

FALL NEWSLETTER



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

WHAT IS GOING ON WITH ALL THESE TICKETS?!?!?!?

We are a PBIS district!! PBIS stands for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. PBIS is a schoolwide approach to discipline. With PBIS students are explicitly taught the expectations for all areas of the school not just the classroom. By using this model students learn what type of behavior is and is not appropriate in each specific area of the building. PBIS focuses on the positive by recognizing students for good behavior and decision-making. Every member of our staff is involved in this system of recognizing students. Currently, we are using tickets to reward students and all the tickets earned are entered into a raffle each Friday. Several times through-out the year we will be having events and activities that students will be saving their tickets to participate in. Be sure to ask your child what they earned a ticket for!

-Mrs. Coburn

FALL NEWSLETTER

PRE SCHOOL NEWS

MRS. THOMSON



What a wonderful beginning of the year we have had in preschool! Our class has nicely settled into our new FULL DAY routine and are very busy learning new and exciting things! It is inspiring to see all of the energy and excitement our students bring to the classroom everyday!

Just a few parent reminders to pass along to every one! Preschool begins at 9:00 AM. Please be sure to arrive on time! Sometimes school time is slightly different from home time. Please adjust accordingly. Also, please make sure to label your child's lunch box/snack and make all items as accessible to your child as possible. Notes should be handed directly to me at the beginning of the day. We will check backpacks of the students who come on the bus only. Thank you so much for your cooperation.

One of the main questions we hear from parents at the beginning of the year is, "What do you do in preschool? What will my child learn?" Well, we do a lot! The students will be learning **many** new things throughout the year. Not only will they be learning "academic" concepts, such as colors, letters, numbers, etc., but they will also learn and develop language, motor, and social-emotional skills. Preschool is the time where we can begin to "set the stage" for future educational success. It is important that students are able to be independent thinkers and problem solvers. We encourage our students to

figure out ways to solve problems as well as begin to understand his/her role in the classroom community. Combined with structured group activities, we use play as a means for children to explore and learn about the world around them. Children greatly benefit from being in an environment where they can learn from and along side their peers, as well as from the adults in the classroom. Preschool is such a marvelous time for young children and our goal is to instill a love of learning that will continue throughout their educational careers.

We are looking forward to a wonderful year! Thank you for sharing your children with us! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me!!!

Mrs. Thomson



FALL NEWSLETTER

KINDERGARTEN NEWS

MRS. BASHISTA

Happy Fall to all of our Kindergarten families as well as to the rest of our Chester families.

We have been so busy learning the daily routines of our classroom! We are getting pretty savvy at putting away our belongings in our cubbies, following directions, traveling the hallways of our school, sitting, listening, learning, cooperating, sharing, making friends, and so many more things!

We have begun our ELA and Math curriculums. We just finished a unit on Realistic Fiction with many stories about the beginning of Kindergarten. The children learned that realistic fiction stories are stories that could happen but did not. We have also been talking about how to tell what the characters in the story are feeling. The children loved listening to stories that were very relatable to their lives.

We are jumping into letter ID and sounds, what the difference between a letter, word and sentence are and recognizing the different sounds in words. We are doing activities to begin our work on handwriting skills. We will begin encouraging our kindergarten students to start writing their names with only the first letter as uppercase, with all of the rest being lower case letters, however our handwriting curriculum does focus on forming the capital letters first.

In Math we have been working with shapes! We are currently working on a unit for 2-dimensional shapes and learning how to navigate our Math workbooks. The children are enjoying making puzzles using squares,



triangles, rhombuses, trapezoids and hexagons. They also learned a game called "Fill the Hexagon." In this game they roll a special dice with different shapes on it and learn how to combine many different shapes to make new shapes.

We are fast becoming proficient learners, listeners, observers, cooperators, friends, leaders, followers, lunch eaters, paper cutters, writers, singers, artists, and happy students! Before long, you won't even recognize us!

Happy Fall
Mrs. Bashista



FALL NEWSLETTER

FIRST GRADE NEWS

MRS. CADIGAN



Greetings from Grade 1!!!

The First Grade class has been busy learning new classroom schedules and routines. Several days were spent developing class rules and forming a new community. Each day we begin with a morning meeting that incorporates community building, oral language story telling, ELA (English Language Arts) and math concepts. We are working again this year on our school-wide character development program "bucket filling" and many discussions circled around filling and dipping buckets.

In reading, we have been reviewing high-frequency words or sight words learned last year. We have also introduced our learning centers. During this time, students are rotating through centers that practice a variety of skills. All centers are independent and it gives them a chance to improve their reading, writing, and math skills. We also have been working on listening comprehension while we are listening to our read aloud books.

We will be using Lucy Calkins' Writing Workshop again this year. We have spent some time storytelling and we have launched writing workshop. During this time, students are working on the writing process for writing personal narrative stories, or

about something that happened to them one time. The goal is to write and sequence a personal narrative across three pages, including details.

During math we have been focusing on understanding addition and subtraction. We finished chapter 1 in our math program "Go Math" which is all about addition. We started chapter 2 which is all about subtraction. Ipads are also used to reinforce and expand on what we learned in our lessons throughout the day.

We began Science with learning about apples. We are learning about the different types of apples and the parts of an apple. We also learned about the life cycle of an apple through all four seasons. We started the year with a fun book character study. The students did a good job learning about their character and filling out a poster about their character's traits.

Happy Fall,
Mrs. Cadigan



FALL NEWSLETTER

SECOND GRADE NEWS

MRS. GAGNON

Reading: The 2nd grade readers are making connections to both fiction and nonfiction readings. They are also learning about different reading strategies to help them decode words to become stronger readers.

Writing: The 2nd grade authors just finished personal narratives and are working on answering prompts based off of books we have read.

Math: The 2nd grade mathematicians are learning how to break numbers into hundreds, tens, and ones. They are also discovering different ways to represent numbers!

Science: These scientists are learning how plants grow! They are learning through whole

group discussions, read alouds, short video clips, and hands on activities!

Social/Emotional: The 2nd graders are also learning how to work in large and small groups in a kind and respectful way. They are discovering how to wait, listen with respect and make connections to one another.



FALL NEWSLETTER

THIRD GRADE NEWS

MRS. BRADY



In 3rd grade we have been busy establishing classroom rules and routines that are expected in the classroom. We also have been continuing to get to know each other and discussing how to be a successful learner in class.

In order for students to be successful in 3rd grade, it is important that they do the following things -

- be patient with themselves since learning takes time
- respect classroom space and property
- respect and show kindness to all others in all settings
- follow directions and do what is asked
- be a good listener and don't distract
- be helpful

- focus on the task at hand
- be in control
- eyes on speaker
- complete homework
- read daily at home too
- practice math facts at home too

We have been working hard on using many different strategies in math to add and subtract 3-digit numbers. We are almost done with the graphing chapter in MATH and then moving right into



multiplication.

In Reading we have been establishing procedures and routines in order to have a successful reading workshop.

In writing we have been focusing on how to write personal narratives (true stories about ourselves).

Students have also started STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) class on Tuesdays. We have also been working on force and motion.

FALL NEWSLETTER

FOURTH GRADE NEWS

MS. CABRAL

Grade 4 is off to a great start! I know it has only been a couple of weeks, but I would like to share again a list of friendly reminders to help the school year go smoothly.

1. Every student **MUST** have a pair of **headphones** to stay at school. We use interactive websites on a daily basis and students need to be able to work at their own pace.
2. **HOMEWORK FOLDERS** contain a monthly calendar, a list of assignments, events for the week, and important reminders. Please do not remove fastened sheets from the folder until the month is completed. The folders travel back and forth to school **everyday**. Please pay attention to the special dates such as early releases, etc.
3. Students have a flexible homework plan. A homework "packet" will go home on Fridays and will be due on the following Thursday. The weekly homework sheet will list out the assignments as a guideline. However, the objective is that students will become responsible for budgeting their time. Homework is not meant to be punitive. It should review concepts already taught in class or serve as a "review" of third grade curriculum. **However, there may be times**

that your child has classwork assignments that may need to be completed at

home. Practicing math facts and practicing reading fluency are ALWAYS a good idea!

4. **READING LOGS** will also go home on Fridays. Students are responsible for reading appropriate material and to record their minutes each night. However, a **PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE** is required at the end of the week.
5. "Perfect homework" consists of the following:
 - Red folders returned at the beginning of the new week.
 - Homework folders in mailboxes everyday.
 - Reading log signed and returned on Thursdays.
 - Reading and math homework completed and of *good quality* turned in on time.
 - Library books returned on time.
6. Please wear sneakers and comfortable clothing on Thursdays (P.E.) and Fridays (Fitness Club).

If you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to contact me at hcabral@grsd.org.



FALL NEWSLETTER

FIFTH GRADE NEWS

MRS. BAKER

The month of September has almost come to an end and we are off to a good start!!! Students came ready to learn and have acclimated well to 5 th grade.

This year takes on a whole new challenge of responsibilities and after only a few weeks students are meeting these expectations.

Thank you for initialing the agenda each night. It is important that you know what your child needs to complete for homework. Please continue to help them be successful with these new tasks.

In math we are learning about place value to the thousandths place and how to multiply by a two-digit number.

Students are enjoying playing Khan, Splashmath and Prodigy online to help support their math skills. They can practice these skills at home also.

In social studies we have been immersed in the study of natural disasters.

Students have been exploring the effects of floods and earthquakes. We watched some videos from the floods that just occurred a few weeks ago.

In science student are learning about the scientific method. They will soon be conducting their own hands-on experiments using physical and chemical properties/changes.

I look forward to an exciting year with your child. They are literally bouncing out of their seat with excitement and can't wait to see what the future has in store for us.



FALL NEWSLETTER

NURSING NEWS

MR. CARLSON

The rush of activity at the beginning of each new school year had just begun to settle down when our beloved school secretary, Donna Morrissey, came banging on my door demanding this note. Phewww-no time for a breather!

Speaking of *breathers*, the good news is that nearly all of your school children have been breathing easily so far this fall. With few lung-related incidents to date in school, we can likely attribute this to life here in the country - where major sources of pollution are far away.

But one local source of pollution has been affecting many adults and children in the Gateway District. By now you have probably all heard something in the news about the recent spate of illness and deaths in the U.S. related to vaping and E-cigarettes. We learned just this week that the first of our neighbors here in Hampshire County has died of this as-yet-undetermined respiratory illness related to vaping. The hopes of many of us for a safer alternative source of nicotine delivery are beginning to go up in smoke.

As doctor Robert Shmerling, Faculty Editor for Harvard (Medical School) Health Publishing wrote in his recent blog,

“Perhaps we shouldn’t be surprised that lung problems might develop in people who vape: our lungs were meant to inhale clean air and nothing else. It took many years to recognize the damage Cigarettes can cause. We could be on a similar path with vaping.”

I would like to encourage parents and children who vape or smoke to consider alternative means of finding stimulation. Patches, gum and ingestion can provide access to the stimulants that folks seek through smoking and vaping and preserve the fragile lining of the lungs for more fun exploits such as exercise, outdoor adventures and just plain **LAUGHING!**

Link to the Harvard Health Blog:

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/can-vaping-damage-your-lungs-what-we-do-and-dont-know-2019090417734>



FALL NEWSLETTER

PTO NEWS

The Chester PTO will be hosting its yearly Boo Bash dance on Friday, October 25th from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Come join us for pizza, music, yummy treats and fun games.

Keep sending in your Box Tops. Every little bit helps our school raise money. Download the new Box Tops APP to send your store receipts for double the points. You can also send your receipts to us and we will download them for you.

Keep an eye out for the Fall Fundraiser and the scholastic Book Fair Flyers in November.

Please consider joining the PTO. We are always looking for new members!

Contact the school directly or Sarah Anable at SHMA1413@aol.com or (413)207-7528



Title I Changes

Fall brings change --and there are lots of changes in the Chester Title I program! Sadly, we had to say goodbye to Mrs. Craig when she moved to California at the end of last school year. Happily, though, we can announce that Cynthia Thomas will be starting in the Title I paraprofessional job Sept. 21. Cynthia comes highly recommended, with years of experience working with kids. We know the whole Chester community will welcome her!

In other changes, Chester has become a whole school Title I program. The good news is that there will be none of that pile of Title I paperwork which many parents have had to sign in the fall! The Title I teacher and paraprofessional will have more ability to work with children in the classrooms as well as pulling them out. We will also have lots of flexibility to work with children in math as well as reading. All of the staff are looking forward to seeing how this new set-up works out. Hopefully you will let us know how it is working, too! If you ever have any concerns, please be in touch. You can reach me at the school number, or 413-344-7906, or through email: cbresnahan@grsd.org.

Chris Bresnahan, Title I teacher

