



CROCKER CHRONICLES

March 16, 2012

Dear Crocker Farm Families,

What a wonderful week of early spring weather! While I know some skiers and sledding enthusiasts have missed a typical New England winter, I have enjoyed being able to run on the local trails and the mild weather over the past few months.

I want to celebrate the achievements of two of our students. Khalia, a third grade student, is the top-ranking third grader *in the state* on the “First in Math” program. Many students and families have commented on how the web-based program has supported learning in mathematics at home. Vincent, a sixth grader, won the school Geography Bee in January. We recently found out that he qualified for the State Geography Bee in Worcester. We are so proud of our students’ achievements!

I was able to observe many of the presentations last week for the 6th grade “World’s Fair” project. It was great to see our more senior students take such leadership roles in our school; our younger students loved seeing them in action. The depth of their research and their oral presentations were outstanding; I learned a lot about a variety of different countries just by watching.

Our annual state testing (MCAS) period is coming up. Our schedule for the assessments is below; please help your child by promoting good rest and nutrition. Also, my experience has been that if families do not make the test “a big deal” at home, it allows for students to be more relaxed and successful in school.

Finally, please be on the lookout for a Crocker Farm Podcast that will be coming at some point in the next month. Our goal will be to share out our students’ voices and to communicate the learning that happens here in a new context.

Sincerely,

Michael Morris

ELA MCAS Exam Schedule

Grade 3: 3/26, 3/30

Grade 4: 3/20 (composition), 3/22, and 3/27

Grades 5 & 6: 3/21, 3/28

Make-ups: 3/29, 4/2



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16 de marzo de 2012

Queridas Familias de Crocker Farm,

¡Qué maravillosa semana de clima primaveral temprano! Aunque sé que algunos esquiadores y aficionados a trineos tirados se han perdido de un típico invierno de Nueva Inglaterra, he disfrutado de haber podido correr en los senderos locales y del clima templado en los últimos meses.

Quiero celebrar los logros de dos de nuestros estudiantes. Khalia, una estudiante de tercer grado quien es la estudiante de más alto rango en el estado en el programa "First in Math" (Primero en Matemáticas). Muchos de los estudiantes y las familias han comentado sobre cómo el programa basado en la web ha apoyado el aprendizaje de las matemáticas en casa. Vincent, un niño de sexto grado, ganó el Concurso de Geografía de la escuela en enero. Recientemente hemos descubierto que clasificó para el Concurso de Geografía del Estado en Worcester. ¡Estamos muy orgullosos de los logros de nuestros estudiantes!

Tuve la oportunidad, la semana pasada, de observar muchas de las presentaciones de los proyectos del "Worlds Fair" (Feria del Mundo) del sexto grado. Fue fantástico ver como los estudiantes de último año asumieron el rol de líderes en nuestra escuela; nuestros estudiantes más jóvenes estuvieron fascinados de verlos en acción. La profundidad de su investigación y sus presentaciones orales fueron sobresalientes. Aprendí mucho de varios países tan solo por observación.

Nuestro periodo de exanimaciones anuales del estado (MCAS) se está acercando. Nuestro horario para las evaluaciones está al calor; por favor ayude a su niño exhortándole a descansar y a nutrirse de buena manera. Además, por experiencia sé que si las familias no hacen ver el examen como "gran cosa" los estudiantes estarán más relajados y serán más exitosos en la escuela.

Finalmente, estén pendientes del Crocker Farm Podcast que saldrá en algún momento el mes que viene. Nuestra meta es la de compartir las voces de nuestros niños y la de comunicar el aprendizaje que llevamos a cabo aquí en un nuevo contexto.

Sinceramente,

Michael Morris

Horario del ELA MCAS

Grado 3: 3/26, 3/30

Grado 4: 3/20 (composición), 3/22, 3/27

Grados 5 y 6: 3/21, 3/28

Make-ups: 3/29, 4/2

Latest news from the music class

During the month of February all classes studied African American music.

Younger students sang African American songs and spirituals such as “Kumbaya,” “There’s a Little Wheel A-turning in my Heart,” “I’m on My Way to Freedom Land,” “I’m Gonna Sing When the Spirit Says Sing,” and “This Little Light of Mine.” They played singing/action games from the same tradition, such as “Grandma Sick in Bed,” “Here we go Zudeo,” “Shoo Turkey, Shoo,” “Draw me a Bucket of Water,” “Little Johnny Brown, Spread Your Comfort Down,” and “Oh, Won’t You Sit Down?”

Through discussions about these songs and playing these games, children learn about the history of our country and become familiar with the musical form of call and response, a basic element of American music originated from Africa.

Students in Kindergarten played ten kinds of instruments (each in their own turn) to accompany the spiritual about the ten angels and listened to the story of the “Jazz Fly.” Lately they started the study of simple rhythms.

First grade students played simple rhythms to the song “Rabbit Run on the Frozen Ground” and sang the lullaby “Hush Little Baby.” They are starting their study of the Do Re Mi sounds by singing songs that contain only these notes, such as the action song, “Tap Everybody,” the Arabic song “Olive Chant” and the Japanese jump rope song “Kuma San,” (Honorable Bear.) Students learn to recognize the placement of these sounds on the musical staff and listen to clues from my recorder to find the musical monkey hiding in the lunchboxes labeled with Do, Re, and Mi syllables.

Second grade classes watched the film "Follow the Drinking Gourd" about the Underground Railroad. The film is narrated by Morgan Freeman and the music is by Taj Mahal. The same classes performed a dance to the song “Little Liza Jane,” and a hand jive pattern to “Miss Mary Mack” with partner changes. Some **2nd through 6th grade** classes sang the partner spirituals “Oh When the Saints” and “This Train is Bound for Glory” in two groups at the same time.

Third grade students are now familiar with 5 notes on the recorder and can play a variety of songs and note combinations.

Older students sang the haunting slave song, “Sold off to Georgy” and African-American spirituals such as "Come and Go with me to that Land" and "Soon I will be Done with the Troubles of the World" and played call and response singing games such as “Shoo Lie Loo” and “Oh Won’t You Sit Down?”

Fourth grade students performed the hand jive motions to the rhyme, “Down, Down Baby” with different partners at each turn and played the song, “Shortnin’ Bread” on the xylophones. Like many early African American songs, this song is also built on the pentatonic scale, and the students are singing/playing combinations of these notes. Students in **fourth, fifth and sixth** grades played the harmonic changes of the classic 12 bar Blues on individual tone bells.

Fifth and sixth grade students sang the national anthem, “Star Spangled Banner” and the “black national anthem” “Lift Every Voice” and learned about the origin and history of both songs. They discovered the meaning of the word “polyrhythm,” (another musical element from Africa that became an important contribution to the development of American music) by playing rhythms in different time signatures at the same time. They also followed the chord changes on the xylophones of a blues in the minor mode, playing along with a 2002 recording of a remake of B.B. King’s famous hit, “The Thrill is gone” in the hip-hop style.

I hope to see you on April 11th at 7:00 pm when we present this year’s Chorus Production, “Harriet the Spy” in the cafeteria

Agnes Zsigmondi, Music teacher

*You are cordially invited to the upcoming event at the
Crocker Farm School*

Crocker Chorus presents:

“Harriet the Spy”

*April 11, 2011
7:00 pm and
April 12 at 9:30 am
In the cafeteria*

Families are encouraged to attend the evening performance

We hope that you will be able to join us!

THE AMHERST, PELHAM & AMHERST-PELHAM REGIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Serving Amherst, Pelham and the Amherst-Pelham Region

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PRESS RELEASE

3/12/12

Maria Geryk, Superintendent of the Amherst, Pelham and Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools, is pleased to announce that Dr. Ronald Ferguson will visit Amherst for a full day of events on Wednesday, March 28, 2012. Based at Harvard University since 1983, Dr. Ferguson is a nationally renowned expert on the racial achievement gap.

In addition to working with district teachers, administrators and students throughout the day, Dr. Ferguson will be the featured speaker at a public forum from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on March 28 in the Amherst Regional High School Auditorium at 21 Mattoon Street, Amherst. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Parents, guardians, students, faculty and community members are encouraged to attend this free event.

A large turnout is expected so reservations are highly recommended. Translators, transportation and free childcare and parking will also be available. To reserve a seat or to arrange for childcare, translation or transportation services, please contact Kimberly Stender at stenderk@arps.org or 413-362-1825.

Dr. Ferguson's visit to Amherst is part of the Office of the Superintendent's initiative to bring the national discussion on education to the community and is made possible by generous donations from Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College, the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst Education Foundation and Five Colleges, Inc.

Biographical Statement for Ronald F. Ferguson

Dr. Ronald F. Ferguson is an MIT-trained economist whose work over three decades has focused on economic, social and educational challenges in urban America. Issues of racial and ethnic inequality have been a central focus. He joined the faculty at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government in September 1983, after teaching at Brandeis and Brown Universities. Currently, he holds a joint appointment between the Harvard Kennedy School and the Graduate School of Education.

For the past decade, Dr. Ferguson's research has focused on racial achievement gaps, appearing in publications of the National Research Council, the Brookings Institution, the U.S. Department of Education, the Educational Research Service and various other books and journals. He is the creator and director of the Tripod Project for school improvement and the faculty co-chair and director of the Achievement Gap Initiative (AGI) at Harvard [www.agi.harvard.edu]. The AGI is a university-wide endeavor that also reaches beyond Harvard and brings together researchers, policy makers and practitioners to work on school improvement, parenting, and youth culture to help raise achievement and narrow gaps. His most recent book is *Toward Excellence with Equity: an emerging vision for closing the achievement gap*, from Harvard Education Press.

The mission of the Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools is to create a dynamic learning community where students and staff work together and where all students are supported and challenged to achieve their full potential in their intellectual, creative, social and civic endeavors. With parent and community participation, staff and students strive to ensure a safe environment and to promote respect and appreciation for the diversity of individuals, cultures and learning styles

IMPORTANT MESSAGE>>>IMPORTANT MESSAGE>>>IMPORTANT MESSAGE

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s):

New this spring, students in grades 6 through high school will be asked to read statements about their responsibilities during MCAS testing and to sign an acknowledgement indicating they understand these responsibilities. We recommend that you discuss them with your child along with the school's handbook and related policies. *Thank you for your involvement in your child's education.*



At the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Regional School Committee has voted to make-up the school closure of March 1st on April 6, Good Friday, rather than during the April break. As a result, the full April break will remain intact. Families are asked to adjust their calendars accordingly. Students who are absent for religious observations on April 6 should simply present a parent's or guardian's note upon their return to school."

The Pacific Lodge of Masons 99 Main Street Amherst is hosting a pancake breakfast on Saturday, March 31, 2012. (Located right next to the Amherst Police Department). This annual breakfast will raise needed funds for their charity- the Masonic Angel Fund. Tickets are \$5. The Amherst Masonic Angel Fund has helped over 500 local school children in the last 8 years. The Freemasons provide gifts to needy children within 24 hours of a need being identified by a school nurse, guidance counselor, or teacher- the child remains anonymous to the Masons. Gifts have included eye glasses, medicines, operations, music lessons, clothing and shoes, winter coats and hats, summer camp memberships, a semester of morning snacks for some classes, new bedding, helping children who have experienced a family tragedy; anything that really helps a child's educational experience. Pacific Lodge is pleased to announce that attending the pancake breakfast will be the Discovery Channel to learn more about what our Masons are doing their local community. So, please come!

ABSENT LINE: Parent/Guardians are required to call the absentee line, 362-1659 if your child will not be in school. If your child is tardy to school, please have him/her stop by the office for a pass before going to class. Call before 9:00 to avoid receiving an automated phone call.

Linea para reporter ausencias: Se les require a todos los padres/encargados que se comuniquen con la escuela llamando al telefono 362-1656 si su hijo(a) va a estar ausente. Si su hijo(a) va a llegar tarde a la escuela por favor asegurese que su hijo (a) se reporta a la reporta a la oficina primero.