



October 2013

Welcome back to another year at Washington School to all of our returning families. For those of you who are new to our learning community, we are happy to have you with us and wish you the best of luck during your time here.

Over the summer we saw some changes around Washington School. We have some new teachers. It is with great excitement that I introduce you to Mrs. Corujo, Grade 2, Mrs. Cataldo, Special Education, and Mr. Vavra, Vocal Music. They are joined by paraprofessionals, Mrs. Philpott and Ms. Henderson.

Our school is seeing other changes as well. Last year, the Washington School Parents' Association donated new cafeteria style tables for use in the multipurpose room. We now have 8 tables and hope to increase to ten in the near future. These tables have made it possible for students in grades 2 through 5 to eat their lunch somewhere other than their classroom. Also, if you have had a chance to look around our hallways, you may have noticed all of the new bulletin boards that were also donated by the WSPA, thanks to money earned through fundraisers and our annual Tricky Tray.

This year we are looking to increase our parent involvement at Washington School. One way that we hope to do this is through special evening workshops and activities. If you have any ideas for workshops and activities, please let me know via e-mail. All ideas will be given consideration and decisions will be based on time, staffing, and amount of interest.

It is hard to believe that while in some ways it feels like we just started, your students will already be receiving their first progress report on October 17th. Parent conferences will be held the following Thursday evening and Friday afternoon. If you did not sign up for a conference time at our Back to School night, you will still have a chance to request a conference when progress reports go home. Although conference appointments are only 10 minutes long, our teachers plan to get as much information about your child's progress to you as possible. If you or your child's teacher feel that more time is needed a longer meeting can be set up on a different day.

One other change that you will see in the near future involves the WashingtonSchool.info website. It is currently under reconstruction to make it easier to use and more informational for all our community members. One new feature will be the ability to receive e-mail newsletters. This new initiative will help to save paper and the environment while allowing you to access news and information directly on your smartphone or laptop computer. Keep an eye out for the newly designed website around the end of October.

As always if you or your family have questions, I am only an e-mail or phone call away. To you and your students, I wish you the best for a happy, healthy, and successful new school year.

2nd Grade September News

Welcome back to school everyone! As we enter the beautiful season of fall, the students in 2nd grade are eager to learn and discover new things each day. The first week of school, the students had the opportunity to become acquainted with one another by completing *All About Me* bags. The students shared their summer adventures and things close to their hearts with the class. The students also had the opportunity to stand in front of their classmates and read their adventures aloud. Speaking in front of an “audience” was a new and exciting experience for the students!

The students are becoming accustomed to daily classroom routines, and learning about personal responsibilities. During our Reading Workshop, the students are discovering how to make predictions and visualize in reading. The students have been making predictions about how characters will act and predicting how characters change in stories.

In Writing Workshop this month, students have published writing pieces based on their personal experiences. They are learning to expand their writing using a B.M.M.M.E. (Beginning, Middle, Middle, Middle, End) structure.

Working in centers is something the second graders are becoming quite comfortable with. During guided reading groups, the students are enjoying working together at different literacy centers set up throughout the classroom. The literacy-based centers are supporting the growth of writing, reading, and working as a community of cooperative learners.

In Math, the students have recently completed our first unit. The students had ongoing learning and practice of solving hundreds, tens, and ones problems. The students had the opportunity to use their tool-kit bills to solve place-value and money problems. The students are also enjoying “Math Facts In A Flash” which allows them to practice their math skills using the computer.

Finally, we would like to congratulate **Ethan Ortiz**, **Kian Mueller**, and **Jackie Rodriguez** who are the 2nd grade *Students of the Month*. Ethan, Kian, and Jackie have demonstrated the character trait of the month, perseverance. They have also been *respectful* of others, *ready* for class each day, and *responsible* with their school work. Each month, a new student, who fits the character trait of the month, will be honored with *Student of the Month*.

It’s been a terrific start to the 2013-2014 school year! Let’s keep up the hard work and have a wonderful year!



Fourth Grade News

By: Mrs. Nasse and Mrs. Sommer

Welcome back! Every year, the summer seems to get shorter and school approaches faster than the year before. It is hard to believe that we have been in school for a whole month already! We are excited for the new school year, and are anticipating greatness from the children this year.

The students will continue to be a part of Reader's Workshop. Because of this, reading will be an important part of homework this year. Every student will be required to read at least 20 minutes every night, and then spend at least 5 minutes responding to what he/she read. This is very important to help foster the child's love of reading and will also help to improve his/her reading and writing skills. This assignment is an integral part of the Reader's Workshop, and needs to be treated as any other homework assignment. Therefore, if it is not completed, it will be treated as a missing homework assignment and the student will be required to make it up either during lunchtime or after school.

Second, each child knows his/her own independent reading level, and we strongly encourage that the students only read books on that level. Please refer to the websites below when buying books or checking out books from the library and try to only select ones that are either on or around your child's level. This way, the students will be able to comprehend what they are reading, and will be able to use the reading strategies and skills taught in school to help strengthen and build comprehension.

Third, there are no reading textbooks or workbooks this year. Instead, the children are reading stories on their level with guidance from the teacher and binders are being used to assess comprehension and skill. We are also using novels this year, but the majority of reading will be done in smaller group instruction to target the skills each individual student needs to work on.

Reader's Workshop has proven to be very successful, and we are excited for the endless possibilities it promises to bring this year. As always, you can feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns. Also, please refer to our homeworkknow page for some helpful websites to use at home to help build skills.

Book levels website:

www.booksource.com

<http://home.comcast.net/~ngiansante/>



Third Grade: A Spectacular Start to the New School Year

By: Mrs. Chesney and Miss Cifarelli

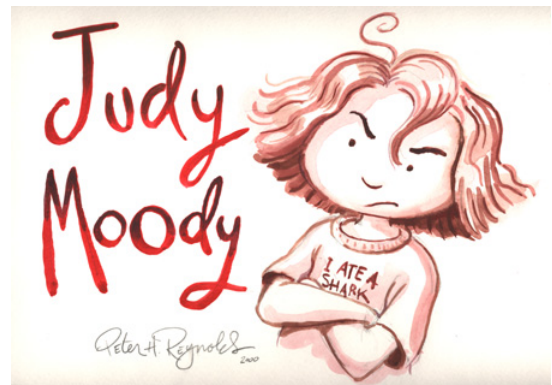
The third graders are busy learning about the importance of being good classroom citizens. The focus has been on learning our daily class routines and following these important class rules in order to have a successful and productive school year:

- Be a good listener.
- Be prepared and complete all your homework.
- Follow directions.
- Be respectful, kind, and polite to others.
- Be organized.

The character trait for the month of September was perseverance. The read aloud, Thank You, Mr. Falker, written by Patricia Polacco, was viewed using our smartboard technology to support the students' understanding of the character trait. Each student had the opportunity to show their understanding of the story's theme by expressing what the author's message was in a reader response. We plan to use many more mentor texts to help the students internalize the character traits for each month of the school year.

During Reading Workshop, the classes are applying the focus strategies of asking questions and making connections while enjoying our first class novel study, Judy Moody Was in a Mood, written by Megan McDonald. Parents and guardians, here is one way to assist your child in becoming a successful reader: While your child is reading nightly for twenty minutes, encourage him/her to ask questions before, during, and after reading and practice making text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections. Another way to support your child as a learner is to ask him/her if he/she understands the theme of the story. The "big message" or the "heart" of the story is a major focus of the new Common Core State Standards.

We are looking forward to a successful, productive, and exciting school year ahead. It is helpful to reinforce good citizenship and Washington School's three Rs, Respect, Responsibility, and Readiness, at home.



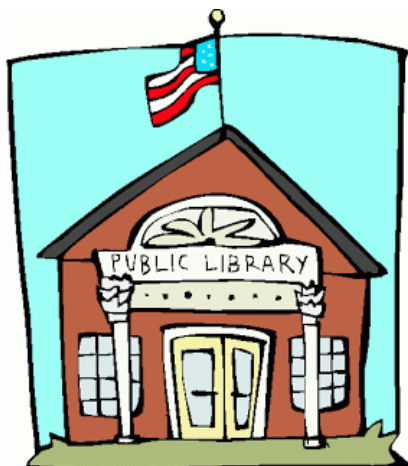


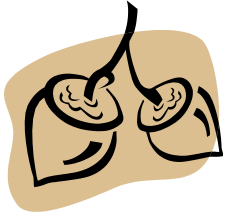
First Grade Newsletter

The students in first grade have been very busy!! We started by learning how to be good readers and writers. We are learning how to make predictions and ask questions while we read. We are also learning different strategies to help us read words. Our personal narratives are getting better and better each time we write and we are getting ready to publish them. On October 28th, all first graders are going to the Bergenfield Public Library. If your child doesn't have a library card, please stop by the library to fill out an application. We will be taking out books during our field trip.

The first grade students are also working on their math skills. We are learning how to use a number grid to count back and forward. Please start to work with your children on their math facts. You may start with adding 0's and 1's. In social studies, we are learning phone numbers and address; please help your child to memorize this important information. The theme of October for our character trait is respect. We are learning all the different ways to show respect. In science, we learned how to read a thermometer. There is so much happening in first grade!!

Keep reading with your children every night!!





Kindergarten Update October 2013

Ms. Petro's and Miss Sulich's kindergardeners started the year off getting to know each other. Each student wrote about themselves and drew a self portrait. They have discovered many interesting things about themselves and their new classmates. In doing so, we have also been learning how to treat others in our "classroom family" by creating rules and abiding by them.

The students are now familiar with our classroom routines. We enjoy singing, drawing and learning games during our weekly specials. Lunchtime is the perfect opportunity to play with old and new friends outside on the field.

In Literacy the students are finishing our first unit. They have read all about how to respectfully treat others and connect to feelings and experiences of our own. Every day we have fun practicing phonics skills, reading, writing, and exploring grammar.

Our Everyday Mathematics books have guided us in exploring numbers, sorting, counting, patterning and much more. During math, we have an opportunity to work in groups and use manipulatives to help us show our work.

We have observed Johnny Appleseed Day in a special way! Mrs. Petro's class visited Miss Sulich's class for a reading and short BrainPop video on Johnny Chapman. It was an exciting way to share our ideas with our friends and discover his important role of planting apple seeds, as his seeds still provide us with delicious apples today! Our big kindergardeners are off to a great start, and we are looking forward to learning many more new and exciting things! Many adventures, old and new, are told through a good book. Please continue to read to your child every day.





Is my child well enough to go to school?

Every parent is faced with this question. Plans that are set up ahead of time regarding with whom or where you could leave your child could ease the stress when that inevitable day comes. In order to ensure a healthy environment at Washington school, I am asking all parents to follow these guidelines:

1. A child must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.
2. A child must have no vomiting for 24 hours before returning to school.
3. Please bring in a note from home or from the physician's office upon returning to school if your child has had a doctor's appointment.
4. Your child should be acting like him / herself before returning to school.
5. Discharge from the eyes might be a sign of conjunctivitis and should be seen by a physician.
6. Encourage your child to wash his / her hands frequently - this is the best way to prevent the spread of germs.
7. If your child has asthma medication, please check that medication is in the health office.

Fourth Grade Parents:

This year your child is required to have a physical exam. Families that opt to have their child examined by a private physician will need to submit their physical as soon as possible. Please contact me if you have any questions or need a physical form.

Citizens of the Month:

Perseverance

KP- Khael Maclang

KS- Gavin Pirro

1K- Briana Schiaterella

1M- Rebecca Perez

1P- Sophie Almonte

2B- Ethan Ortiz

2C- Jackie Rodriguez

2K- Kian Mueller

3CH- David Lugo

3CI- Melanie Marquez

4N- Susan Johnson

4S- Jodiefoss Ramos

5MA- Andrew Lee

5ME- Irving Zafra



This year at Washington School, our character education program will focus on character traits of good citizens. Each month our students will learn about one trait. These traits will be introduced through stories and activities. At the end of the month, the students will vote for the member of their class that they feel best exemplifies the Character Trait they have been studying. The person selected will be named Citizen of the Month. They will have their picture taken for our Hall of Fame bulletin board and will be invited to a special lunch to be held on November 13 where they will receive a special certificate.

2013-2014 Character Traits

September: Perseverance

October: Respect

November: Responsibility

December: Caring

January: Generous

February: Honesty

March: Fair

April: Cooperative

May: Gracious