

# COFFIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER

Issue Two 2013 – 2014

October 2013

Dear Coffin School Families,

I hope this finds all of you well.

October is an exciting time at school. The daily structures and routines of classroom life are in place and students are consistently gaining in their capacities for independent and collaborative work. Our Kindergarten students continue to transition and are growing by leaps and bounds. Our first-graders are settled in and digging deeper in the curriculum and our second-graders continue to serve as leaders and role models in our multiage classrooms. It's all very rewarding to see.

Last weekend a number of staff and I attended the Communities in Action Children's Mental Health and Well-Being symposium at Bowdoin College. I learned a lot that day. The staff and I continue to share our insights with one another and anticipate reporting out on what we've learned with the entire faculty and perhaps our larger school community.

Of my many "takeaways" from the day, I continue to ponder one of Dr. Levitt's metaphors. He spoke about how children "tune" to the conditions around them. He then elucidated the three major stress types – positive, tolerable, toxic – and pointed out how the interactions between an individual and their environment will "tune" internal perceptions and reactions. This "tuning" can lend itself to both positive outcomes (resiliency) and potentially adverse outcomes (in the absence of stable and nurturing relationships).

I am excited and encouraged by his research. This means that we as families and a school community have the capacity to provide supportive relationships for all our children despite stressors which invariably present in all our lives. One way we can put this work to daily practical purpose is through communication and positive collaboration. Our collective efforts as parents and teachers can provide buffers for a number of these stressors. The outcome of this teamwork is increased resiliency and a foundation for learning and personal growth that will sustain our children throughout their lives.

Many thanks for all the ways you continually support your children and Coffin Elementary School.

Most appreciatively,



Mr. C.  
sciembroniewicz@brunswick.k12.me.us

## Coffin Calendar

### October

Saturday the 19<sup>th</sup> - CFC October Festival 2:00 - 4:00 PM  
Monday the 21<sup>st</sup> - Picture Retake Day  
Saturday the 26<sup>th</sup> - Flu Shot Clinic @ HBSS 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

### November

Saturday the 9<sup>th</sup>, 3rd Annual Elementary Craft Fair @ HBSS  
Monday the 11<sup>th</sup> - Veteran's Day - NO SCHOOL  
Friday the 15<sup>th</sup> - K-5 trimester ends  
Friday the 15<sup>th</sup> - Walk/Bike to school  
Tuesday the 19<sup>th</sup> - CFC Meeting @ 7 p.m.  
Tuesday the 26<sup>th</sup> - Early Release @ 1:00 PM (conferences)  
Wednesday the 27<sup>th</sup> - Conferences - NO SCHOOL  
Thursday the 28<sup>th</sup> and Friday the 29<sup>th</sup> - Thanksgiving Break

### December

Wednesday, the 11<sup>th</sup> - Early Release @ 1:00 PM (staff development)  
Monday the 23<sup>rd</sup> through January 7 - Holiday Break  
Tuesday the 17<sup>th</sup> - CFC Meeting @ 7 PM  
Friday, the 20<sup>th</sup> - Walk/Bike to school

## Welcome New Staff!!



**Brenda Conn** has joined the **Functional Life Skills** team here at Coffin. She came to us from the HBS Connections program where she spent the last 6 years. She is excited to try something new with a change of pace.



**Amy Crosby** has loved everything to do with **art** ever since she was the same age as the young students of Coffin and Harriet Beecher Stowe Elementary schools. When she's not spreading her passion along to her pupils, she enjoys being outside, playing banjo, and illustrating children's books. She lives in Durham with her husband, chickens, and dog.

*A community of learners founded on safety, gentleness, kindness and the pursuit of quality work.*



## A Message From Mrs. Bradley Coffin School Counselor

Greetings to all parents K-2. I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting all your children as new K students at Coffin this autumn and reconnecting with all first and second graders during my class visits in September with my puppet friend Baxter the Bear. As the School Counselor, also known as the "Feelings Teacher", I will be visiting each class monthly teaching a variety of topics that strengthen social, communication and problem solving skills.



This month in Kindergarten we are learning words to express our feelings and that our faces and bodies tell others a lot about how we feel. First graders are learning there are many feeling words and using these words can help others better understand us, help with friendships and help solve problems peacefully.

I also offer small groups for children that focus upon developing friendship skills and coping with family changes. I continue to provide short term counseling support available to all children through parent or teacher referral. If you have any questions or concerns related to your child's social/emotional well being please do not hesitate to make an appointment to see me.

Rachael Bradley M.S. Ed.



## Library News

It is a joy to see the children's enthusiasm for books. Ruth Wilson and I hope that your son or daughter enjoys the book he or she has chosen to take home each week. I also hope you can share it as a family by reading it – or parts of it - aloud to them. The plastic bag each child is given helps protect the book from food and liquids in the back pack. If that bag is lost, you may substitute any sturdy plastic bag for use as a library bag. Just label it, please, with your child's name.

Parents and grandparents are welcome to check-out books from the Coffin library. The library is tucked away in back of the school by the cafeteria. It is worth the trip. We have over 15,000 books in our new space. We will set up a library account for you, and you are welcome to visit our cozy little library. Just check in at the office as a visitor. We are open most days before and after school. Please feel free to give us a call at 844-2663 or e-mail me at [msoule@brunswick.k12.me.us](mailto:msoule@brunswick.k12.me.us).

It is a privilege to be a part of your child's first school library experiences. I hope the love for books lasts a life time.

Mrs. Margy Soule and Mrs. Ruth Wilson

[msoule@brunswick.k12.me.us](mailto:msoule@brunswick.k12.me.us) or 319-1955



## **Behavior Support: News You Can Use**

Lori A. Watson, Coffin School Behavior Interventionist

Chances are, you've found yourself watching something your child is doing and wondered, "Why do they do that?!" At these times it's easy to get hung up on the form a behavior takes, "I can't believe he \_\_\_\_?!" But, the question we want to be asking is about function, "Why?" What purpose is this behavior serving? What do they **get** or **get away from** by doing this?

Now, I dare say if you ask your child this question, it is likely that you will get a less-than-satisfactory response and it's true, he probably doesn't know why. That's where principles of behavior can help us to understand.

It's as easy as A-B-C...*we wish*...

A-B-C stands for: **A**ntecedent (things that precede or can act as a 'trigger'), **B**ehavior (what the child does), and **C**onsequence (the desirable or undesirable thing that follows)

An example:

A	B	C
Mom tells Johnny to turn off TV	Johnny cries and yells	Mom says, "Okay, you can have a few more minutes"

Once we know what either triggers or maintains behavior, we can make some adjustments to our own behavior to promote desired behavior.

A	B	C
Mom tells Johnny, "You might get upset because it's time to turn to turn off TV, BUT, if you say, 'a few more minutes please' you can finish your show"	Johnny says, "a few more minutes please"	Mom says, "Okay, you can have a few more minutes"

The Consequence can be changed as well:

A	B	C
Mom tells Johnny to turn off TV	Johnny says, "a few more minutes please."	(Instead of "No" which she knows will trigger a tantrum) Mom says, "Sounds like a great idea after dinner."

Mom has provided a *functional no* (saying no without saying no) and redirected him to when he will be able to get the thing he wants.

By making a slight change to her own behavior, Mom has removed triggers and taught replacement behaviors!

**Key Concepts: Function, Functional Communication, Functional "No"**



Students in Mrs. Crockett's class celebrate reading Dr. Seuss. "Oh the books we can read!"







First grade students in Mr. Funderburk's class explore their recently unveiled classroom library. We first learned all of the practices for caring for books, the system for placing books in bins and the importance of reading a variety of texts.



Dr. Pat Leavitt from the University of Southern California delivers a key note address at the recent Communities in Action Children's Mental Health and Well-Being Symposium. Dr. Levitt shared his research on the impacts of stress on children's brain development.



Mrs. Stinson shares a sample of student writing with Mrs. Burgess, Mrs. Caron, and Ms. Dunn -members of her Professional Learning Group (PLG). The larger Kindergarten team has made student writing a focus, researching and sharing best practices.



Mrs. Burgess discusses literacy instruction with parents at last Thursday's Kindergarten Curriculum Night.





# Nurse's Notes

## Fall 2013

### Influenza or "The Flu"

#### What is the flu?

Influenza, commonly called "the flu," is caused by the influenza virus, which infects the respiratory tract (nose, throat, lungs). Unlike many other viral respiratory infections, such as the common cold, the flu causes severe illness.

#### What are the symptoms of the flu?

Influenza is a respiratory illness. Symptoms of the flu include fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and muscle aches.

(See Cold vs. Flu Chart - over)

### What YOU can do to prevent the spread of Flu

**WASH** your hands

**COVER** your cough or sneeze

**STAY HOME** if you are sick

**GET VACCINATED** against influenza

### Free Flu Vaccine Clinic

**When:** Saturday, October 26

**Where:** Harriet Beecher Stowe School

**Time:** 8:00 am – 2:00 pm

Open to all students, their families, and community members.

### TIPS FOR HEALTHY CHILDREN AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

Please be sure your child eats a **healthy breakfast** and has a **healthy snack** at school each day. We are a **5-2-1-0** school. **Let's Go 5-2-1-0** encourages children to eat **5 or more servings of fruit or vegetables a day**, **drink water or low fat milk** and **avoid sugary drinks**.

Most experts agree **children need 10-11 hours of sleep each night**. Too little sleep can affect the body's immune system, which helps protect us from illness.

### REMINDER

Please **pack extra clothing** in your child's backpack for the occasional accident. Every child should have an 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.

# Is it a Cold or the Flu?

Symptoms	Cold	Flu
Fever	Rare in adults and older children, but can be as high as 102° F in infants and small children	Usually 102° F, but can go up to 104° F and usually lasts 3 to 4 days
Headache	Rare	Sudden onset and can be severe
Muscle Aches	Mild	Usual, and often severe
Tiredness and Weakness	Mild	Often extreme, and can last two or more weeks
Extreme Exhaustion	Never	Sudden onset and can be severe
Runny Nose	Often	Sometimes
Sneezing	Often	Sometimes
Sore Throat	Often	Sometimes
Cough	Mild hacking cough	Usual, and can become severe



The Maine Department of Health and Human Services  
Bureau of Health  
[www.mainepublichealth.gov](http://www.mainepublichealth.gov)





# Community for Coffin

<http://www.brunswick.k12.me.us/cof/community-for-coffin/>



Community for Coffin (CFC) would like to thank the countless parents and community members who have volunteered in September and October and have helped to get our year off to a great start!"

## To name just a few:



Garden Club Co-Chairs Kim Bolshaw Noetzel (pictured) and Barry Logan, and all their helpers on Gardening Days



Jennifer Baldwin-Mackey (pictured), Radka MacKillop, Christine Brimlow, and organizer Kate Kalajainen - Playground Door Painting Day



Coffin Student Directory printers Jenna Silvia and Kurt Karwacky (pictured), coordinated by Lesley Levy



Kate Kalajainen, Gitta Peterson, Sarah McPherson (Co-Chair), Keisha Payson, Sheryl Palese and all the daily Snack Shack volunteers (including Co-Chair Karyn Butts, not pictured)



## Come join us!



"Celebrity Reader" Jud Caswell (pictured) visiting Mrs. Crockett's class for the Read-a-Thon, led by Co-Chairs Gitta Peterson and Kate Kalajainen

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