not all children fill out reading logs and hand them in. Please remind your child that he/she needs to turn in a **signed reading log** at the end of each month.

Here is a little food for thought. One of the most important things a parent can do for their child is to read to them several nights a week. Even if they already know how to read, this activity can boost a child's language skills. Reading does not have to be a bedtime activity. Try it in the car (only when someone else is driving.) Keep a book handy for long waits in line at the grocery store. Also, a trip to the library is easier on the pocketbook than a trip to the mall or movies.

The Third Grade Team

Fourth Grade

Happy New Year! We hope that everyone had a nice and relaxing break. Things are already back in full swing in fourth grade. This week in language arts, we are reading about Snowflake Bentley. Ask your child what he is best known for. In math, we are continuing to practice our multiplication skills and are busy comparing large numbers. Continue to practice those multiplication facts at home. In our next unit, we will begin dividing, so students will need to know their facts. We are continuing our study of electricity as well. Do you know what conductors and insulators are? We bet your child does. Ask them for some examples of each. In social studies, we are learning more and more about the first settlers of Pennsylvania. Did you know that Hannah Penn (William Penn's wife) was the only woman to lead one of the thirteen original colonies, or that Daniel Boone was one of the best known trappers and led many pioneers west? As you can tell, fourth grade has certainly been a busy place!

Fifth Grade

Language Arts,

Everyday Math,

Science,

Social Studies,

And Health,

Help our children construct minds of wealth!

Language Arts: Our reading anthology continues to present us with exciting and interesting themes. We will finish up Unit 3 Turning Points and be taking our unit assessment in two weeks. We will start Unit 4 Theme: “Experiences” after and have the test mid March. It is always helpful to test your child, each week, in preparation for their Friday spelling test. All children are expected to achieve **Accelerated Reading** points each week. This is a program Ms. Harris, our wonderful librarian, monitors for us. The more we read, the more familiar and relaxed the children become with words and texts. Please ask your child how many AR tests they have taken each week.

Math: Mathematics sees us finishing Unit 7, and heading back to Fractions in Unit 8. Your child should have memorized their multiplication facts. We will add, subtract, divide, and multiply fractions. Additionally, we will work with ratios which can also be expressed as fractions, decimals, percents, or written using plain words. We continue to **encourage** the children to play the “**First in Math**” and “**Study Island**” computer games at home as extra math support. There are computer “stickers” and certificates to be won as the children increase their scores. The students can make vast improvements in their skill levels. *Please continue to check your child’s math journal for any incomplete pages that may have been missed due to absences, as they are graded accordingly.*

****Remember to use flashcards to help your child practice basic multiplication/DIVISION facts****

Science: In science, we are finishing our Food Chemistry unit. Our last trimester science program will be: Microscopic Organisms. Children work in teams to complete experiments and written labs. Please ensure they study for their tests. Each child is given a “Fact Sheet” to help them.

Social Studies: Our social studies curriculum continues to give us wonderful, descriptive lessons. We finish Unit 4: The Struggle for North America and Unit 5: The New Nation in Marking Period 2. Unit 5 will have an end-of-unit test, so please remind your children to keep answering the study guide questions and to review. We are looking forward to the next units, as they are very compelling as well! Again, we advise you to encourage your child to read the unit lessons a second or third time to improve their understanding of these complex historical events.

Health: We have been stressing the concepts of responsibility, self esteem, bullying, and staying healthy. Students have been given in class activities as well as take-home.

We will introduce the students to the Million Dollar project in this marking period. We will hand out some of the paperwork to you during conferences. Please help your child stay on top of all the deadlines for specific pieces of work. The bulk of the work is done within the first three weeks of the project. This is a *home project* and the children will need your support and guidance. The final product will be due early May, 2012.

PSSA testing in Math and Reading begin in early March. The PSSA Writing portion, for 5th grade, is done at the end of March. Please allow your children to have plenty of sleep and a good

healthy breakfast. There will be less homework during this time. Please keep READING and working on the Million Dollar project.

****Please check and sign your child's homework book & fill out Reading Logs nightly ****

Yours in teaching,
5th Grade Team: *Mr. Welsh and Ms. Wasekanes*

Sixth Grade

Welcome Back! We hope you all had a restful winter break and are excited for your child's last few months at Willow Hill Elementary!

We are very excited to start the new year on the right foot!

Math

We are currently working on Unit 5 which is concentrated in geometric properties. The students will learn to classify and draw angles, estimate the measure of angles with and without tools and find angle measures and write equations by applying properties of angles. Students will also be able to identify and describe congruent figures and construct congruent figures using a compass and a straightedge.

*Students are expected to bring home their Student Reference Book each night to assist them with homework completion.

Communication Arts

Our theme for Unit 3 is "Great Ideas." We have focused on identifying the characters, setting and plot, drawing conclusions, cause and effect and summarizing. We have also focused on word origins, prefixes and suffixes, and analogies. The grammar focus has been verb tense, main and helping verbs, and irregular verbs. Our writing focus this unit is a fictional narrative. Students have planned their writing and are working through their first and final drafts.

*Students must read each and every night! Please make sure they fill out their monthly reading calendars and turn them in at the end of each month.

*Students will be given a book report each marking period. Our second book report will be assigned in the coming weeks.

*Students are required to accumulate at least 20 Accelerated Reader points per marking period.

Science

Our science unit this marking period centers on measuring time. Students will explore the evolution of how time is recorded and how calendars have changed throughout history. Key concepts include that time can be measured by observing the natural cycles of the sun and the

moon, shadows cast by the sun can be used to measure and predict the time of day, the phases of the moon follow a cycle that can be used to measure and predict the passage of time during a month. Students will work together to create and use sun clocks and water clocks and to use these clocks to conduct experiments.

Social Studies

Trade and Tradition is the unit we are currently learning about in social studies. We will explore topics such as The Arab World, The Ottoman Empire, and the Kingdoms of Africa.

Health

Stress Management and Conflict Resolution are the concepts that will be covered in the second marking period. Also, students will begin the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) Program.

Reminder

*Please check student's assignment book each night for homework assignments and reminders!

Ms. Casciani, Mrs. Skilton and Mr. Tague

Learning Support 4-5-6 Room 133- Janice Jedlinski

The year is half over and we still have so much to do so the next couple of months will be busier than ever!

In language arts, we continue to work in the Triumphs Reading program and are seeing some wonderful progress. The weekly assessment is a very useful tool that tells us exactly what our strengths and weaknesses are so that we can put an extra effort in where it is needed.

Our daily journals, friendly letter writing and poetry development is one of the best parts of our day. It allows us to be as creative as we want but also makes us very aware of how important punctuation, spelling and grammar are. An important lesson we have all learned is that if it's not written right, it sure doesn't sound right being read aloud.

Addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, time, money, fractions. Whew! We have been learning so many new math concepts that our heads are spinning but in a good way. With a good grasp on these concepts, it's getting easier to see how they tie into so many other areas of mathematics. As one of our students stated, "Math is Everywhere."

We are currently hosting a Student Teacher from Walden University who will be with us through February and we hope to learn as much from her as she does from us.

Our Martin Luther King Assembly skit was a huge success and we enjoyed sharing with the whole school our interpretation of Dr. Martin Luther King's life through a timeline demonstration.

The students in room 133 are committed to reading and promise to read every day and complete their reading logs to show our commitment to the rest of the world! We've even earned a "Reading Chair" for all our hard work.

Ms. Marshall

Welcome Back and Happy New Year!! I hope your winter break was relaxing and filled with wonderful memories! It is hard to believe that we are already in the middle of the 2nd marking period! Time really passes by quickly as your children work hard!

As we move forward in the Triumphs and Foundations' reading programs, the students continue to make progress in many areas, but especially in phonics, decoding, identification of high frequency words and comprehension. It is important to practice these skills at home on a daily basis. The kindergarten students should practice letters (identification, sounds, and handwriting) and the older students should review their high frequency words and study their spelling words. ALL students should practice becoming better readers. Here are some suggestions to get started:

BEFORE reading a story, take a picture walk and make predictions.

DURING reading, check predictions and make new predictions.

AFTER reading, retell the story using pictures, or even act it out!

The children continue to learn and experience math all around us. Making real life connections with math concepts is a key to success in math. Explore the environment around to notice and identify numbers, patterns, shapes, sets or groups and money. Practice identifying and counting, adding and subtracting numbers, objects, money and telling time. Allow your child to help clip coupons and pay for purchases. The more practice, the more successful we become with our progress.

Winter is a great time for family game nights. There are lots of fun games that can be played that also allows your child to practice many skills that are beneficial to learning. Why not use this opportunity to snuggle in with a favorite snack, a mug of hot chocolate and a favorite game that allows your child to practice important social skills, such as patience and turn taking?

Whatever the objective, you are sure to have fun quality time that can never be replaced! Stay warm!!!

Ms. Seslow

Happy New Year!

It is the time of year to make resolutions and set new goals! Goal setting is just as important for kids as it is for adults. Here are the important steps to setting and more importantly, achieving your goals!

1. Set a goal.
2. Take action.
3. Get results

Setting a goal and getting results will help your child to build confidence and self-worth. They will know that they have the power and the ability to achieve the things that they want to achieve in life!

In our classroom, we are also talking about setting goals. Talk to your child about the goal that they are working on in our classroom. Math goals might relate to learning to count coins, tell time or develop fact power. Reading goals might include learning sight words or spelling words, improving journal writing, and developing more independence in reading. Some children might choose to set a more personal goal such as; completing homework, focusing in class, following the classroom rules, or keeping a positive attitude in class. Whatever goal your child does set, we will be taking action to achieve results!

Mrs. Grubb

We often spend time telling students they need to become better readers. Well, just exactly how does this happen? Below are 10 strategies a group of 5th grade students from another school came up with to become proficient and advanced readers:

1. Decoding/Phonics

- ✚ Look for familiar spelling patterns and word parts to help you decode longer words.

2. Make & Confirm Predictions

- ✚ Think about what might happen next in the story.
- ✚ Read to find out if you are correct.
- ✚ Make new predictions.

3. Create Mental Images

- ✚ Picturing in your mind what you are reading can help you understand.
- ✚ Pay attention to descriptive details.

4. Self-Question

- ✚ Learn to ask yourself good questions as you read. This will help you understand and focus on important details.

5. Summarize

- ✚ Tell or list the main points of the selection or the main things that happened.

6. Read Ahead

- ✚ Don't give up! Keep on reading, the meaning may become clearer when you have more information.

7. Reread to Clarify

- ✚ If something doesn't make sense, you may have missed an important point. Try reading the passage again or go back to an earlier part of the selection.

8. Use Context to Confirm Meaning

- ✚ By paying attention to the words around unfamiliar words, you can learn many new words and become a stronger reader.

9. Use Text Structure and Format

- ✚ Find clues to meaning by looking at how the author organized the information.
- ✚ Look at the headings and captions.

10. Adjust Reading Rate

- ✚ A selection that has a lot of facts and details (such as non-fiction) may have to be read more slowly than a story about a character (fiction).

Try some of these strategies with your child during his/her allotted reading time each night!

Mathematics

Fluency in mathematics is as important for comprehension of calculations as fluency in reading is for comprehension of text. Students who have memorized the basic math facts and can recall them with ease are able to focus on the broader purpose of mathematics, which is to understand the core concepts of math and develop strategic thinking and problem solving skills. As a parent, you can help your student memorize basic math facts at home by practicing with fact triangles (flash cards) for 10 minutes every day. For students in grades K, 1, and 2, practice addition and subtraction facts. For students in grades 3 through 6, basic multiplication and division facts should be included along with the addition and subtraction sets. One strategy parents can use to build their student's confidence and memory development, as well as assess his/her progress toward mastery, is to sandwich the facts your child has difficulty with in between the facts your child already knows. Once the basic facts can be used fluently, your student will enjoy greater success when addressing more challenging forms of mathematics.

Reading



The Pages for Progress Program is off and running! Many, many students have been reading nightly, filling up their calendars and counting up their pages. We challenged classes to read for class goals as listed below:

K – 1st: 15,000 pages
2nd – 3rd: 20,000 pages
4th – 6th: 30,000 pages

We are thrilled to report that 13 classes have reached their goal!! Once the goal is reached once, the class keeps on reading and tries to reach it again. Some of our classes have reached their goal twice already!

Winning classes got to choose their prize of either a chair painted after the class' favorite book, or a class party. We are filling up our classrooms with painted book chairs and celebrating too!

Together our school read **558, 051** pages!! What an amazing start towards our over one million pages goal!

The winning classes are:

Ms. Wynne's Kindergarten – Magic Tree House painted chair and a class party!

Ms. DeBow's Kindergarten – The Kissing Hand painted chair

Ms. Flood's Kindergarten – David Goes to School painted chair

Ms. Doctor's First Grade – David Gets in Trouble, Magic Tree House painted chairs
and a class party!

Ms. Dancer's First Grade – Junie B. Jones painted chair

Ms. Lee's First Grade – Andrew's Loose Tooth painted chair

Ms. McDevitt's Second Grade – class party!

Ms. Shorday's Second Grade – Officer Buckle and Gloria painted chair

Ms. Herrmann's Second Grade – class party!

Ms. Walton's Third Grade – class party!

Ms. White-Burrough's Fourth Grade – A Week in the Woods painted chair

Ms. Miller's Fourth Grade – Diary of a Wimpy Kid painted chair

Ms. Jedlinski's Class – Pirateology painted chair

Reading is rewarding in so many ways, whether you win a prize or not. Books offer a way to visit new places, or enjoy characters just like you. And research has repeatedly shown that reading leads to success both in and out of school. So encourage your child to keep on reading and fill up their Pages for Progress calendar each month!

Remember, Reading = Success!

From The Art Room

Happy New Year to all from the art department!!!

The 2012 school year is taking off with a bang in the art department. First, during the month of January, student artwork from the Willow Hill Elementary will be on display at the Abington Free Library on the lower level bulletin board. Come out and see what the children have accomplished in art so far this school year. Second, we have just completed our lessons on the artist Vincent Van Gogh. Those 4 through 6 grade students did a spectacular job on creating artwork in the style of Van Gogh. This was not an easy assignment using the oil pastels. However, the students met their objectives head on and did an awesome job. The Van Gogh style

oil pastel drawings we'll begin hanging up throughout the school hallways this week. Finally, let it snow, let it snow, let it snow (somewhere else but here☺). The lower primary grades have made outstanding winter pictures using assorted cut papers and paint. These winter's capes will adorn the hallways this week as well as the Abington Free Library.

In the sixth and fifth grades, we have begun studying the artwork of author and illustrator Faith Ringgold. Her quilt-like approach will be emulated by students in this present art assignment. Look for these projects to be completed and displayed early in the month of February for African American History month.

Have a great winter and I will see you in the funny papers!!!

Anthony T. Shelton, Sr.
Art Itinerant/Willow Hill

Music

Throughout the winter months, our music classes will start to really delve deep. Sixth grade will work with guitars, while the fifth grade explores the last 100 years of music history. Third and fourth grade will continue to learn about the way that music is put together by composing some music, while the primary grades keep practicing the basics. Practice makes perfect! In chorus, band, and orchestra we have begun preparing for our June 6th concert. We hope that you can all attend, so mark your calendars today!

Physical Education

Happy New Year! I hope everyone is well rested after our winter break! In physical education, we are now playing a game called American Gladiators that is inspired by the TV show from the past. Students use strategy and team work to navigate through an obstacle course that is constructed in the gym. Dodging and fleeing are the skills used to play the game on offense. On defense, throwing and communication is the key to success. All grades will participate in this non-stop game that teaches students about responsibility, perseverance, and courage!

Frank Kotkoskie

Title I

Parent Resource Center

Please visit our Parent Resource Center located in the main lobby. Booklets and pamphlets on several topics of interest are available to you. The materials include tips and information on

ways you can help your child in school and the community. Here are some of the titles you may choose from:

Homework Time Made Easier- And More Effective

Seven Habits of Highly Responsible Students

What to Do If Your Child is Having a Problem in School

The ABC's of Discipline at Home

How to Work with Your Child's Teacher

Secrets for Making Children Want to Read

Basic Fact Practice

Please continue to support and help your child with the acquisition of basic mathematics facts. Mastery of basic facts is extremely important throughout the elementary years as it builds a solid foundation for more complex skills and concepts. Practicing addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts on a daily basis is a great way to help your child be successful in mathematics and it only takes a few minutes each day!

Extended Library

We are now in the second cycle of the Extended Library and it's not too late for your child to join us! Extended Library is offered to students in grades 4-6 on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons. In addition to spending time reading, students will practice mathematics and reading skills through activities such as games, quizzes, and tutorials through a computer- based program.

Title I Parent Meetings:

You are encouraged to attend the Parent Meetings to learn helpful tips and strategies and receive information to help you help your child. The remaining meeting dates this year are as follows:

Thursday, January 19, 2012

Thursday, April 26, 2012

Service Learning

Thank you to all the families who donated items for the stockings. We were able to fill 60 stockings to give to the Salvation Army. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday is coming up. Monday, January 16th will be a Day of Service. We will pack bags in the school cafeteria with much needed toiletry items to give to the homeless in Philadelphia from 9-10 AM.

Please continue to encourage your child to participate in activities and provide service in the community. Also, remind your child to keep track of their Service Learning hours on their log. If they need a new log, please tell them to ask Mrs. Lee or Mrs. Doctor. You can also print a service learning log from the Abington School website.

Psychologist

Get out there, and play!

It may sound absurd to talk about playing with our children in the heart of winter; but, this is the perfect time. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Education, playing with our children promotes more than just physical wellbeing. Playing with our children is not just fun, but it also helps to build relationships, reduce stress, increase physical fitness, fosters healthy brain development, builds and strengthens social and emotional bonds, and increases creativity. With the start of a new year, this is a perfect time to start spending more time playing with our children. Here are some ideas:

Physical Play

Push-Up Challenge (How many can you do? Challenge each other to do one more the next day, next week, in one month)

Jump Rope together

Play basketball (How about a game of H-O-R-S-E?)

Go for a walk (Take turns picking a place to walk.) Look for things that are a certain color or start with a certain letter.

Jog with your children (let them set the pace)

Have a catch (football, Nerf Ball, tennis ball, paper airplane, balloon)

Quiet Activities

Make puppet socks

Play some board games (Trouble, Sorry, Monopoly)

I Spy

Card Games (War, Go Fish, 99, 21)

Do a puzzle together

Paint by numbers (watercolor)

There are lots of fun inexpensive things to do with your child. The most important thing is to give your child 100% of your attention in a relaxed setting. Your child will see that you care and will feel relaxed, too. Even if you only have ten minutes in a day to play; play! It may be the best ten minutes for both of you.

Library

Who do you call junior paleontologists? Answer: Second grade students who have been *digging* through print and online encyclopedias, and books in the library, only to discover a wealth of knowledge on dinosaur fossils. Primary students have already begun a quest to develop information literacy skills.

Through the use of Culture Grams, and age-appropriate books from the *Countries of the World Series*, third grade students are currently researching countries and their methods of transportation, food, dress, shelter, languages, and lots more.

Fifth grade students have begun working on a biography project that will allow them to practice note-taking and citing sources using NoodleTools. Students have been given instruction on how to use timelines, the index, glossaries, and table of contents to help them find specific information on a topic. Instruction and practice is given on using PowerPoint as a presentation tool. The notes will be used to complete an expository writing piece and to create a Biography PowerPoint.

