

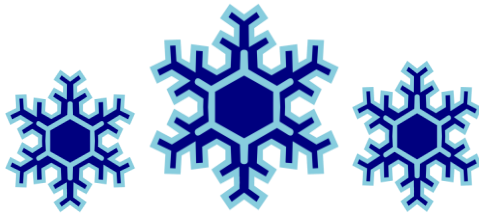


**SANDOWN NORTH
ELEMENTARY**

**FEBRUARY
2016
NEWSLETTER**



*From the desk of
Jo Ann H. Georgiam, Principal*



As you know, all staff and students at Sandown North strive to be STARS. When we are Safe, Trustworthy, Always Respectful, and Responsible, our school environment is comfortable, supporting us all in our learning. Recently, staff members from the Bernice A. Ray School in Hanover New Hampshire visited our school to learn about our evidence based behavior program, Star Quest. We welcome visitors because it is always a win-win situation. When we explain our processes, we are in effect teaching, which further

cements our own knowledge. In addition, the questions, perceptions, and excitement of the visiting teams further fuels our desire to learn more and to fine tune the systems currently in place.

We're proud to be considered a New Hampshire exemplar school! At the same time, it is important that we continue to learn and to refine our practices. This month, representatives from our school visited South School and Matthew Thornton School in Londonderry. Both schools are Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) schools. Our staff members were able to see their colleagues' Morning Meeting and got ideas about roll-outs and ways in which we might be able to change or add on to our own meeting. Fresh ideas are always welcome if they help our students be even more involved. Sharing with colleagues is a powerful professional learning experience for all involved.

Our students also learn from each other. In their Guided

Reading groups, they share interpretations, predictions, and their connections to text with each other. When they tell what they are thinking while supporting their statements with details from the readings, students learn from each other. Talking about reading is powerful. Students may not always agree with a conclusion another reader has drawn, but their questions lead to even deeper thinking. Adults look forward to talking with others about books they are reading, thus the popularity of Book Groups. The conversation helps adults to expand their way of thinking. This occurs for our students as well. Our children have the opportunity to work and think in small groups and also have opportunities to conference with their teacher regularly. Teachers ask high level questions that force students to think deeply about text. They may ask their student to read the part of the passage that supports the answer the child has given. When the student is reading aloud, the teacher notes the fluency with which the child reads.

Round Robin Reading, which many of us experienced, is no longer a practice in our classrooms. When students were taking turns reading aloud, one by one, they often stopped paying attention to the

message of the text after their turn. In addition, Round Robin Reading caused some students to feel anxious and their anxiety led to trouble reading the words fluently. Now, when they are asked to read aloud in front of others, it is a part of the book or passage that they have already practiced reading silently. When a student is reading with a teacher, s/he may be asked to read aloud so that the teacher can gain information that will guide his/her instruction for the child.

All students have strengths and challenges as learners and all students have interests. Staff members work to support and to challenge each of our learners. Recently, Mr. Ciarla offered interested fourth and fifth graders a chance to participate in a spelling bee. Third graders were in the audience cheering on the participants while learning about the process for the competition. Those who participated did their very best and demonstrated good sportsmanship. Our runner-up was Joshua Boucher, a fourth grader, and the winner was Gabriella Double, another fourth grader. Congratulations to all who participated!

News from the Assistant Principal

Last month, I had the pleasure of attending the Manchester Monarchs hockey game and hearing our Sandown North Chorus sing America the Beautiful in between periods. The students truly sounded amazing. I would like to thank Mrs. Yankowskas for the incredible job she did arranging for this opportunity and directing the students and Ms. Worthen and Mrs. Carey who also help out with chorus. Thank you also to the PTA for sponsoring the event and Mrs. Pitman for coordinating the tickets. In addition to the chorus doing a great job, all of the students who attended seemed to have a lot of fun. One of the highlights was watching the kids (and Mrs. Carey ☺), on the jumbotron, dancing and having a great time! We have a lot of performers in our midst!

Recently, students completed the Tripod survey. As mentioned in the parent letter, sent home prior to the survey from Deb Armfield, Executive Director of Curriculum, Assessment and Professional Learning, it helps our classroom teachers, specialists and special educators to better understand students' experiences in their classroom. The information is

used for ongoing professional learning.

I wanted to remind families that February 19th is an early release day. We will also be celebrating Healthy Heart Day at Sandown North. Staff and students may dress in athletic wear and/or red and white. We are encouraging everyone to bring healthful snacks. Teachers will be incorporating activities around health and wellness into their lessons and each hour, as a school, we will "stop, drop and wiggle" for some fun movement breaks.

Enjoy the new snow and the winter outdoor activities it brings to keep us moving throughout the season!

Nancy Stafford,
Assistant Principal
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In music class, students have been continuing their journey to become more "tuneful, beatful, and artful" musicians. This past month, children in grades 2-5 have learned to apply this concept to Orff instruments. Conceived by German

composer Carl Orff for young musicians, these instruments include pitched percussion, such as xylophones, glockenspiels, and metallophones, and unpitched percussion (drums, tambourine, bells, etc.). After learning basic techniques such as removing and replacing bars, holding the mallets, and playing ostinati (repeated patterns), students learn to balance vocal and instrumental sound. Students typically try out at least three different instruments per class as they rotate volleyball-style among the rows.

First graders are demonstrating great independent singing skills! We sing echo songs such as "Down by the Bay," to which they create their own verses. Additionally, they practice keeping the beat to various songs and activities as part of the First Steps in Music curriculum, developed by Dr. John Feierabend.

The Sandown North Winter Concert was fabulous! Mr. Mainella and I are so proud of the band, strings, and chorus students for their outstanding performances and STAR behavior both on and off the stage. Additionally, the chorus performed beautifully and majestically at the Manchester Monarchs game on January 17. Max even came over to visit us

during the game! Many thanks to the Sandown North families and staff for supporting our fine musicians.



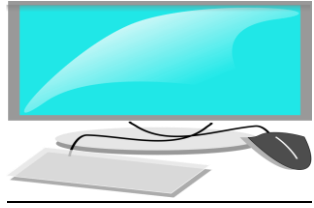
String students practice their candy cane bow holds to prepare for their concert.



Max visits the chorus during the Monarch game.

Musically yours,
Alison Yankowskas
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Tech News



Students in grades 3-5 have been creating billboard designs to inspire future generations of innovators. They have shared some great ideas for products and practices that could make our world an even more amazing place! They can find their class ideas in their Google Drive Shared folder. I'm sure they would be excited to show you how they plan to inspire the future.

Justin Bentley-Melle
Technology

IN THE LIBRARY



This month we will be celebrating "I Love to Read and Write"! We invite you to celebrate with us by participating at home. You should have already received a letter explaining the program along with a calendar of activities. We invite you and your child to complete at least

14 of the 29 activities listed and then return it to school for a prize after vacation. During the week of February 15th we will have daily in-school activities as well. Another letter will be sent home to keep you posted!

Educational research has demonstrated that children are more successful in their school careers when families are actively involved. We encourage you to enthusiastically support your child's literacy efforts. Keep reading and writing!

Laura Ross
Media Generalist