

Muddy Brook Elementary

Specialist Learning Link



November 7, 2014

November News

Dear Families,

Cooler days and longer nights are upon us! Outdoor play continues to be an important part of the lives of our Muddy Brook students, and outdoor recess will be maintained throughout the long winter months. It is absolutely necessary that your child is dressed for the outdoor weather, which can be tricky in the Berkshires. We would love to offer support to those who would like help with outdoor gear. Think ahead! Your child has grown since last year and will likely need a new size. If you need support in getting this equipment, please contact your child's classroom teacher and we will be sure he or she is well equipped for the months ahead.

For those of you who have lost outdoor clothing this year, or at any point lose clothing in the near future, you might want to visit our Lost and Found in the cafeteria. We have a huge collection on the right side of the cafeteria as you enter; two boxes and also hooks along the wall. Both are filled with student clothing that was left behind. Please be diligent about writing your child's name on the tags so that we can help to return the clothing to its proper owner. As winter approaches, putting your child's name on boots, hats, mittens, coats and snow pants is a must! Thank you.

Two very important news events:

Veteran's Day Celebration:

Monday, November 10th is our Veteran's Day celebration at Muddy Brook. We will have a family breakfast at 8:30AM in the cafeteria to honor all those serving in the military and veterans. Be sure you have reserved your seating for this event. At 9:15AM an assembly will begin in the gym. If you come to either event with your child or children please be sure to sign in at the office prior to attending the event so that we have accurate attendance records on this day.

Springfield Unicycle Parade:

Our unicycle team is raising money to pay for a bus that will allow us to go as a group to the Springfield Balloon Parade on Friday, November 28. One of our unicycle parents, Rob Trask, is offering to donate 20% of all sales from 51 Park Restaurant on November 13. If you go to the restaurant next Thursday, be sure to tell your server that you are there to support the Berkshire Hills Unicycle Team. We need to raise \$500.00 for our trip.

I continue to be thrilled to be part of the Muddy Brook community of learners. Please stay in our communication loop and contact us if you have questions, concerns or thoughts. We are open to hearing your ideas!

Thank you for all that you do for our children,

Nan Thompson, Assistant Principal



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Specialist Areas & Grade Levels

Art

Mrs. Benton
Grades PK—Four

Library

Ms. Smith
Grades PK—Four

Music

Mrs. Moran
Grade Kindergarten

Music

Mrs. Bickford
Grades K—First

Music

Mr. Gillespie |
Grades Two—Four

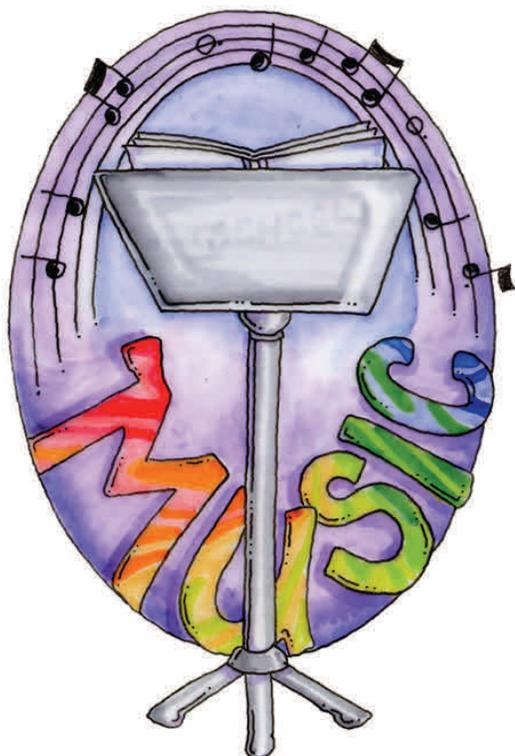
Technology

Mrs. Candee
Grades Two—Four

Physical Education

Mrs. Pleu
Grades K—Four

Music Notes from Mr. Gillespie



All 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade students have started to work on the Winter Concert music. As they start to memorize some of these songs, maybe you'll hear some singing around the house! The 2nd Grade Concert, on December 5th at 2:00pm, is "A Winter Fantasy." The 3rd and 4th grade concert (Dec. 11 at 1:00) will include the musical, "The Magnificent Seven."

4th Grade Band students should continue to practice 100 minutes a week. Each band student will be starting to learn the concert pieces during November. Make sure they do some extra practicing on that music! And parents: please initial your child's practice chart each week to help inspire more practice!

Orchestra Outlook by Juraye Moran

Beginning string students are all learning the notes on their D and A strings. They are no able to play both Pizzicato (plucking) and Arco (bowing). We are beginning to learn some classic songs from Mozart as well as traditional folk melodies. Advanced string students are preparing to perform at our Veterans' day breakfast celebration. They have been practicing Yankee Doodle and America the beautiful. As the weather gets colder reminders to keep your string instruments healthy. Keep instruments in a temperate place, not near heaters and woodstoves or left in the car overnight. This keeps the wood from drying out and helps to keep strings in tune. We are looking forward to performing for all at our Winter Concert in December.

Mrs. Moran's EK and K students have been having fun with the Halloween holiday by singing creepy, scary songs and using instruments to create creepy, scary sound effects! As Thanksgiving approaches, students will be learning about family customs and singing some traditional songs. Of course, we will be singing and acting out some Turkey melodies and plays as well. These students will also be performing in December for parents and friends. We look forward to seeing you there.



Music Magic by Julie Bickford

Believe it or not, concert season is nearly here! This month, the students in PK, K, and 1st grade will be hard at work on their concert songs. Their concert will be on **Thursday, December 18th at 2:00** in the Muddy Brook Gym. Students should wear a white shirt

and black skirt/pants for the concert (light-colored shirt and dark pants are also acceptable.). Please contact me or your child's classroom teacher if there is a question or issue about concert dress.



Our theme for this year's winter concert is "A Winter's Night, Twinkly and Bright." The songs will be about stars, light, the nighttime, etc. Ask your child if he/she would like to share a concert song and see what he/she can sing for you!

Kindergarten and 1st grade will also be performing at this year's Veteran's Day celebration. The Kindergarten has been learning "America the Beautiful" with Mrs. Moran, and the first grade has been learning "You're a Grand Ol' Flag."

Songs to Sing at Home

The More We Get Together (K)
 America the Beautiful (K)
 5 Little Pumpkins (K)
 Twinkle, Twinkle (K)
 Star Light, Star Bright (K)
 Skinnamarink (K/1)
 Hello, Everybody! (1)
 Bye'm Bye (1)
 The Snowman (1)
 I'm a Jack-o-lantern (1)
 Sunset (1)
 Shoo, Fly! (K/1)
 Goodbye, Everybody! (K/1)

Don't
 Forget to
 Sing at
 Home!

Musically yours,
Ms. Bickford

Library Update

November has arrived and so has the study of Fairytales, Folktales, and Tall Tales! Over the next two months each grade will be exploring and studying a wide variety of some famous and not-so-famous fairytales, folktales, and tall tales.



Pre-K and EK have wrapped up their Real vs. Fake unit and will now be exploring popular fairytales such as *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, *The Mitten*, and *The Gingerbread Man*. We will read each story and then engage in a variety of activities that will allow students to retell the story, display their understanding of the story, and enhance their experience with the tale. Near the end of the month, we will also incorporate Thanksgiving stories, traditions, and activities.

Kindergarten has wrapped up their Fiction vs. Non-Fiction unit and is ready to discover fairytales! Over the next few weeks we will be exploring different versions of the same fairytales including *The Little Red Hen*, and *Goldilocks and the Three Bear*. Students will have a chance to compare the stories and do a variety of activities to enhance their understanding of the stories. Near the end of the month, we will also incorporate Thanksgiving stories, traditions, and activities.



First grade has wrapped up their Non-fiction unit and has learned some basic research skills. We are now moving on to Fractured Fairytales! Over the next few weeks we will be reading several popular fairytales followed by their “fractured” counterparts in which the characters or setting have been changed to make the story funny or to change the perspective. We will begin by reading *The Three Little Pigs* and comparing it to *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*.

Second grade has learned and used the important parts of a non-fiction book and will be developing those skills later in the year. Over the next few weeks we will be taking a break from non-fiction to explore Folktales Around the World! We will be studying the folktales and how they relate to the culture they come from as well as creating projects to deepen our understanding of the stories.



Third grade has completed their Animal Research Project and shared their research with their classmates. We are now moving on to the study of Folktales. Students will be interacting with folktales in a variety of ways including comparing different versions of the same folktale, creating their own folktales, and learning about the culture from where the folktales originate.

Fourth grade has completed their Animal Comparison Project in which they studied two different animals and had to create presentations which highlighted the two animals' similarities and differences. We are now beginning our exploration of American Tall Tales. Over the next few weeks we will read a variety of tall tales, students will write their own tall tales, and will create projects around the origins and lasting effects of tall tales.



Thank you to everyone who was able to stop by the Book Fair in October. We sold over \$6,000 worth of books and about **\$2,000 of that comes right back to help the library program!** Thank you!!

Happy Reading!
Elisabeth Smith
Library Media Specialist
elisabeth.smith@bhrrsd.org

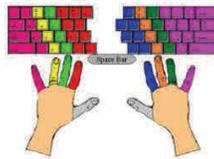


Welcome to the Technology Lab!

Dear Families,

Who remembers this sentence, “The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog”? Is anyone instantly reminded of keyboarding from middle school or high school? I know I am!

Many of us were in middle and high school when we were expected to be proficient using a keyboard. Expectations for students have changed over the years, and keyboarding is just one way. Our students use computers every day, developing proper keyboarding skills is an important fundamental skill our students need to have.



Our 3rd and 4th grade students are focusing on learning proper keyboarding skills. We are focusing on memorizing the home keys, asdf jkl, and becoming comfortable resting our hands on those keys when typing. This is a skill that will only develop with practice. I encourage students to practice at home when possible. If you have access to the internet check out **Dance Mat Typing** at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/z3c6tfr> this is a fun typing game from the BBC. The game has 4 levels and each of these levels is divided into 3 stages. Students will start with easiest and simple level and build up their skills to level 4.

The 4th Grade has been busy applying their new keyboarding skills as they created pamphlets about Mexico for their Mexican Fiesta last week. Students not only applied their new keyboarding skills to input lots of interesting information but also applied their knowledge of formatting documents, editing their writing, and adding clipart.

2nd, 3rd and 4th grade are continuing to learn about becoming strong digital citizens. Currently objectives we are focusing on are that all students will be able to...

- Learn to recognize websites that are good for them to visit.
- Recognize if they should ask an adult they trust before they visit a particular website.
- Recognize the kind of information that is private.
- Understand that they should never give out private information on the internet.

Helpful Tips, Websites & Apps

Does this happen to you... your child finds an app they MUST have or you're rushing through the store and your child begs you for a new DVD or video game? If you're anything like me, I'm always unsure whether it's appropriate. Is it developmentally appropriate, is it educational, and is it worth the price? All questions that rush through my mind as I'm trying to remember to grab the diapers and the tooth paste. We all have so much on our plates, it can be very easy to just say “YES” without being thoughtful about the decisions we're making. This app is perfect for parents who need an easy resource for ratings and reviews on the go.



- **Kids Media**
- It's Free!
- Parents can access thousands of ratings and reviews -- on the go -- with the free Kids Media iPhone and iPad app. You'll have a whole database of movies, TV shows, books, and music, apps, websites, and games reviews with you wherever you are. Find out which iPad and iPhone apps are best for learning. Get recommendations from Common Sense Media's editors and create age-based profiles for your kids to personalize your search for quality media before renting, buying, watching, or playing.

Greetings from the Art Studio by Ali Benton

Greetings from the art studio!

Artists are busy learning and creating in the art studio classroom. Students are building the ability to envision artistic possibilities and choose personally meaningful art avenues to explore. This rich problem solving is challenging, frustrating and satisfying. On art day please ask your child questions about their learning and challenges: What did the teacher share? What was hard or tricky? How did you solve your problems? What was most satisfying? Often these conversations can lead to some independent and family art explorations at home. 😊

Each year in our art studio centers open faster as artists deepen their understanding of studio routines and treat materials and the work space as their own. Younger artists are busy working independently at multiple skill centers throughout the room. Printmaking is going strong, with students in upper grades experiencing multiple techniques and concepts. The next studio center to open in art is the fiber center. Muddy Brook artists will be working with yarn, thread and fabric. Students will experience weaving, sewing and stitching techniques based on their grade level and personal interest. Practicing knots and tying at home will help alleviate some frustrations with these emerging skills.



Second graders learned about glue gun safety and demonstrated their understanding of the use and safety of this empowering tool. We use Cool Shot glue guns that use special low temperature glue that will not harm children's skin if touched and feature additional safety components.

A Note from Melinda Olds, School Adjustment Counselor

Due to schedule changes, the Parent Group will not meet this month. A notice will be put in the newsletter when we meet again. Thank you!

Melinda Olds

Physical Education Learning Link

During the month of November we will be spending a lot of time outdoors.

Please remind your children to:



- Wear appropriate shoes and socks for outdoor walking.
- Dress in layers.
- To help prevent ticks, wear long sleeves and pants.

PK – 3rd Grade - These classes will begin to work on throwing skills and stepping with their OPPOSITE foot. We will start to introduce different pieces of equipment such as balls, paddles, scoops and hula hoops for the children to use in station work.

2nd Grade – Will also be practicing their throwing skills then using these skills in big group games. They will also be incorporating different types of equipment in station work.

3rd and 4th Grade will be starting our very popular unit – Archery! We start our Archery unit in 3rd grade and it is very exciting. We set up an archery range on the front soccer field and use hay bales as targets. Students chart their shot arrows on a paper with a bulls-eye which represents the hay bale at which they are aiming. This is a great way for the kids to work on their fine motor skills, upper body strength, hand-eye coordination and accuracy.



MBE FAMILY HIKE DAY

On Tuesday, November 11th we invite students and their families to join Mrs. Pleu and Mrs. Soule for a hike of Tyringham Cobble.

*We will meet at the parking area (located off Jerusalem Road) and will **begin hiking at 10:00am.***

Follow Tyringham road into the center; at town hall/post office/library bear right onto Jerusalem Road. Parking will be on the right (16 car lot).

It's a 2 mile loop of moderate intensity of the beautiful Berkshires!

Rain will cancel this event

This is an informal opportunity to build our MBE community through a healthy, fun activity.

☺☺COME JOIN US, Mrs. Pleu and Mrs. Soule ☺☺



Housy Hoops

Registration for Housatonic Youth Basketball is now open and our Junior and Senior skills assessments tip off this **Saturday, November 8!**

Visit our website at www.leaguelineup.com/housyhoops to register. Click "Online Forms" on the left to access the online registration form for all players in **Kindergarten through 8th grade**.

Our house league is open to all children in Kindergarten through 8th grade. The entry fee is \$30 per player, with a maximum of \$60 per family. Fees can be paid at the registration dates above or the skills assessment/opening day.

We have three divisions. The skills assessment kick-off for the Junior and Senior Divisions is on Saturday, November 8. The Senior Division (grades 6, 7 & 8) will be at 1:30 pm and the season will begin the following week. The Seniors typically play on Mondays, Wednesdays and Sundays though the schedule will vary some from week to week.

The Junior division (grades 3, 4 & 5) skills assessment on November 8 will begin at 10 am. Their season, too, will begin the following week with games and practices primarily on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The Pee Wee division (grades K, 1 & 2) will begin on December 6 and run for 10 Saturdays. Registered players can expect to hear from a coach in the week preceding Opening Day for times and team assignments.

For those house league players interested in additional competitive basketball throughout the county, we also will have travel teams at the following grade levels: 3rd/4th, 5th/6th & 7th/8th.

Questions can be directed to Brian Cunningham at briancunningham274@gmail.com.

Come Support the.....

Berkshire Hills Unicycle Team



Half the Bike and Twice the Fun

Where: 51 Park Restaurant, Lee

When: Thursday, November 13, all day

*51 Park will donate 20% of sales when you mention to your server that you are dining to support the **Berkshire Hills Unicycle Team**.*



The unicycle team will continue to meet on Mondays from 2:45-3:30 pm. The team will be traveling to Springfield, MA to participate in the Big Balloon Parade the day after Thanksgiving. Please contact Heather Boyko, hsboyko@gmail.com, for details and confirmation that your cyclist will be participating. To help with the cost of transportation, 51 Park is sponsoring a fundraising day, Thursday, November 13. They will donate 20% of sales when you mention Berkshire Hills Unicycle to your server. See Flyer for details.