

# DEEP RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Mr. Christian J. Strickland | [cstrickland@reg4.k12.ct.us](mailto:cstrickland@reg4.k12.ct.us) | 860-526-5319

## Upcoming Events

- **March 1st - DRES Science Fair & Invention Convention Showcase: 5:00 - 7:00 PM in the DRES Gymnasium**
- **March 2nd - DRES Science Fair & Invention Convention School Showcase and Judging: All Day Event**
- **March 5th - DRES PTO Meeting - 7:00PM in the DRES Media Center**
- **March 8th - Early Dismissal at 1:00 PM - Teacher Professional Development**
- **March 9th - No School For Students - Teacher Professional Development Day**
- **March 15th - DRES BOE Meeting - 7:00 PM in the DRES Media Center**
- **March 22nd and March 23rd - Early Dismissal at 1:00 - Parent Teacher Conferences**
- **March 26th - DRES Day of the Arts**
- **March 27 - 28th - DRES PTO Book Fair (3/28/18 - Family Night 6-8)**
- **March 29th - Kindergarten Welcome Night - 6:30 PM in the DRES Gymnasium**
- **March 30th - No School - Good Friday**

## The Gift of Presence

It is a busy and often stressful world we live in with information and sensory stimulation coming at us from multiple sources both inside and outside of our own heads! We can get the news on our wristwatches and know instantly how many steps we've taken toward a predetermined goal we've set for ourselves. Being informed and having goals are good things.....right?!? Yes they are good things..... until they overwhelm us to the point we hide under the covers or preoccupy us so that we miss out on our very own life and loved ones. It can be a challenge to avoid the trap of "rehearsing and rehashing" our life's events, missing out on the present moment. Self reflection and goal setting aside, you can miss a lot if the bulk of your thought is focused on anticipating future events or ruminating about the past.

Mindfulness is about being fully aware of whatever is happening in the present moment, without filters or judgment. One helpful definition is to think of mindfulness as the simple and direct practice of moment to moment observation of the mind body process through calm and focused awareness without judgment.

That all sounds great in theory but how does it line up with homework, practice, chores, temper tantrums, play dates and "screen time?" Well, in fact, research has found that mindfulness can help children develop the skills they need to better understand and manage their feelings, pay attention, reduce stress and grow in compassion and empathy.

Where to start.....how about with a minute of mindful breathing? Right now, have a seat, close your eyes and slowly breathe in and out, focusing your attention on the air moving in and out, notice how your body feels in the chair and soften any spots of tension you may feel. By focusing your attention and thoughts on your breath you remain in this moment. You can't "breathe" past or future, breathing is all about the right now so stay with it! A helpful way to coach yourself or your children during those moments of rehearsing, rehashing, stress or anxiety is to remember to STOP ~ Stop. Take a breath. Observe. Proceed.

Okay, this is going to take practice. It might be helpful to find a time and place to practice mindfulness. First thing in the morning or at bedtime or both can be beneficial times to practice a mindful minute and set the stage for a calm, peaceful and present start and finish to the day. As you become more accustomed to mindfulness it becomes easier to use in times of stress and anxiety.

Observation without judgment sets us up to grow in our compassion and empathy for others and ourselves. Stop, take a breath, observe, proceed without labeling of good, bad, right, wrong, fair, unfair, blame, criticize. Take note of thoughts, feelings and sensations in the moment, aware of things as they are, acknowledging that the past and the future are both outside of this moment, the present. Remember how it feels when someone is truly present with you; it is a gift. To be truly present in the moment, calm and focused without judging resets our thinking and our emotions. Helping our children learn and practice this skill helps them grow emotionally and socially, giving them an invaluable tool as they move forward in school and beyond. It is the gift of presence.

There are many resources for mindfulness; here are just a few ~

Snel, Eline. *Sitting Still Like a Frog: Mindfulness Exercises for Kids*. Boston MA: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2013.

Stahl, Bob and Goldstein, Elisha. *A Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Workbook*. Oakland CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc., 2010.

[www.LeftBrainBuddha.com](http://www.LeftBrainBuddha.com)

[www.greatergood.berkeley.edu](http://www.greatergood.berkeley.edu)

[www.GoZen.com](http://www.GoZen.com)

## **KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION: STUDENTS WANTED**

While I know it is only March and we are still very much focused on our efforts and progress this year, we are also looking ahead to who will be joining our kindergarten classrooms and DRES school community next year. With that being said we are often aware of the students who are looking to join us in the fall, but we also need your help in talking to community members, family and friends about Kindergarten Registration.

Our Kindergarten Welcome Night is scheduled for March 29th at 6:30. This event provides parents of an incoming kindergarten student the opportunity to learn more about the Deep River Elementary kindergarten program. We encourage any and all parents who have a child starting kindergarten in the fall to attend this event.

We hope that you will help us get the word out to families about kindergarten registration. If you know of a family who is thinking about starting their child in the fall or needs a registration packet, please encourage them to call our front office at 860-526-5319 and ask for Mr. Strickland or Mrs. Zupan. We will be more than happy to help out!

## **HELP WANTED! SCIENCE FAIR AND INVENTION CONVENTION JUDGES NEEDED!**

Are you, or someone you know, involved in a science or engineering field? Would you be willing to volunteer to be on our judging panels for our Science Fair and Invention Convention the morning of March 2nd? If so, please contact our front office so that you can be added to the list. We are looking to build two panels to judge each event with adults in our community who work in these fields. Please consider being a part of this great event at DRES!



## **The Science Connecticut Mastery Test & the Smarter Balanced Assessment**

Students in grades 3-6 will be taking the Smarter Balanced Assessment in May. This assessment is computer-based and will assess students in the areas of mathematics and language arts & literacy. Both areas will be assessed through multiple choice and open-ended responses as well as a Performance Task in these two content areas.

Please know that these tests will be spread out over a two-week period for your child and will not be given in a single sitting. Grades 3 through 6 will begin their testing the week of May 7<sup>th</sup>. Student testing can be paused if necessary to allow for breaks or to resume the testing at another time.

To help your child in preparation for this, classroom teachers have already begun working with them on using the training and practice websites provided by Smarter Balance. This is being done so that they are familiar with the formatting and tools they will see when taking this test on the computer. In addition, your child's classroom teacher has been working all year at aligning his or her lessons with the Common Core State Standards and planning their instruction in a targeted manner to help make all students successful.

On Wednesday, May 22nd our Grade 5 students will be taking the Next Generation Science Standards Field Test. This assessment is given in a single sitting and will address scientific units of study and inquiry that our fifth graders have focused on. Our teachers and students have been working hard this year to become strong scientific thinkers.

While we take a close look at how our students do on these assessments, we also realize that it is just one part of your child's overall academic performance. If your child is taking these assessments, we ask that you encourage them to focus and try their best. Getting a good night's sleep and eating appropriately will also be of benefit to them. Finally though, remind them that we all believe in them and if they give their best effort we will continue to be proud of them.



## **MARCH MATHEMATICS UPDATE**

Our students often ask, “Why do I need to know this?” and “When will I ever use this skill in real life?” As educators and parents, we can help make math relevant to students by helping our children make connections to everyday life. Talk about how you use math and reasoning in your job, in your home and in your hobbies. Encourage your child to help you solve real life problems. In addition to sharing in a great conversation, your child may walk away with a greater sense of investment in learning and applying the math.

Consider these situations and take advantage of other “teachable” moments:

- Calculating materials for a building project--measuring, working with fractions and various units of measurement
- Designing a pattern when beading a necklace or bracelet
- Cooking and doubling or halving a recipe
- Comparing unit prices at the grocery store to find a better buy
- Figuring out a discount given a percent off sale
- Sorting items by color or category (laundry, toys, shoes, silverware, etc.)
- Calculating a server’s tip at a restaurant
- Estimating the bill at a restaurant or movie theater
- Planning the cost of a birthday party
- Explaining gross vs. net or income vs. expenses if you own a business
- Factoring in shipping and tax when buying online
- Counting utensils when setting the table
- Estimating elapsed time when planning the afternoon or weekend
- Factoring in wind chill and talking about negative numbers when skiing or skating
- Designing a poster or invitation, including measuring and centering

### Current Units of Study:

Grade K--Exploring Shapes

Grade 1--Exploring Shapes

Grade 2--Units of Money & Place Value to One Thousand

Grade 3--Measuring Mass, Volume & Length, Elapsed Time, Comparing Fractions

Grade 4--Traditional Addition & Subtraction, Measurement & Angles

Grade 5--Multiplication of Whole Numbers (Ratio Table, Partial Product, Algorithm) & Fractions

Grade 6--Positive & Negative Numbers, Absolute Value, Points on a Graph

- Jill Shakun



## BEHIND THE ART ROOM DOOR

### CRITICAL AND CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING.

**The challenge:**

The fifth and sixth grade students were asked to create two micro sculptures, one that fits inside a test tube the another inside a mason jar.

*The other criteria were as follows:*

- One had to be related to the ocean in some way
- The other a sculpture of their choice
- Either could be abstract or realistic in nature.
- The sculptures needed to be two inches tall or more
- Not touch the sides of the jar
- Stand on their own.

To accomplish the task, they were allowed to use supplies provided and to supplement, could bring in things from home, nuts and bolts, small things from the junk drawer, things from the bottom of the toy box. By adding these additional supplies to their sculptures they would create a piece that would be uniquely their own.

**The process:**

- Students were required to make a plan for both sculptures. Within the plan they had to list all the possible things they might use for supplies.
- Sketch out what they wanted their sculptures to look like.
- Talk about their ideas to their groups (tables).

It was exciting to see the different ways students approached the problem.

Students were encouraged to make conscious choices and find multiple answers to the given problem through the creative process.

When everyone's sculpture is complete, each student will articulate his/her artistic thinking and process of each sculpture to the group. Exciting things are happening in the art room.



## Read Across America Day!!!



### Read Across America

### *Coming to DRES...Friday, March 2*

It is time once again for the of students of Deep River Elementary School to join millions of their peers across the country to celebrate the twenty-first annual Read Across America Day on Friday, March 2, 2018. Read Across America is celebrated on March 2 each year in commemoration of one of America's most beloved authors, Dr. Seuss. This is a day sponsored by the National Education Association (NEA). The NEA's goal and purpose along with the staff of Deep River Elementary School, is for students to learn to love and enjoy reading in hopes that they will become lifelong readers and learners.

On Friday, March 2, students will have the option of getting in the spirit of celebrating Dr. Seuss's birthday with being able to wear the colors of red, white, and black to pay tribute to Dr. Seuss's *The Cat in the Hat* or to wear a shirt from a place that they have visited in recognition of *Oh, The Places You'll Go*. Each class will have a designated time to visit in the DRES library where they will engage in fun activities centered on the celebration of Dr. Seuss and his stories. In addition, each class will have a guest reader invited by their classroom teacher to come in and read aloud a Dr. Seuss story. Finally, we at DRES will spend March 2 celebrating the love, fun, and value of reading.

We hope that you will join us and celebrate Read Across America by listening to your child read or read to them. Because *Kids who read and who are read to, do better in school and become lifelong readers and learners.*

**So remember... "You are never too old, too wacky, too wild, to pick up a book and read to a child." ~Dr. Seuss**

## FROM THE DRES PTO

### DRES PTO Meeting

Date: March 5, 2018

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: DRES Media Center

### Agenda

Welcome & Introductions - Amy Petrone

1. Secretary Report - Katie Bauer
  - \* Review and Acceptance of Meeting Minutes from DRES PTO Meeting on February 5, 2018
2. Principal's Report - DRES Principal Strickland
3. Parks & Recreation Commission Report
4. DRES Board of Education Report
  - \* Info from Supervision District Meeting and Joint BOE meeting on February 22
  - \* Info from Region 4 Budget Workshop 2 on February 21 (New Workshop on March 5, 2018 Added)
  - \* Info from DRES Budget Workshop 2 on February 20 (Workshop 3 has been cancelled)
  - \* Next Deep River BOE regular meeting March 15, 2018 @ 7:00 p.m.
5. Vice President Report - Angela Tressel
6. Treasurer Report - Miriam Morrissey
7. Corresponding Secretary Report - Danielle Etes
8. PTO Committee Reports (Baking, Bingo, Birthday Bulletin Board, **Book Fair (3/27-28)**, Books for Birthdays, Box Tops, **Day of the Arts (3/26)**, Field Day, Recycling, School Beautification, Sixth Grade Promotion Night, Someone Special Dance (Recap), **Teacher Appreciation (3/22)**, STEM Day (Recap), Used Goods Drive, Veteran's Day, Winter Wonderland, Yearbook)



### Old Business (Past Events and Activities)

1. Update on PTO appreciation event (Jeni Gray-Roberts, Amy Petrone, & Cari Kruzel-Boxwell)
2. Any other business

### New Business

#### 1. Upcoming Meetings/Activities in March/April:

3/22 - Staff Appreciation Spring Dinner

3/26 - Day of the Arts at DRES

3/27-28 - Scholastic Book Fair and Family Night

4/9 - Guest speaker: State Trooper Dawn Taylor (topics in this presentation may include Drugs & their Impact on Children and Gun Safety)

2. Any other new business
3. Nominating Committee to gather nominations for the 2018-2019 Executive Board and Committee Chairs
4. **RAFFLE - FREE TO ENTER ~ MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN**

Adjournment - Next DRES PTO Meeting Date: Monday, April 9, 2018 - 7:00 p.m. - DRES Media Center

**DRES PTO Meeting Minutes**

**February 5, 2018**

**Attendees:** Christian Strickland, Andrea Ricci, Amy Petrone, Katie Bauer, Angela Tressel, Cari Kruzel-Boxwell, Krista Farrell, Sue Rowland, Miriam Morrissey, Chris Marra

The meeting opened at 7:00 p.m. The following topics were discussed:

**Secretary Report – Angela Tressel for Katie Bauer**

Cari Kruzel-Boxwell made a motion to accept the minutes. The motion was seconded and it passed unanimously.

**Principal’s Report - Mr. Strickland**

- STEM Day was a great success. A big thanks to the parents and volunteers to make it happen
- The Science Fair and Invention Convention need judges on March 2, 8:30 – 11:00
- Alicia Farrells, PhD presentation “Anxiety: The Monster Among US” is shared on the Region 4 website
- Region 4 is planning to host Alicia Farrells in April. The topic will be “Perservance”.
- Kindergarten welcome night is March 29. Please spread the word.
- School is in session on February 20 and 21. These were originally snowflake days.

**Park and Rec – Miriam Morrissey**

- The Youth Theater’s production “The Ever After – A Musical” was performed on Feb 3 & 4. It was an excellent performance.

**Upcoming Events:**

- Easter Egg Hunt – March 24<sup>th</sup>
- Fishing Derby – May 12<sup>th</sup>
- Carnival – June 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>
- Summer Camp

**Board of Education – Miriam Morrissey**

- DRES 2018-2019 *PROPOSED* Budget was discussed.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> Budget Workshop is on Feb 20<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm, at the Central Office
- All the Budget information is posted on the Region 4 website, under Board of Education

**Vice President Report – Angela Tressel**

Nothing new to report

**Treasurer Report – Miriam Morrissey**

- Winter Wonderland netted \$234.91

**PTO Committee Reports**

- Baking Committee (Annmarie Magee and Angela Tressel) – Looking for more volunteers to provide snacks and drinks for the Someone Special Dance.
- BoxTops (Amy Petrone and Lisa Rogers) – 2 drawings for Jump tickets to Rockin’ Jump Trampoline Park in East Haven and Jump tickets to Launch Trampoline Park in Hartford will be held on February 9. All Box Tops must be submitted by Friday, February 9.
- Someone Special Dance (Rachel Welch) will take place on February 9<sup>th</sup>. Life Touch will be the photographer. There have been 32 tickets sold (as of Monday, Feb 5).
- Committee Chairs are needed for Winter Wonderland and Beautification/Veteran’s Day.

**Old Business**

- There will be an Appreciation Event on May 14<sup>th</sup> during the regularly scheduled PTO meeting. Local vendors will be invited as well as DRES Students and Parents to show our appreciation for their continued support. Light refreshments will be served.

**New Business**

- Cari Kruzel-Boxwell proposed doing a big “once a year” request for donations instead of requesting donations throughout the year. The donations would be planned and doled out to the necessary Committees/Events as needed.
- Amy Petrone proposed inviting a speaker to a future meeting. The group decided on asking Officer Dawn Taylor if she was available to speak at the March 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. Possible topics would be gun safety (in light of Guilford tragedy) and current behaviors (social media, drugs, etc) effecting our children.

**The next PTO meeting will be held on March 5 at 7:00 pm.  
The meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.**



*The Chester, Deep River, Essex, Region #4, and Supervision District Boards of Education are equal opportunity/affirmative action employers. The Chester, Deep River, Essex, Region #4, and Supervision District Boards of Education do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, marital status, national/ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, or disability in their programs, activities, and employment practices. Questions or complaints related to Title IX should be directed to Kristina Martineau, Assistant Superintendent, 1 Winthrop Road, Deep River, CT 06417 or by phone at 860-526-2417; questions or complaints related to disabilities, should be directed to Sarah Smalley, Director of Pupil Services, 1 Winthrop Road, Deep River, CT 06417 or by phone at 860-526-2417.*