

COFFIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER

Issue Five 2013 – 2014

January 2014

Dear Coffin School Families,

I hope this finds your 2014 off to a good start.

At some point over the last couple of years, you've likely heard of the Common Core State Standards. These standards are championed by the National Governor's Association in conjunction with the Council of Chief State School Officers. Forty-five states have independently adopted the Common Core and it's having a significant impact on K - post secondary education. This will become even more apparent when 3rd through 8th graders across the State begin taking what is called the 'Smarter Balance' assessment in the spring of 2015.

Even though Coffin students won't be taking these assessments while they're in our school, the work we're doing in K - 2 is essential to their academic success in the years to come. Over the last two years, the Coffin staff have been deeply involved in learning about and understanding the Common Core. What we've discovered through this study is that while there will be inevitably some shifts that will impact our children (for example, they will be interacting even more with nonfiction - both reading and writing), much of our current work is already aligned with the standards.

One of the benefits of doing this Common Core work in our Professional Learning Groups and at staff development sessions is the opportunity to share best teaching practices and to reflect upon what works and what needs refinement.

These rich conversations are a springboard for celebration as well as well as for meaningful professional development. In this context, the Common Core is serving our common good.

Have a great month!



Steve Ciembroniewicz
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Coffin Calendar

January

Monday the 20th – Martin Luther King Day
Tuesday the 21st – CFC meeting @ 7:00 PM
Wednesday the 29th , Early Release @ 1:10* (staff development)
Wednesday the 29th - Facilities Master Plan Meeting @ Curtis Memorial Library 6:00 PM
All Month – A.A.E. (Arts Are Elementary - Julie Yeo) in Grade 1

February

Friday the 14th, Valentine's Day
10th to the 14, Colors Week
17th to the 21st - Winter Break
Friday the 28th K -5 Trimester Ends
Tuesday the 25th – CFC meeting @ 7:00 PM
Friday the 28th – Walk/Bike to school

March

Wednesday, the 12th, Jump Rope for Heart Jump Rope Demo
Friday, March 17th, Coffin Concert, 9:30 AM & 2:00 PM
Friday, the 14th, No School, Professional Day
17th to the 21st, Jump Rope for Heart
Wednesday, the 26th, Early Release @ 1:10* (staff development)
Friday the 21st – Walk/Bike to school
Tuesday the 25th – CFC meeting @ 7:00 PM

***NOTE** - Coffin Early Release times will shift by 10 minutes to accommodate parents with children @ HBSS and Coffin.



Mrs. Sharon McCormack, Coffin's Learning, Enrichment, Academic/Arts Program (LEAP) teacher leads a first-grade lesson on the geometry of architecture.



Coffin School has been awarded a Safe Routes to School mini grant of \$250.00 to support our efforts in the monthly Bike/Walk to school days. This grant is given through the Maine Department of Transportation Safe Routes to School effort. The Maine Safe Routes to School—Walk and Bike to School Program is a statewide effort among Maine communities to increase bicycling and walking to school for improved public safety, public health, fiscal responsibility, and a cleaner environment. The Maine Safe Routes to School Program is part of the national, federally-funded, Safe Routes to School Program.



Coffin will be using these funds to more safety cones to outline our walking route and materials for a Baxter Bear costume to greet students as they arrive at school.

Many thanks to Mrs. Peck-Moad for taking advantage of this opportunity on behalf of Coffin School!



Alan and Abigail from PDT Architects met with Coffin Staff after school last week to share concept formation diagrams and gather input on a proposed Pre-K to Grade 2 school to be built on the former Jordan Acres site. On January 29th there is a School Board meeting on the Facilities Master Plan scheduled for 6:00 PM @ Curtis Memorial Library. The architects will be on hand to share plans and get input from the public.



Arts are Elementary resident artist Julia Yeo works with first-graders as they create tiles for a community art project. We overheard one student proclaim, *"I've just LOVED green my entire life."*



Mrs. Murphy leads the entire school in a sing-a-long of the Coffin song at last Wednesday's assembly.

The Coffin way, it works! Be gentle so that no one gets hurt The Coffin way, shout to the ceiling. Be kind and take care of our feelings. The Coffin way to be at school, be safe! You gotta follow the rules. The Coffin way, we show we care. We all work together with Baxter Bear. That's the Coffin Way!



If you'd like to learn more about the Common Core, these sites might be of interest:

CCSS Home Page - <http://www.corestandards.org/>

A Coffin School Staff Development Day Handout (last year) -

<http://www.brunswick.k12.me.us/sciembroniewicz/files/2014/01/CommonCoreHandoutEditedJan2014.pdf>

Maine DOE Common Core Home Page -

<http://www.maine.gov/doe/commoncore/>



Behavior Support: News You Can Use

Lori A. Watson, Coffin School Behavior Interventionist

“Can’t Do It” or “Won’t Do It”

When we’re trying to figure out why a child isn’t doing something, a question we seek to answer is whether it’s *can’t* or *won’t*?

Can’t implies a skill deficit – the child actually may not be able to do the task. Luckily, we’re all teachers for our children...so we teach! With a critical eye, think about what steps in a task might be getting in the way: organization, the physical skills necessary for the job, understanding the language of the direction, etc. As you uncover what might be getting in the way, target that directly before moving on to the next step. It’s okay if you back up a little because starting with something a child feels confident with can help to build momentum as more challenging tasks are introduced. A real-life example: getting dressed: A child may be able to put their clothes on, but struggles with buttons. This might look like a refusal to get dressed when really it could be dreading the buttons. In such an instance, we can offer to do the buttons but save the last one for the child to do....then over time, save the last 2...3...etc.

Won’t indicates a lack of motivation. A real-life example: I **can** clean my house every day but I **won’t** because I’m not expecting company and I’d rather read a book!



Things that can help to increase motivation are including a child’s interests – for example, if picking up toys is a battle each day, you could draw a game board together and move your game piece a space every time you clean up...it’s up to you if you decide to do a prize at the end, an activity together, a phone call to grandparents to celebrate...options are endless.

Use novelty, with a piece of cardboard “plow” the toys into a pile, pretend to be a moving truck (complete with beep...beep as you back up).

Offer choices, allow them to choose the order in which chores are done, or invite them to “assign” a section to you to clean.

Shorten the task. Set a timer or a song and see how much you can clean up before it’s over.

Reinforce the value of the act, “it looks so nice when it’s clean...there’s room to play our game now that we’re all picked up”

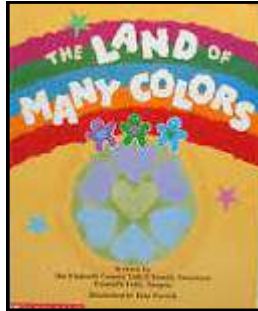
To those who say, “well, he should do it because he should do it and he shouldn’t get rewarded.” I agree...in time. When our little ones were learning to walk, we oooooed and ahhhed to reinforce all the little steps toward the goal and now, they’ve found their own motivation for walking!



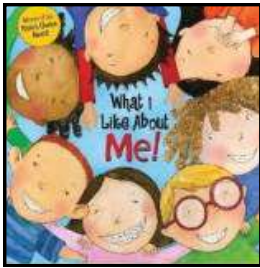
A Message From Mrs. Bradley Coffin School Counselor

This month in honor of the life of Martin Luther King we are learning about Diversity during K-2 classroom guidance visits. In Kindergarten we are reading *The Land of Many Colors* and discussing how we are different and how we are also the same in many ways.

In the story, students learn that blue, green and purple gingerbread characters fight about who is better and then discover they can only live peacefully and create a colorful, plentiful new land by sharing, helping and working together. After hearing the story, classes will be sharing and cooperating as they cut and glue paper shapes in small groups to create their own imaginary lands of many colors.



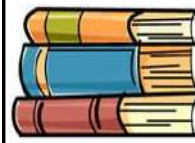
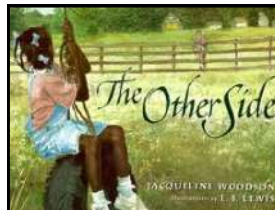
Grade One students are discovering their similarities and differences by listening and touching an interactive book titled *What I Like About Me*.



Then, with partners, children talk and discover ways they are alike and ways they are different. While sharing their findings with classmates we have noticed our similar and different clothing,

eye color, hair color, skin color and even our ice cream preferences. We talk about how teasing anyone about differences would certainly not be kind or respectful.

Multiage classes heard and discussed *The Other Side* - a story set in the time of segregation about two children who want to be friends and play together but are not allowed. In this moving story 1/2 students begin to understand the message of Dr. King and how it relates to their lives. Afterward, they discovered many similarities and differences among themselves. The students concluded that the world would be quite "boring and confusing" if we were all the same!



Library News

January Library News

There are several exciting events to look forward to in the library.

We will celebrate Colors Week in February with stories to go along with the colors of the week.

March brings more exciting events: March 3rd is our Community Read Aloud to celebrate Dr. Seuss's birthday. This event is sponsored by the United Way Success by Six.



March 10th is the kickoff for the Spring Reading Challenge. This year's theme is "Don't Bug Me, I'm Reading". The challenge will continue until the end of March when we'll tally up all the reading charts that were turned in and see if we meet our challenge goal number.

Mrs. Margy Soule and Mrs. Ruth Wilson

msoule@brunswick.k12.me.us or 319-1955



Mrs. Bean, Mrs. Doughty and Mr. Funderburk meet in their Professional Learning Group to analyze student data as part of ongoing progress monitoring. In addition to assessing student progress and sharing teaching strategies, they also determine what interventions are/need to be in place to support continued learning for all their students.





Nurse's Notes



LICE

It is that time of year when we often see an increase in the incidence of head lice in schools. When I first began school nursing the practice was to send children found to have lice home to be treated; they were not to return to school until they were nit free. Classroom and school-wide letters were sent home in those days, often resulting in weekly letters to one classroom or another throughout the winter months. Best practice has evolved based on research which has shown that past policies have had little effectiveness in the incidence of head lice in the school setting. Classroom notification is no longer the practice. For more information on lice in school please see the attached, *Brunswick Schools Important Information on Lice*.

Dress for outside play

Children should come to school prepared for outside play to ensure that they are warm and dry throughout the day. In winter this includes **a warm coat, snow pants, a hat, mittens or gloves, warm socks and boots**. A pair of **shoes** should be brought to school to wear inside as boots can be very hot and uncomfortable when worn all day. As stated in the Student Handbook, **Please DO NOT request that students be kept in for recess**. If a child is not well enough to go outside, he/she should not be in school.

Vision and Hearing Screenings

The State of Maine requires all first grade students to be screened for vision and hearing. Vision screening tests children for *myopia* (near-sightedness), *hyperopia* (far-sightedness) and strabismus, or *heterotopia* (a deviation of an eye from its axis so the eyes are not focused together on the same object.) Screening of Coffin first graders began in November and will continue through the end of January. Vision and hearing screenings at school provide an effective means of identifying those children who may have vision or hearing problems. Early interventions can resolve and/or minimize problems so that students can participate fully in the learning process. If there are any concerns a referral letter will go home with your child requesting a professional evaluation. Once your child has been evaluated please return the completed evaluation to the School Health Office.

REMINDER

Please pack extra clothing in your child's backpack for the occasional accident. Every child should have and extra change of clothes including pants, a shirt, socks and underwear. The school *does not* keep a supply of extra clothes. Parents will be called if their child needs extra clothing and none is available.



Brunswick Schools

Important Information on Head Lice

Just hearing the words "head lice" can make your head feel itchy. But when a case of head lice is discovered in a classroom panic sets in.

Head lice crawl. They do not hop or fly. The primary mode of transmission is from direct head to head contact. They can also be transmitted by personal items such as combs and hats. Head lice do not transmit disease and are not considered a medical or public health hazard. They are not a sign of poor hygiene.

Head lice should not cause students to miss school. By the time a student is identified as having head lice they have probably had it for a month and pose little additional risk of transmitting it to other students. For this reason a student with head lice will remain in school for the rest of the day and will return to school after initiating treatment.

Classroom-wide head checks and no-nit policies have been eliminated after research has shown them to have little effectiveness in the incidence of head lice in the school setting.

Students with head lice will be handled on a case-by-case basis. There will not be classroom-wide or school-wide letters being sent home to parents reporting a case of head lice. The classroom teacher will be notified that a student in their class has head lice and if any other students are suspected of having head lice the teacher will send that student to the school nurse for a head check.

To lessen the chance of your child "catching" head lice:

- Have them avoid head to head contact with other children
- Discourage the sharing of personal items such as combs, brushes, headbands and hats
- Check their heads on a weekly basis and after sleep-over's

For more information on head lice visit the CDC website:

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/parents.html>

Please do not hesitate to contact your child's school nurse if you have any questions or concerns.

