

Hastings Middle School Parent Newsletter

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From the Desk of the Principal

Brain research confirms what experienced teachers have always known: no two children are alike, no two children learn in the identical way, an enriched environment for one student is not necessarily enriched for another, and we should teach children to think for themselves. In her book *Teach Me Teach My Brain*, education expert Carol Ann Tomlinson states, “Three principles from brain research- emotional safety, appropriate challenge, and self-constructed meaning-suggest that a one-size-fits-all approach to classroom teaching is ineffective for most students and harmful to some.”

In order for all students to experience successes that matter to them, schoolwork must accommodate individual differences of talent and development. Teachers’ expectations must reflect an understanding of differences and portions of curriculum must accommodate individual choices. Ways of presenting and assessing knowledge must complement disparities in youngsters’ talents or dispositions for revealing their knowledge. Educationally speaking, this way of doing business reflects a mindset, an approach, and model best

phrased as differentiation. Staff development educator, author, and educational consultant, Rick Wormelli, says, “The first thing that comes to mind when defining differentiated instruction is understanding that it is maximizing the learning that can happen over what traditionally happens with one-size-fits-all lessons. At any point when you’re choosing to maximize what students learn, as opposed to settling for what they can learn, that is indicative of a differentiated class.”

Effective teachers differentiate naturally; they recognize that teaching involves sensitivity to students’ needs and learning preferences, and understand that diverse methods make learning relevant for students and help them make necessary connections for learning. We have extensive research available to us to assist us in creating instructional environments that maximize learning opportunities that will ensure students develop the knowledge and skills necessary for achieving positive learning outcomes. Armed with that research, teachers develop the capacity to identify student needs more accurately and develop a repertoire of learning experiences and assessment strategies that challenge and reach all levels of learners.

As a learning community, we understand the importance of using strategies to make teaching and learning crystal clear for each child. The mandates of NCLB, our restructur-

ing status, the vision established by the governor’s Readiness Project, and professional responsibility have impelled us to set our priorities through a new lens; one that opens our eyes to differences and our minds to explore unique learning experiences. As a result, for the past year and a half, our improvement efforts have focused on research based differentiated instructional strategies.

How does all of this translate into classroom experiences? Simply put, it means that we do whatever it takes to help students learn. The model of differentiated instruction requires our teachers to be flexible in their approach to teaching and adjusting the curriculum and presentation of information to learners rather than expecting students to modify themselves for the curriculum. Through the use of class analysis and formative assessments, teachers assess student readiness level and interests. Armed with this information, they then develop and use a multitude of teaching strategies, providing diverse ways through which students can access and understand concepts and skills, and allow students choice in how they can best show their learning.

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Teaching and learning involves a blend of whole-class, group and individual instruction. As teachers explore and share these ideas, the learning experiences of our future leaders-our students-will improve.

Honor Roll



The “A” Honor Roll requires that you have “A’s” in all your subjects. The “B” Honor Roll requires that you have “A’s & B’s” or all “B’s” in all your subjects.



Progress Reports/Report Cards

It is always important for you to know when to expect progress reports and report cards. Our schedule for this school year is listed below.

	Progress Reports	Report Cards
Term 1	Oct. 10, 2008	Nov. 7, 2008
Term 2	Dec. 12, 2008	Jan. 23, 2009
Term 3	February 27, 2009	April 3, 2009
Term 4	May 8, 2009	Will Be Mailed

Promotion / Retention Guidelines



All *Hastings Middle School* students must meet the following guidelines to be promoted to the next grade:

- All students will pass three of four core academic subjects.
- Enrichments classes are considered in promotion as follows:
 1. Students who fail two enrichment courses in addition to one academic course, will not be considered for promotion.

- Students who fail the same core academic subject for two consecutive years will not be considered for promotion.
- In certain circumstances, a Promotion Review Committee may recommend approval of alternative learning experiences when deemed in the best interest of the student. The committee will submit its recommendations to the Principal who may at his/her discretion, approve or disapprove.

Student of the Month



Each month teachers nominate students for *Student of the Month* recognition. The students are placed on a ballot and teachers vote for one student from each team. Students are nominated for demonstrating the core values of our school. Those core values are *Politeness, Responsibility, Involvement, Discipline, and Excellence*.

Congratulations to the winners for December. They are: *Dylan Cromwell, Kathryn Braley, Colin Thomas, Morgan Pedersen, Emma Robidoux, Victor Miller, Autumn Cyr, Kyle Bueno, Veda Krol, Danielle Paulson, Kimberly Baptista, Kyle Everett*.

Early Release Schedule



Students will be dismissed at 11:30 a.m. No lunches will be served on the dates listed below:
March 19, & Last day of school

Pride Cards

Pride cards are issued to a student who has done some type of school service for a student or a staff member. At the end of each month, one pride card is chosen from each grade from the boxes in the Guidance Office. These lucky students receive a prize.

	December
Grade 6	Tyson Curvelo
Grade 7	Zachary Viera
Grade 8	Connor Flynn

School Nurse Notes

Nurse—Barbara Webster Tel: 508 979-4064
Email Address: bwebster@fairhavenps.org



Cold and Flu season is upon us. In an effort to keep the majority healthy, please do not send your child to school with a fever or extreme cold and flu symptoms. Encourage your children to wash their hands frequently and to use chapstick to protect their lips.

Mandated screenings for scoliosis are wrapping up. I am still looking for copies of the most recent physical exams from many seventh grade students. I will be calling parents in the next month to follow up on these physicals. Thank you for your attention to this.

Barbara Webster RN, BSN

Comments from the Assistant Principal



As I'm sure you have all come to realize, winter weather adds to the amount of time it takes you to get your child to school. More parents drop their child off by car when the weather is inclement. Please remember this as you plan your departure time. If you get to school before 7:30 AM, you should have no wait at all. After that time, the traffic increases dramatically. Again say your good byes and give all the last minute directions so that your child can quickly exit the car, and the line can move. Students may enter the building at 7:25 AM if they are buying breakfast, or if they want to use the library. Keep in mind that the library can only hold so many students and, as you can imagine, it fills up quickly in the cold weather. Rest assured that if it is raining or if the temperature is very low, we do let the students in early. The earliest that we have staff available for supervision is 7:25 AM, so if you drop your child off before that, he or she will be outside. We make every attempt to be reasonable in regards to tardiness. If traffic/road conditions call for it, we delay attendance so that students are given more time before they are considered tardy. Please make sure that your child is dressed properly for the weather. I am always amazed as I stand outside freezing at the number of

students who come to school with no coat, no hat, no gloves, and no warm shoes. Again the earliest students will be allowed to enter the building is 7:25 AM.

The eighth grade has the opportunity to participate in a fundraiser to help them pay for the end of the year dance/cruise. I will be sending out more information as June approaches, but the eighth grade will have its dance on The Odyssey out of Boston. This is a little expensive, but it is a wonderful way to celebrate the last time most of the students will be together before many of them go their separate ways to different high schools. For this fundraiser any profits raised will be credited to the individual student's balance for the dance. This is completely voluntary, and if you do not wish to participate, you do not have to participate. Keep in mind that this will mean you will be responsible for the entire cost of the trip if your child wants to attend. Based on the previous two years, I can assure you that all eighth graders who have successfully completed the requirements for promotion want to participate. Mr. Donnelly met with the students this week to explain the fundraiser. If you have any questions, call my office at 508-979-4066.

Boys' Basketball Team By Mr. Mitcheson



Mr. Barr and Mr. Mitcheson would like to thank all the students that tried out for the basketball team this year. As usual the selection process was a difficult one, but not solely because of athleticism. The behavior, attitude, and effort exhibited was remarkable. I am proud to announce that the following thirteen young men will be positively representing our community:

David Santos, Nicholas Portelance, Ryan Dixon, Zackary Viera Jason, Heller, Edward Ruel, William Pires, Daniel McLaughlin, Jacob Carvalho, Eamonn Andre, Nathan Rock, Ryan Baldwin, Drew Wethington

The boys have had a challenging start, but have made some huge improvements as they learn to work together. Close games against Bourne and Ford Middle School left the boys eager to play them during the second half of the season. We would also like to extend a big "Thank You" to the Matty Oliveira Foundation. Without the generous donations from this fund, Hastings would not have these wonderful opportunities.



General Mills Box Tops for Education

Please continue to bring in your box tops. This fund raising program provides our students with fun and educational opportunities.

Millicent Library Events



Books2Movies Club — Book discussion on Friday, February 6 at 4—5 p.m. Monday, February 23 at 4—5 p.m. will be

book discussion. Movie will be shown on Friday, February 27 at 4—6 p.m. Book this month is *City of Ember* For grade 3-6.

Writing Club — Thursday, January 29, February 12 & 26 from 3—4 p.m. Come join this group of aspiring writers. Bring something you are working on to get ideas and support. We will also play fun writing games For grades 6 and up.

Kids Yoga — Saturday, February 7 at 10:30—11:15 a.m. Learn balance, posture, and relaxation! This class is taught by Ms. Stephanie.

Teen Game Day — Friday, February 13 at 1—3 p.m. Come play Guitar Hero on the big screen! We will also have Twister, Mancala, Cranium, and more. Grades 6 and up.

Vacation Week:

Kids Game Day — Tuesday, February 17 at 2—4 p.m. Ages 7—12.

High School Musical 3 Movie — Friday, February 20 at 3 p.m.

For more information contact
Laura Gardner at
lgardner@sailsinc.org.

Support our Troops! By Mrs. Haines



Hastings Middle School has adopted a platoon of 44 soldiers serving in Iraq. These soldiers are originally from Connecticut and are in need of some kind words, local news, and supplies. Each month a different team is responsible for putting together a care package that will be shipped to our platoon. Show your gratitude to our deserving heroes! Please do your part by writing letters, drawing pictures, and buying supplies and entertainment items for our platoon. Monetary donations are also needed to cover the costs of shipping and handling. Please look for notices coming home during your child's assigned month that will provide you with more information.

Months are assigned as follows:

October - November: 6W

November - December: 6B

December - January: 7W

January - February: 7B

February - March: 8W

March - April: 8B

Thank-you for your anticipated support!

For more information please contact Mrs. Haines at jhaines@fairhavenps.org and go online to www.adoptaplatoon.org

Rachel Ray Healthy Lunch Box Recipe Contest By Miss Morton

CONGRATULATIONS!

To the 6th grade health students who entered the **Everyday with Rachel Ray Healthy Lunch Box Recipe Contest!** Two of the students who entered the contest were winners! The school received two Arctic Zone Coolers and two Rachael Ray Yum-O Cookbooks. One of the books will be placed in the library and the other in the health room. I am extremely proud of all of the 6th graders who entered wonderful recipes. Job well done!



Physical Education Student of the Month

Mr. Galvam and Mrs. Nunes would like to recognize the following students for their sportsmanship, skill, and effort in Physical Education for the month of December.

Grade 6: Grant Gadbois
Kandyce Langlois

Grade 7: Devin Dias
Sara da Costa

Grade 8: Kyle Everett
Veda Krol

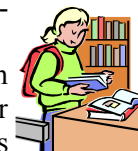
History's Mysteries By Miss Bendiksen

Who built Stonehenge? What are the Nazca Lines? Was King Tut murdered? Why were thousands of terracotta soldiers buried with a Chinese Emperor? These were a few of the mysteries that the sixth graders explored during the first semester of the *History's Mysteries* enrichment class. The students published two magazines, created models, and presented advertisements for exciting historical get-a-ways! This class provided a wonderful way for students to practice inquiry-based research while sparking their creativity and imagination. Thanks for a great semester!



From the Stacks By Ms. Richard

The Book Fair that was held in early December was very successful. We took in \$2,500. The library received \$1,000 in books from Scholastic and took some voucher credit for future use. Thank you to the following parents and grandparent who volunteered during the event: Diane Hahn, Sharon Dorian, Chris Souza and Mary Jane Richard.



We would also like to thank the following people who have recently made donations to the library collection: Edith Ronn, Emily Dorian, Sean Masse and Samantha Tonnessen. Book and monetary donations are welcome to help us update our collection. Contact Ms. Richard.

Art Club 2009 By Mrs. Roveda



On Tuesday, Jan. 12th 23 students joined our new Art Club. I had been holding a Jewelry Club on Wednesdays for the past few months with a small group of students. Those students and I collectively decided to change the focus from jewelry to all forms of art. After getting feedback from some of my other students we decided Tuesdays would be a better day to hold it as many of the interested art students had other commitments on Wednesdays. I was pleasantly surprised by the large turnout on the first day of our new club.

Our first project was making clay tiles. After a demonstration on how to create a design using relief, impression, and how to use certain clay tools students were ready to go. Students sketched their ideas for tiles while the clay slabs were being rolled out and distributed. The creativity was palpable! By the end of the hour, students had each begun a beautiful hand-made tile. No two tiles were alike! Each student put their own artistic expression into their tile which reflects each of their individual personalities. It was a pleasure to hold the class and I am looking forward to the weeks to come and the artwork that will be made. I would like to thank all of the new club members for their enthusiasm, attentiveness, and helpfulness.

Monetary donations for purchases of supplies are welcomed. Contact Mrs. Roveda for more information.

Recycling Bins By Mr. Barr



Here at HMS we are trying to get a little greener one step at a time. The 8th grade science classes teamed up with the entire school and implemented a recycling program, but we are in short supply of recycle bins. We need additional bins so that every classroom can participate. We are asking anyone who may have extra recycling bins to at least donate them to us. We need your help, so we can make a difference one classroom at a time!

Grade 6 Science Classes

In late January, early February, Mr. Baldo's and Ms. Freeman's science classes will be constructing three dimensional relief maps out of salt-dough, based on the contour lines of a topographic map. We are looking for parent volunteers who are willing to come in and make the dough, help students roll and cut out the map pieces, and clean up.



Please contact Mr. Baldo or Ms. Freeman if you are available. We will give you an exact date as the time approaches. Thank you.

Binder Clips Request By Mr. Beaulieu



Mr. Beaulieu would like to say thank you to all those in the Hastings community who have donated over 70 binder clips so far. What a huge help! We still need many more, and are very happy to continue to accept binder clips of ALL sizes. Please continue to send them in as many as possible. **Muchas gracias, amigos!**

The Spanish students of Mrs. Duarte and Mr. Beaulieu are in need of 3x5 index cards to make study cards. They have used thousands and thousands so far this year, and we are quickly running out. These cards are so important for many students, and they are using them very wisely and sparingly; the 6th graders are using cards cut in half so they get two vocabulary words out of each card. Donations of 3x5 index cards will be appreciated. On behalf of Spanish students, Mrs. Duarte and Mr. Beaulieu, we thank you kindly for your contribution. **Muchas gracias and adios for now.**



Update on Christmas Carol Mrs. Bradshaw and Mr. Mitcheson



As you recall, our 7th grade field trip to Trinity Rep to see A Christmas Carol was cancelled due to inclement weather. Trinity Rep's "No Refund" policy left us with 2 options: attend another performance this year or earmark the deposited funds for next year's performance. Due to the fact that upcoming performances do not align with our curriculum, the team has chosen the latter alternative. As a result, our money will remain on deposit and we will reserve a performance date for next year's grade 8 and grade 7 students. Thank you in advance for your understanding.

Math Club Miss Chretien

Several seventh grade students have recently joined the math club. The students are working hard to prepare for the New England Math League contest which will be held in February.



Hands on Egypt! By Mrs. Haines



Over the past few weeks the 6th grade has been studying the fascinating and mysterious civilization of ancient Egypt. One of the most interesting topics explored was the Egyptian religion and the culture that was shaped out of it. Students were introduced to some of the most famous of the ancient Gods, they studied beliefs about the after life and the tremendous effort the Egyptians put into getting there. They explored tombs like the pyramids and the mummification of the dead. Students on 6 white even made their own pharaoh mummies out of apples! They each named their mummy, cut & cored the apple, and buried it in salt-just like the ancient Egyptians! Staying true to the process, the mummies will not be ready to be uncovered until February 20th. With patience & anticipation we wait!

The whole 6th grade will be treated to a presentation by our very own, Mr. Kraig Perry- former history coordinator and teacher at HMS & FHS. Mr. Perry is an avid educator and learner of ancient history, focusing much of his zeal on the study of ancient Egypt. Mr. Perry visited Egypt last year. His presentation will include amazing photographs, music, video, and artifacts that will surely bring ancient Egypt to life at HMS!



Yearbook 2009 by Mrs. Duarte

Attention eighth grade students and parents!

Each eighth grade student may submit a favorite baby picture for the *Baby Photo* section of the yearbook. These items will be placed in the yearbook at no cost to you.

Keep in mind that wallet size photos work best. **NO** photos larger than **4" x 6"** will be accepted!! Make sure to write the student's first and last name on the back of the photo.

All photos should be submitted to Mrs. Duarte by **Friday, February 13th**.

NO photos will be accepted after this date.