

Vol. III No. 4

January 2019

PLAINS SCHOOL

Newsletter



Principal's News
From Mr. Skala

Dear Plains Families,

We are about to begin the second half of the school year shortly. It is hard to believe how quickly the months pass. The winter months tend to be a bit more difficult since we deal with weather related issues with snow, freezing rain, and days that are a bit dreary. As I have mentioned before, I am using a CHILD CARE WEATHER WATCH chart that factors in outdoor temperature and wind chill in order to make a good decision for outdoor play.

Finally, I ask that you continue to monitor my electronic messages, as I will be sending home information related to school events, programs and assemblies from time to time. I wish all a very Happy New Year. We welcome Mr. Tighe Dudek to Plains School as our new PE teacher. He is a graduate of Springfield College. We are excited to have him join our team here at Plains.

Sincerely,
Hank Skala, Principal

January 9, 2019-Early Release- dismissal for K & 1 2:15, Pre-K 2:00
January 21,2019-Schools Closed-Martin Luther King Day

Kindergarten News
Submitted by Gina Moulton
Grade Level Coordinator

*Treat people kindly, do what is fair.
Work for all people, show that you care.
Change what is wrong, but please do not fight.
Think of new ways to change wrong to right!
These are the ways, if we work as a team,
to remember the man who said, "I have a dream".*



Happy 2019! We hope you enjoyed a relaxing and fun-filled break. In January, our kindergarten students will begin guided reading groups. This is small-group reading instruction for students reading similar levels of text, allowing us to address each student's specific reading needs. While reading, the focus is on meaning, but also on problem solving strategies to help figure out words students do not know, yet. This is an exciting time in kindergarten. All of the skills we have been working on seem to come together and we tend to see an amazing amount of academic growth.

In math, students are busy looking for 5-groups and "extra ones" and then adding the numbers together. We are also working on number formation and addition and subtraction word problems. Each day we continue to count the days we have been in kindergarten. Next month we will reach 100 and celebrate the number 100 in many different ways. When you are driving in the car, ask your child to count with you to 100. 😊 😊

We will continue to go outside each day for recess. Please label and send in snow pants, boots, and all other winter gear. If you haven't already, please also send in a warm change of clothes to keep at school.

First Grade News
Submitted by Ashley Macey
Grade Level Coordinator

Happy New Year! We are very excited about all the things the New Year will bring. It is hard to believe that at the end of the month we will be half way through the school year. The children have grown so much and have developed into independent, confident learners. The depth of comprehension and understanding is taking hold. We see readers, writers and mathematicians who are eager to share their confidence in learning. To keep building, one of the greatest impacts you can have on your child at this age is reading with them as often as possible. Research has found out that repeated reading is the key strategy for improving students' fluency skills.

Martin Luther King's birthday gave us another important opportunity to talk about civil rights and the significance of Dr. King's many contributions to our country. Our Second Step program and Scholastic News articles will provide additional civics lessons in our classroom and community.

We are into our fourth unit of the math curriculum, place value concepts. This unit builds on the work with teen numbers from the previous unit. The children will explore tens and ones using physical groupings and math drawings.

Science has shifted from "the sky" to animals in winter. We will be studying how animals in our area cope with the environmental changes this time of year. We will do this in coordination with our field trip to the Hitchcock Center at the end of this month into early February.

Lastly, throughout the winter, children will continue to go outside for recess as often as possible. When this happens, sometimes children's clothes tend to get wet. Please help us by sending in a spare change of clothes for your child. Be sure to label everything with your child's name. As always thank you for helping to make our days run smoother.

Counselor's Corner 2019
Submitted by Nancy Jessup
School Adjustment Counselor

Happy New Year! The holidays are past and it's time to get back into our regular routines. Being a parent can be one of the most satisfying things in our lives. It can also be the most challenging and frustrating. Dealing with a child's anger is among the biggest challenges of parenting. It's a major task to allow children to express their feelings in a non-aggressive way.

I have found, in responding to the behavioral needs of young children, that an important task for us is to help them to learn appropriate ways of dealing with their anger. Children need to learn safe limits to their behavior for their own security and for the safety of others. They also need to know that their feelings are understood. When a child feels that they are being recognized and that their feelings are acknowledged, this helps them build a healthy sense of self. It's important to communicate to a child that it's OK to be angry, everyone gets angry from time to time; it's what we do with our anger that's important.

One way to do this is to model for our children. We can use “I” statements, such as “I feel angry when...” We can also show them ways to cool down and be able to talk about their angry feelings. Counting is one method of calming down; taking three slow deep breaths is another. Sometimes hitting a pillow, pounding clay, or ripping up newspaper helps to vent those angry feelings. It’s important to be direct and tell children things such as “We don’t hit. Hitting hurts” or “It’s not OK to break anything.” Sometimes we may need to remove a young child from a situation if they are hurting someone or something. To let children know that we understand their feelings we can acknowledge them by saying, “It sounds like you’re angry,” or “Boy, you look mad.” This helps young children to learn to identify and name what they are feeling; often, they don’t really know. Then, when they have calmed down, you can invite them to talk about what made them angry and help them come up with solutions.

Just like adults, children don’t think too well when they are in a rage. They don’t listen too well either. That’s when we can model the calming down techniques and say to them, “We can talk about this when you’re feeling calmer.” When a very young child is throwing a tantrum, they may just need an adult there to keep them safe and hold them until it’s all over. The force of their own anger can frighten children.

It’s not easy for an overstretched parent to always be able to handle these situations calmly, particularly if they occur at inopportune moments, like in the grocery store or on the way out the door. It’s important for parents to get the support they need, to talk to other parents who can relate to what it’s like. It helps to know that it’s something that all parents deal with at one point or another.

Second Step is the violence prevention program that is taught in all the grades in South Hadley up through fourth grade. The last unit of the program is Emotion Management. This teaches children techniques they can use to calm down when they have strong feelings, this can be reinforced at home. If anyone is interested in learning more about the Second Step Program, please feel free to contact me. I have informational materials and a DVD that can be borrowed.

From Hannah Berube, Music Teacher

Dear Plains Families and Friends,

Happy 2019! Students in Kindergarten and First Grade put on a wonderful Winter Performance in December and started work on our next unit. Students in First Grade are beginning to learn call and response songs, while Kindergarten is working on more challenging echo songs. Students in both First Grade and Kindergarten are learning a singing game in Spanish called “Tortillitas”.

The words are:

Tortillitas para mamá	Little tortillas for mama
Tortillitas para papá	Little tortillas for papa
Las quemaditas para mamá	The burnt ones for mama
Las bonitas para papá	The pretty ones are for papa

Happy New Year!
Ms. Berube

NOTICE

All students, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or homelessness, have equal access to the general education program and the full range of any occupational and vocational education programs offered by the South Hadley Public Schools.

Declaración de No discriminación

Todos los estudiantes, independientemente de su raza, color, sexo, identidad de género, religión, origen nacional, orientación sexual, discapacidad o falta de vivienda, tienen acceso equitativo al programa de educación general y a toda la gama de programas de educación ocupacional y profesional ofrecidos por Escuelas Públicas de South Hadley

If you feel you may need special accommodations or assistance as a result of a handicapping condition or limited English proficiency, please call Kathleen Boyden at the South Hadley School Department, 116 Main Street at 413-538-5072 (hearing impaired fax 413-538-5000) and notify us of your special need.

Si usted necesita alguna adaptacion o asistencia especial debido a algun tipo de minusvalia, por favor llame al telefono 413-538-5072 (fax para personas con deficiencias auditivas 413-538-5000) y notifiquenos cuales son sus necesidades especificas.