

Stafford Elementary School

Important Dates

Monday 2/15/16- No School

Tuesday 2/16/16- No School
Professional Development

Tuesday 3/1/16- PTO meeting

Parent Teacher Conferences

Conferences will be held on
Wednesday 3/9/16 and
Thursday 3/10/16 . We will be
using the online scheduler
again. Please follow this link
[https://www.ptcfast.com/
schools/
Stafford_Elementary_School](https://www.ptcfast.com/schools/Stafford_Elementary_School)
start signing up on 2/20/16.

Upcoming Events

2/26/16-Remote Control Car
Racing Club with Mr.
Montgomery

3/11/16-Movie Night

4/7/16-Internet Safety with
Scott Driscoll

4/14/16- The Brain Show

Information coming soon!



A few words from Ms. Piscetello and Mr. Montgomery:

Brrr...winter has finally arrived. Just a reminder that students should be dressed appropriately for the weather outside; sweatshirts, jackets, hats and gloves. As you know the weather can change quickly so layers are always good. Appropriate shoe wear must also be worn, no heels please. When temperatures permit, students will play outside and be allowed in the snow.



Family Fun Time

In today's world of computers and tablets, phones and video games it can be easy to overlook some wonderful opportunities to connect with one another. Sure, movie nights are fun and entertaining but why not truly unplug and connect with what and who matters most? Here are 10 simple, free, or inexpensive activities for families to do together, I hope you can try. Some may feel a bit out of our normal comfort zones, but most are easy to prepare and can be done in short amounts of time (or stretched out for the times when you are having a ton of fun ☺).

10 Fun and Simple Family Activities

Play a board game

Draw together

Go through family photos

Dance to music

Face paint each other

Play charades

Read a story

Play a card game

Bake a dessert or cook dinner together

Indoor picnic

I hope there is something on the list for everyone and that you enjoy spending time together!

Peace & Care ~ Ms. Morhardt

Grade Two:

Happy New Year! We finished off 2015 with our Grinch Feast. We appreciated all of the generous donations that helped make our feast so joyful and delicious. The children enjoyed snacking on who-pudding, who-hash, and roast beast while watching "How the Grinch Stole Christmas."

We are just beginning our new science unit of Solids, Liquids, and Gasses. The children are excited to learn through hands-on experiments. Ask your child to tell you some properties of solid objects.

We have also begun a new unit in math. Students will be exposed to several strategies to solve 2-digit subtraction problems. These little phrases will help students determine if they need to regroup or not: More on top, no need to stop. More on the floor, go next door and get 10 more. Numbers the same, zero's the game. Remember to keep practicing your addition and subtraction facts at home!

In reading and writing, the second graders are reading a variety of opinion texts, and writing persuasively. It is very important that your child is reading at home every night to help improve their fluency and comprehension. Reading at home for homework each night also counts for the "Wild About Reading" at-home reading incentive program. Keep reading to continue earning stickers and prizes!

Remember...keep practicing your spelling words each night and READ, READ, READ!



Grade Three

Multiplication Madness!

That's right! It's time to master those multiplication facts! Third graders are expected to know all of their multiplication facts from 0-10. We are quizzing the kids regularly and looking for help at home. As part of your nightly routine, please incorporate a few minutes of fact practice. Log on to Fastt Math, quiz your child orally or with flashcards, practice skip counting by different numbers, even have your child teach you our multiplication fact songs!

Our Readers and Writers Workshop has been an active place! Students have formed Book Clubs in which they are reading, sharing, and discussing a series of books or several books by the same author. The kids are setting goals for themselves and love the opportunities to discuss what they've read. Soon they will be trying to persuade the class to read their books. Therefore, we have been practicing persuasive writing. Students are trying to convince their audience to adopt their opinion on a variety of topics and issues. Third graders can be very convincing!

Third graders are getting many opportunities for hands-on work during science class. They are working in teams to try to design experiments and follow procedures in our Water and Climate unit. Amazingly few water spills have been reported!

PTO

SES PTO meets every first Tuesday of the month in the SES library at 6pm. The PTO is responsible for hosting many events throughout the school year, such as the book fair and movie nights. PTO also plans fundraisers to defray the cost of field trips and cover other student expenses throughout the year. The PTO regularly recognizes the handwork of SES teachers and staff by hosting appreciation luncheons and breakfast. All of the donations from parents are greatly appreciated.

Currently we have very few members that attend meetings and we are hoping that more parents will get involved. The PTO will be in need of some new officers next year, please come to a meeting!



Fifth Grade

Greetings from fifth grade! Students have been busy with their academics. In language arts, students are actively participating in our persuasive unit. They are reading and analyzing editorials and will be writing their own soon enough. Keep encouraging your child to read each night. We will be working on written responses to a variety of texts in class. In math, students continue to work on decimal place value in relation to multiplication and division. Please encourage your child to practice their basic math facts on Fastt Math at least three times a week. We saw some original, creative moon projects as a culminating activity to our Sun, Moon, and Planets science unit! The students have started studying explorers and will march through time until the Revolutionary War in social studies. Please check that your child has school supplies from our fifth grade supply list, as some supplies have been used up since the beginning of the year.

The Fifth Grade Team

Mrs. Bontempo, Mrs. Cooley, Miss Gordon, Ms. Meikle, Ms. Miller, and Mrs. Ratti



Speech-Language Notes from Mrs. Holmes and Mrs. Moore

There are many fun activities that you and your child can do together at home during these long winter days that strengthen language and communication skills. First and foremost, take time to READ together with your child. Your child can read to you, you can read to your child or you can share the reading. You will foster a love of reading by talking about the characters, settings, situations, making predictions together and asking your child questions about the story. Discuss your favorite parts and how they made you feel. You might even try acting out scenes from the story after you have finished the reading.

Cooking together can also be a language-enriched activity that you both can enjoy. Read the recipe together. Have your child gather the ingredients and supplies with your supervision. Allow them to measure the appropriate amounts as you discuss each step (great practice for fractions, abbreviations, reading and understanding). Have your child restate the steps to you after you are done. Then cook/bake and enjoy!

GAMES!! Playing games is a fun way to spend time together and foster language skills simultaneously. Games such as cards (UNO, Go-fish), board games (Sorry, Scrabble [Jr.], Clue) and word games (Scattergories, Scrabble [Jr.], I Spy around the house) can be entertaining for everyone!

Spending time with your child doing these types of activities may sound simple, but is a wonderful way to develop essential language skills and also build family memories. Have Fun!

Library Media Center



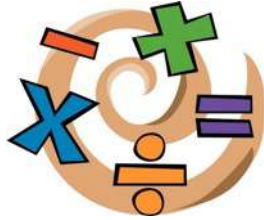
Reading is Snow Much Fun @ SES Library Media Center

The Library Media Center is very busy this school year. Students are checking out books and being read to on a weekly basis. Intermediate Nutmeg Book Award Nominees are flying off the shelves. The fifth graders just finished reading *The One and Only Ivan* by Katherine Applegate. The third and fourth graders are now on their fourth Elementary Nutmeg Award Nominee. So far, *Waiting for the Magic* by Patricia MacLachlan is their favorite. The second graders have started to explore the whole library. Keep Reading!

On Monday, January 11, the American Library Awards were announced. The 2016 Newbery Award winner is *Last Stop on Market Street*, written by Matt de la Peña. (The interest level is k-3 and the reading level is 3.3.) The 2016 Caldecott Award winner is *Finding Winnie: The True Story of the World's Most Famous Bear*, illustrated by Sophie Blackall, written by Lindsay Mattick. The 2016 Coretta Scott King Award is *Gone Crazy in Alabama* by Rita Williams. Award winners will be coming to our library soon!

The computer lab is also busy with classes working on our NEW typing program, Typing Agent. Students can access Typing Agent from home. Please ask Mrs. Davis for the log on information. Don't forget to visit and explore links to many award winning books and educational web sites on the library's web page <http://goo.gl/l1pb2B>.

Mathematics by Mrs. Jacobs



Homework in mathematics can be a challenge. Often the problems students are asked to complete are confusing to adults that were taught math using other methods. Most of us were taught a series of steps for completing algorithms that called for memorization. Now, our students are being asked to go deeper into the mathematical concepts and explain how solutions were found.

As children acquire new skills they sometimes get frustrated. This feeling is called “disequilibrium” when learning. It is actually a good thing. If they didn’t feel a little confused, they would not be learning. Think of it as taking the training wheels off a bike for the first time. Always try to reinforce perseverance at those times and teach children to stick with a problem, even if they need to change the solution plan if the answer does not make sense. It is important to remember the goal of learning mathematics is to apply skills to problem solving. This means students must be able to justify a solution, explain their strategies, and respond to explanations given by other students.

You can always go online to <https://www-k6.thinkcentral.com/ePC/start.do> and have your child login to access the classroom materials and other support programs from home.

Health/PE News by Mr. Terry

The students in class have been busy participating in various activities to increase their physical fitness and knowledge of health concepts.

In Physical Education, all of the classes have been taking part in a fitness unit. The students played “Fitopoly” to warmup and build some muscle endurance. They’d roll the dice and move up spaces to find out what exercise was next for them to attempt. The students would then participate in a fitness game like “The Fitness Scavenger Hunt.”

In Health classes, each grade is focusing on different concepts in various units. The 5th grade is discussing the diversity and possible changes of family life. We’re learning to be accepting of other student’s differences and to let students know that every family is special. They did this while utilizing the concept of a Venn diagram. The 4th grade has been learning about the environment and more specifically the health hazards of pollution. We’ve discussed noise, water and air pollution. The 3rd grade is starting a unit on safety. These topics include bicycle and pedestrian safety, fire safety and strangers to name a few. The 2nd grade have completed lessons on recycling as well as some basic concepts about pollution and its effects on our health. We will soon be putting disease prevention skills into practice as we have a lesson coming up soon on that topic.



Music News by Mrs. Bienvenu and Mr. Gray

Students in second grade have continued to read quarter note, eighth note, and quarter rest rhythms. Students have listened to songs, including songs from "The Nutcracker", and played rhythms on instruments with the songs. For one song "Minuet" by Mozart, half of the class played one group of rhythms on an instrument while at the same time the other half of the class played different rhythms on a different instrument. Students in second grade have just started to review instruments and the instrument families.

Students in third grade are continuing to learn to play the recorder. Students have finished learning the song "B A Superhero", which uses the notes "B" and "A". We will be beginning to learn a new note "G", and songs which will use that note along with the notes we already learned. Students in third grade have also been learning some folk dances.

Students in fourth and fifth grade have been reviewing music vocabulary and using the music vocabulary to write about what they hear when listening to music. Students listen for elements in a song such as dynamics, tempo, and instruments, as well as what the music makes them think of while listening to it. Recently, students in fourth grade have listened to "Flight of the Bumble Bee" by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, and students in fifth grade have listened to "In the Hall of the Mountain King" by Edvard Grieg. Students in fourth grade are also continuing to learn songs from the Recorder Karate program. Our next song will be "Old MacDonald had a Farm". Students in fifth grade have just started a unit on bucket drumming. Students experimented with buckets to find many different ways the buckets could make sound, and have played short rhythm patterns on the buckets. Students will be beginning to compose for the buckets over the next couple of weeks.

Band season is in full swing at SES! Students have been improving week by week because of steady practice and attention to detail.

The first half of the year was great! A big congratulations goes out to all of the students who worked hard to perform an awesome winter concert. Job well done!!

2016 is shaping up to be a big year for band students. We have our band retreat on February 27th, our district band concert on March 15th and our spring concert in May! We would love to see you at our performances!

Thank you to everyone for supporting our program. We hope you enjoy our music just as much as we love playing it!



Art News by Miss Sidor

Our Artsonia art gallery is up and running and new artwork will be added soon, Artsonia slips will be sent home sometime this week. You can use your username and password to grant permission on your own online or you can send the slip back in and I will enter it manually. Be sure to check out our display at Evergreen Health Care Center, a small display is located inside the building showcasing what we do here in the art room at SES. Also don't forget to check out all of the art in downtown Stafford Springs. Arts on Main is the second Friday of every month and offers art and activities for all ages!

Grade 2 artists just finished up their mug project inspired by artist Faith Ringgold. We used oil pastels to create mugs and wrote about our favorite parts of winter so we could include words in our artwork just like Ringgold. Now we are working on creating clay monsters with pinch pots!

Grade 3 artists have been exploring the artwork of artist Keith Haring. We used our knowledge of the human figure and movement to create our own Keith Haring figures with construction paper collage and sharpie. Next we will be making paper mache masks!

Grade 4 artists are immersed in the world of Pop Art and printmaking. We learned about Pop artist Andy Warhol and how he made ordinary extraordinary. We took inspiration from Warhol and his artwork to turn something ordinary into artwork with foam plate printmaking. Artists had to create four prints of their ordinary objects using four separate color schemes; primary, secondary, warm and cool. Next we will be making clay vessels!

Grade 5 artists have been working hard on their whimsical creature paintings. They explored the meaning of value in art and learned how to create a monochromatic value scale using tints and shades of one color. This new knowledge was used to create a monochromatic background for their personified creatures made with chalk pastel. Next we will be making paper mache sculptures!



Thanks to Miss Sidor and art club students, SES now has a new "Welcome" sign. Stop by and take a look; it is above the interior doors in the main entrance.

Wild About Reading Program

This year's Home Reading Incentive Program has begun with a roar! The theme is Wild About Reading. Several students have already reached our school goal of 70 hours, have set new goals for themselves, and will continue to read every day! The following students have reached 70 hours of reading: Madison Sutkaitis, Braeden Gray, Luke Fahey, Keira Rabideau, Rose Johnson, Hayden Verney, Kaylah Pellegrino, Daniel Pucci, AJ Caporale, Peyton Sidebottom, Analisa Montoya, and Anna Fahey. Congratulations to all these great readers.

Special thanks go out to the hardworking parent volunteers who chart student reading every week, and to the dedicated PTO who sponsors this reading program!



Nurse News

Thank you parents for calling in your child's absence in a timely manner. It is helpful to know in the morning if a child is too ill to attend school. Reminder that if your child has been absent more than nine days a doctor's note is required for it to be considered an excused absence.

Please send in an extra pair of clothes for your child to keep in their locker, we do not have many back up clothes in our office.



Reading News by Mrs. Cox, Mrs. Lobik and Mrs. Meakim

Winter is a great time of year to hunker down and read a good book. Here are some fun and engaging activities from **Scholastic** that you can do to spend some quality time with your child, and share in the joy in reading.

Reading Tip for Parents: What's "Just Right"? Children feel confident and competent when they read books that are "just right." But how do you find a "just right" book? Have your child read the back and front cover, and first page of the book. If there are more than five words that he cannot pronounce or understand in context, the book may be too challenging. Be supportive about finding a more perfect fit. Choosing the right book will help your little reader feel successful.

Reading Tip for Parents: Map it Out It's important to provide your child with a variety of fiction and non-fiction reading. A fun way to do this is to get a map and show them the way from your house to the grocery store or another familiar destination. Have your child write out the directions, street by street, and then read them to you as you walk or drive to the store – like a living GPS!

Reading Tip for Parents: Card Tricks Do you think effective reading only takes place at libraries and book stores? Think again! There are reading opportunities everywhere. Go to a greeting card store with your child and read the greeting cards together. Later, vote for the ones whose words convey the best birthday wish or get-well sentiment.

Reading Tip for Parents: Picture This! During your next outing or gathering, take action-packed photos, then have your child create captions to go with each picture. Assemble the pictures and captions in a picture book or album, and add speech and thought bubbles to create a personalized – and probably hysterical -- graphic novel.

Reading Tip for Parents: Last Comic Standing Take time to read comic strips together. Share favorites from your own childhood and have your child put his favorites on the fridge. Read them aloud, and often -- repetition is a great way to build reading skills. Soon, he'll love looking forward to the "Sunday funnies" each week.

Reading Tip for Parents: Become a Fan Your child will soon develop a love for particular authors and illustrators. Nurture her fan-ship by helping her write a letter to her favorite author. Many authors have their own websites with contact information, but here's a great place to start your search (<http://www.scholastic.com/kids/stacks/authors/all.htm>). You can also contact the book's publisher, the mailing address for which can often be found on the back of the title page or on the publisher's Web site.

Reading Tip for Parents: Labels of Love Word recognition and vocabulary are important parts of reading. On a rainy day, get some paper and tape and start labeling everything in your home -- from furniture to small knick-knacks. Reading these labels repeatedly will build your child's mental word bank. If your family is bilingual, create labels in both languages.