

F E B R U A R Y 2 0 1 6

Cook Hill School



Dear Cook Hill Families,

Greetings! As I write this letter I am looking out my office window at a fluffy white snowdrift and thinking of our 100th day of school celebrations! It seems as if the year is slipping away!

We continue to take great pride in our daily morning meetings focused on community building and positive social communication skills. We work as teams to model and practice ways to solve disagreements, help one another, and use our words to communicate our feelings. Our bus safety patrols have been a great way to encourage students to lead by example in less structured settings. The students wear their sashes with great pride.

Currently, we are also focused on ways to improve our reading performance. As we all know, reading achievement is critical to student success. All classes have increased the use of nonfiction text to read for information. Students have been taught how to use features within the text to further their understanding through visual representations. We use graphic organizers to respond to our reading and help us to summarize new learning. In addition, many of our classes have held writing celebrations to share our featured authors. As a staff, we are committed to “growing” readers. Stay tuned as we will be creating videos of staff reading favorite books that you will be able to access from anywhere!

In March you will receive a link for the Cook Hill school survey for parents. We appreciate your willingness to complete this survey. We are always working to improve and we value your feedback. Please consider completing a random act of kindness during the coming month.

Kristine

Save the Date!

Family Literacy
Night...Tuesday, February 9,
2016 from 6-7:30 in the Library.

Cook Hill Pre K

The Pre-K classes have been learning Nursery Rhymes. Nursery Rhymes have great educational value.

In Nursery Rhymes, children hear new words that they may not ordinarily hear in every day language such as tuffet and curds and whey. Nursery Rhymes help children develop strong recall and memorization skills. They help children learn how to pronounce words easily by repeating them over and over.

Nursery Rhymes help children learn how to sequence events and may help them learn simple math skills such as patterning, counting, size, weights and numbers.

Many Nursery Rhymes have positional words that children can learn. Children can use their bodies to act out the Nursery Rhyme and expand their imaginations. Nursery Rhymes are children's first exposure to poetry. In addition to the children learning how to recite these rhymes, they have also been making interactive crafts to help them remember the rhymes. Not only are Nursery Rhymes of great educational value, they are FUN!!!

Community Technology Night

Our third annual community technology night will be on Wednesday, March 16th at Sheehan High School from 6:30-8:30PM.

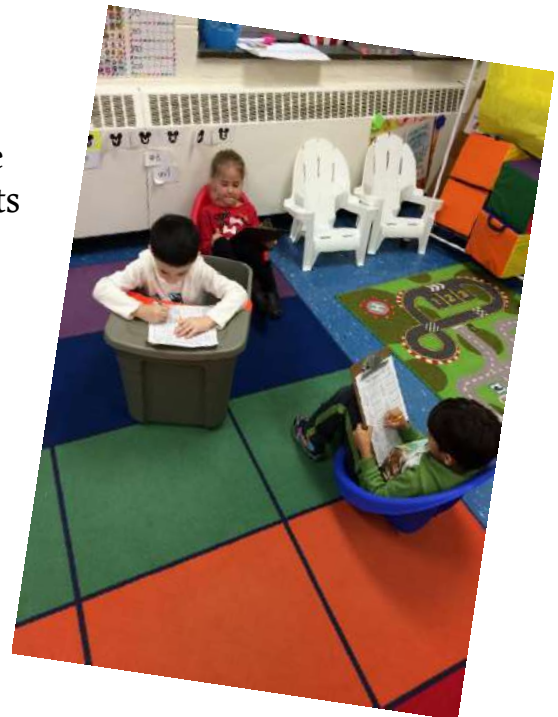


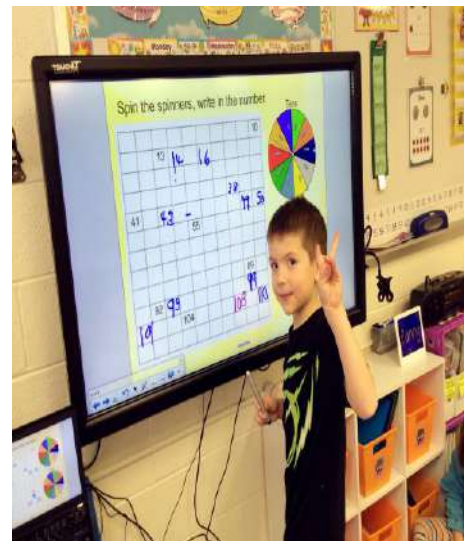
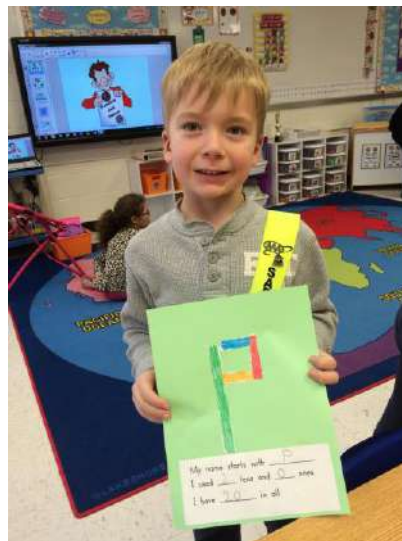
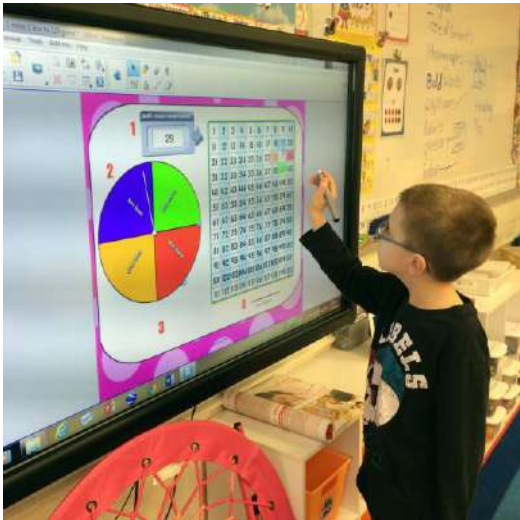
It's Time for Kindergarten Registration!

Please call the Cook Hill School Office for information on registering your child for the upcoming kindergarten class! More information about orientation will follow.

Kindergarten

The Kindergarteners have been working so hard this school year! In reading, the students have been working hard on learning power words and sounding out words. We have seen such an improvement in the students reading and we hope you are seeing it at home as well. They are really starting to become little readers! When reading with your child at home remind them to try some of the strategies that they have learned at school. Lips the Fish reminds students to get their mouth ready for the initial consonant sound in a word. The Eagle Eye strategy reminds students to look at the picture for clues to help them figure out a word. In math, students have been working on number sense and have been spending a lot of time working on teen numbers. The students have practiced counting and identifying these numbers. They have also learned how many tens and ones are in each teen number. The teachers and students are so excited for the upcoming 100th day of school. This is going to be such a fun day and we can't wait to see all of our 100 year olds coming to school that day!





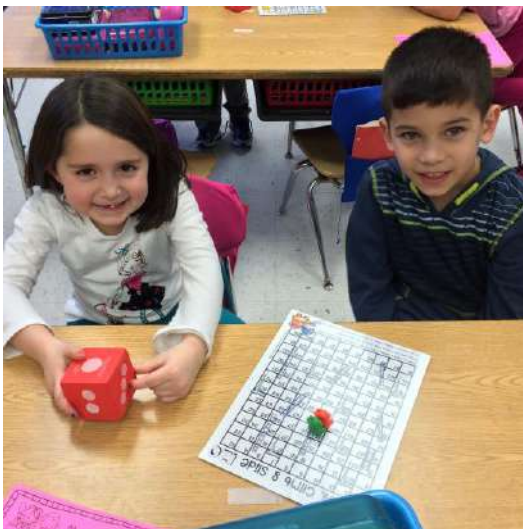
First Grade Happenings

First graders are currently learning about place value in math. Students are using a variety of tools such as one hundred twenty charts, base-10 pieces, counting cubes, and pennies and dimes. The children enjoy using hands-on math tools to build their number sense.

In reading, the children continue to learn decoding and comprehension strategies both in small group settings and one-to-one conferences. Their sight word knowledge continues to increase, which helps them to read with more independence and confidence. First graders have been learning all about informational text and the special features of nonfiction books. This compliments our current focus on expository writing. The first grade team is excited to collaborate with Mrs. O'Brien in the library to help the children become expert readers and writers of informational text!

The weather has been a popular topic of discussion in science class! The students enjoy learning about, and making, weather tools. We certainly have had some interesting weather recently, which leads to great observations for our young scientists.

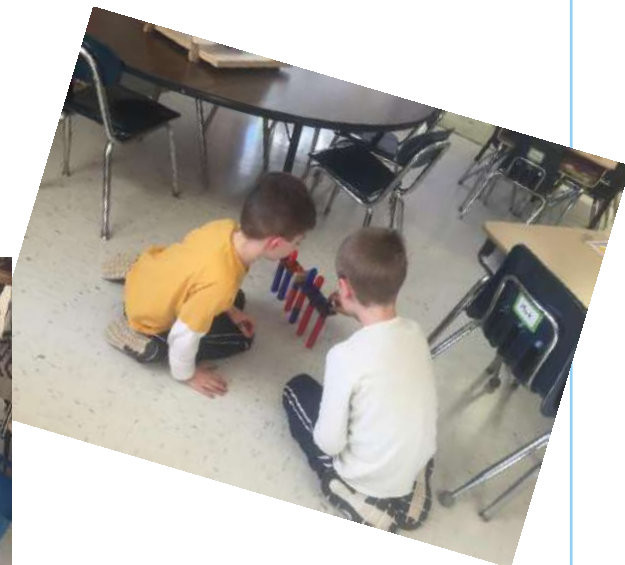
We have had quite a few holidays to discuss in social studies. The children recently learned about Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Groundhog's Day. We are looking forward to our 100th Day of School and Valentine's Day.



Second Grade News...

This winter, second graders have been very busy! In science, students began a unit called *Balancing and Weighing*. During this unit, students get to perform simple experiments with balance, use an equal-arm balance to compare and weigh, apply strategies for comparing and weighing to solve problems, and much more! They have really been enjoying this unit and will continue doing fun experiments for weeks to come. In math, students have been working on telling time. They have been telling and writing time from analog and digital clocks to the nearest five minutes, using a.m. and p.m. They have also been using addition and subtraction within 100 to solve word problems involving lengths that are given in the same units. Also during this math unit, students will discuss length and how they can use different tools to measure length.

In writing, we have been focusing on informative writing. Each second grader wrote a how-to report. They wrote step by step directions on how to do something such as how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich or how to make a snowman. Students got to choose their topic and they had the opportunity to share their writing with their families during the *Non-Fiction Writing Celebration* held in their classroom. Second grader teachers have been teaching students all about non-fiction text features and how to utilize the features. Students chose an animal to research and are in the process of writing an informative piece on the animal.



Greetings from the MUSIC ROOM!

By: Lisa Ives

It's hard to believe that it's halfway through the school year! Before we know it, it will be June!

Here's a brief look at what we have been doing in music.

Kindergarten Students have learned to sing "Hello" in languages from many countries around the world and are learning to find those countries on the map. They are also learning about rhythm and are echoing rhythms on drums. And every once in a while we have time to set up our rhythm instruments stations and give everyone a turn at playing together!

Grade One Students have just finished a month-long lesson on Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf.

In addition to this piece being a mainstay of the classical repertoire, it's a wonderful way to introduce students to the instruments of orchestra. We experienced the piece in many ways: we watched a puppet show version, listened to a version on CD, and made stick puppets of the characters so that students could hold up the correct character when they heard the character's theme played. They were so excited to bring their puppets home! Pick up a recording at our public library and listen to it with your children. Ask them to use their stick puppets and "teach" you about the instrument characters!

Grade Two Students have taken their first steps at learning to read music! It's been such fun seeing the lightbulbs go off as they put together the pieces and discover that those lines on the board translate into those notes on the pages of their books! We have also been exploring music in unconventional forms from groups like Scrap Arts Music and Stomp. Soon we will begin work on our end-of-the-year presentation, so look for announcements to come!

As always, feel free to contact me at any time!





Art at Cook Hill School

"Art is a great adventure, an experience in finding meaning in even common, ordinary things."

Art at Cook Hill School provides weekly opportunities to display creativity, create, and explore the elements of Art through drawing, painting, and sculpture.

Grade 2 students have been exploring the art of Line. Second graders have learned about horizontal, vertical, diagonal, curved and zig zag lines. Students have created several different art projects both 2 dimensional and 3 dimensional.

Grade 1 students have had a fun art experience of creating a snowman. First graders started off sponge painting their snowman. Cut paper details were added. Each snowman was truly unique and a delight to look at.

Kindergarten students have learned about symmetry through creating and designing a pair of mittens. Line, color, and pattern were emphasized in this lesson.

Please take time to enjoy your child's artwork, it means a great deal to them and will be very rewarding to you as well!

Lisa Fachini

Cook Hill School

Art Teacher

Language Development at Cook Hill

Bilingual

Senderos is a comprehensive Spanish reading program. Students are able to see their faces in the engaging selections and stories while experiencing the diverse cultures and traditions of the Spanish language. This great diversity is celebrated along with multicultural literature in the program.

Senderos provides students with an equitable program which not only respects the beauty of the Spanish language but meets the needs of the Bilingual students. The program provides excellent components that embrace the unique challenges of Spanish reading and its language arts. We are very proud to have a Spanish program for our Bilingual students at Cook Hill which lead the path to bilingualism."

ELL Services:

TESOL is a pull out program used here at Cook Hill to assist English Language Learners with the skills in English that they need to participate fully in the mainstream classes. This program is offered to all students who speak languages other than English. We currently have about six other languages spoken at home by students, these include; Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Korean, Arabic and Bengla. The students spend time focusing on listening, speaking, reading and writing in English. Each year the children are assessed using the LAS Links, a state test that shows growth in English, the target language. If you have any questions regarding this program, you can contact Ms. Diaz during school hours.

Family Literacy Program By: Tom Moffo

Parents of children enrolled in Prekindergarten and Kindergarten classes at Cook Hill may participate in language development and reading readiness activities. Parents work on their own adult education lessons and spend time with their children on their grade level language development activities.

Family Literacy meets on Monday and Tuesday. Please call the Wallingford Adult Education Center at 203-294-3902 for the scheduled times and additional information.

Mastery Based Learning Opportunity

All are invited to participate in a booktalk about the book On Your Mark by Thomas R. Guskey. Copies are available on request to Central Office. This book is a great way to prompt a discussion about what is and isn't working with our current grading practices. This will pave the way for discussions about grading in a mastery-based learning environment. Here is an overview of the book from the publisher:

"Create and sustain a learning environment where students thrive and stakeholders are accurately informed of student progress. Clarify the purpose of grades, craft a vision statement aligned with this purpose, and discover research-based strategies to implement effective grading and reporting practices. Identify policies and practices that render grading inaccurate, and understand the role grades play in students' future success and opportunities."

We hope you can join us!

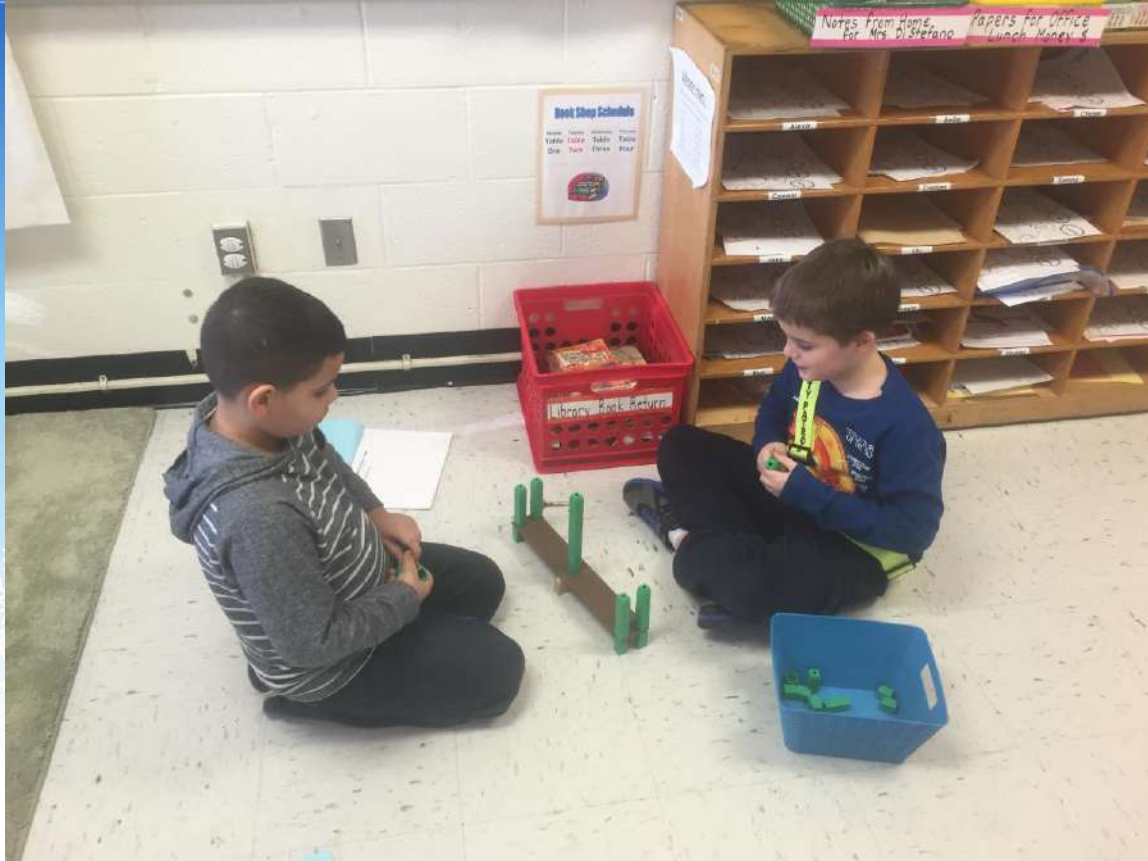
Book Discussion Dates for On Your Mark by Thomas R. Guskey

February 22nd- 7:00 am - 8:00 am at Hubcap

February 29th- 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm at Hubcap

March 3rd- 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm at Hubcap





Cook Hill Elementary School

57 Hall RD
Wallingford, CT 06492
203-284-5400



FROM THE NURSE:

The cold weather has arrived and the heat is on!

Please remember to dress your child appropriately. A warm winter coat, hat and gloves for outside recess and layered clothing for inside as the temperatures vary from room to room.

Keeping hydrated is one of the best ways to keep your child's skin from drying out so remember to send in a water bottle and chapstick for those chapped lips!