News from the Principal
Mrs. Coburn

The school year is moving right along here at Littleville! We can't believe that we've already celebrated our 100th day of school and spring is just around the corner! Keep an eye out for spring mini-course offerings. Sign-ups will be sent mid-March and I encourage you to act fast because mini-courses fill-up fast.

Be on the lookout for information coming home about kindergarten and preschool registration and screening. If you have a child turning 5 years old by September 1st, 2020 please notify the school, so that we can register your child for kindergarten screening on May 8th. If you have a child ages 3-4 please contact our Pupil Services office at 685-1017 to sign-up for preschool screening and learn more about our preschool lottery.

For families of students in grades 3-5, please be aware that MCAS testing will take place on April 8th-9th for ELA and May 5th-6th for Math. Our fifth graders will also be taking the Science MCAS on May 12th-13th.

As always, we look forward to continuing to work together as a team to provide your child with a successful and fulfilling educational experience.

News from the Nurses Station
Mrs. Brownlee and Ms. Thompson

Greetings from your Littleville school nurses, Ms. Thompson and Mrs. Brownlee! The weather certainly has been interesting and here's hoping that the groundhog was correct and spring will be here very soon! Unfortunately, we are still in the midst of cold and flu season. We want to remind everyone to practice good hand washing, and to cover coughs and sneezes using elbows/tissues. If your child has a fever of 100 degrees or higher, is vomiting, or just started antibiotics for a spreadable illness, please keep them home. Students must be fever free without medication for 24 hours, not vomiting for 24 hours, and any antibiotic prescribed must be taken for 24 hours before returning to school. Please send in any updated health information, as well as contact information that may have changed, when available so we can keep our records up-to-date. We can be reached at (413) 685-1318 for questions, comments or concerns. As always, our goal is to keep everyone healthy, safe, in school and ready to learn. FYI, February is heart health month. Visit the American Heart Association at www.heart.org for information on keeping your family's hearts healthy and happy!

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Put down the tablet and try playing a board game this vacation. See what new games you can learn.
News from the Adjustment Counselor
Ms. McCormick, MSW, LCSW, SAC

We all know what it sounds like when a child is bored. We have all heard it:

“There’s nothing to do, I’m bored!!!” says your child as they flop to the floor in dramatic fashion while being surrounded by the latest and greatest toys they just received nearly 1 month ago. They then look at you with their saddest puppy dog eyes, expecting you to stop everything and become their entertainer or better yet, hand them your phone or tablet.

As parents, one of the best things we can give our kids is structure and boundaries to promote a sense of safety and containment in their lives. In the process however, kids have lost the ability to be bored.

Nancy Colier, LCSW, Rev. wrote in Psychology Today, “Being bored has become this frightening and dreaded experience to which we parents must respond immediately. Boredom is not up to a kid to figure out anymore, it’s a parent’s issue and a parent’s problem. Boredom is a state that our children shouldn’t have to endure, and allowing our kids to experience it, not taking it seriously, might even be a sign of parental neglect. As we mistakenly imagine it, boredom is a case of a moment not fully lived, a moment deprived of interest.”

Learning how to independently entertain themselves creates happier, smarter and more self-reliant children. Research has shown that working through boredom teaches kids to open their minds, to think outside the box, and explore the world in different and exciting ways. They also learn the power of imagination, which in turn builds and strengthens neural pathways that correlate with higher intelligence. If those reasons were not enough, boredom can also teach kids who struggle with attention issues how to focus and self-regulate their impulses.

Often, technology (e.g, smartphones, laptops, TVs and tablets) is used as a magic bullet to keep kids entertained when boredom is on the horizon. Research has shown significant consequences when technology is used this way. It has been suggested that we are rewiring children’s brains to need high amounts of immediate stimulus in order to feel a sense of calm. Their brain becomes addicted to this instant gratification and does not develop the ability to regulate one’s emotions and behaviors in the moment. Social skills development is also affected. When they are looking at a screen, they are less aware of the people around them and how to navigate through the social world.

Technology certainly has its place in our world. It should be used as a tool to gain information and even sometimes for entertainment. The answer like many other things we enjoy in life is, moderation. It can even be a great reinforcer when we are teaching children new or shaping skills (potty training, chores, homework, behavior based).

So what can we do?

1. As a family, brainstorm a list of activities they like to do. When they report they are feeling bored, show them the list.

2. Schedule unstructured time into your child’s schedule to create opportunities for them to work through being bored.

3. Encourage unstructured outdoor play.
4. Leave the technology at home to work through boredom while being transported in the car or on the bus. Teach them to look out the window and be comfortable with their own thoughts about what they see, hear, and smell.

5. Talk to your kids and involve them in conversations while riding in the car, sitting at a restaurant or while visiting relatives. It is a valuable experience that gives children appropriate models and practice in the arena of social development. Conversational skills need to be practiced often!!!

6. Let children be responsible for working through boredom on their own.

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News from Kindergarten
Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Boylan
Winter Kindergarten News

Hello from Kindergarten! We are so busy this winter!

Our ELA curriculum is teaching us all about the alphabet, matching letters to their sounds and hearing sounds in words. We are learning high frequency words/sight words, orally forming sentences, and we are even beginning to write sentences now!

Speaking of writing, we are fast becoming storytellers and writers as we learn to tell stories through our drawings and our writing. We are learning all about putting spaces between words and using uppercase letters to begin sentences, with a punctuation mark at the end so that our readers can read our work!

We are diving deeper into our read-aloud stories by comparing stories, noticing special things that authors and illustrators do to make their stories interesting, and learning about different genres of books like fiction, non-fiction, folktales, etc.

We are excited that we received our first report card and have taken part in Benchmark testing to see what reading level we are working at. This assessment will help our teachers to organize appropriate reading instruction and intervention for all of our students.

While students are learning to work independently, teachers are providing reading instruction in ability-matched groups. This is a very exciting time in Kindergarten as children discover the magic of reading!

We are also excited to be receiving the support of our literacy specialists through the LLI program our Kindergarten classrooms to make sure we are all getting a strong foundation for reading.

In Math, we are exploring addition and subtraction, continuing our in-depth work in number sense and operations through our Go Math program. We are following the National Common Core Standards, which allow us to provide a deeper exploration of numbers with our Kindergarteners.

We are very fortunate and quite "tech-savvy" in the use of Chromebooks and Smartboards. Our Kindergarten students are very quick to learn to use these amazing learning tools! Not only do we practice math concepts, and handwriting, we are also able to log into Raz-Kids on our Chromebooks to access leveled reading materials.
We look forward to more learning fun as we enter the second half of our Kindergarten year! It’s hard to believe that we are looking towards becoming first graders in a few short months!

Wishing you a Happy Winter from the Kindergarten Staff and students!

News from First Grade
Ms. Schultz and Ms. Moriarty

Happy New Year! We are off to a great start to 2020.

Each week we work on a phonics/sound focus that will help students decode words they are reading. We spent the first half of the year reading words with short vowels and different consonants at the beginning and ends of words. We are now working on long vowel sounds.

In math, we will learn about counting and modeling numbers. We will work on building tens and ones for two-digit numbers. Also, we will have so much fun exploring the 120 chart (i.e. playing games, finding patterns, etc.).

In writing, we have been writing All About Books, which is non-fiction writing. We are taking the roles as teachers to teach others about our “expert” topics. Please ask your first graders about this type of writing.

In Science, we will be learning about sound and light.

We were awarded a grant to bring a naturalist to our First Grade Classrooms to teach us about habitats and the change of seasons. Ms. Beltran will come to us about ten times from now until May.

Winter is in full swing and our first graders enjoy playing outside for recess. Please send them to school prepared to play outside with their winter jackets, boots, snow pants, hats and gloves/mittens.

News from Second Grade
Mrs. McCaul, Mrs. Dalton and Mrs. Hyjek

With 100 days under our belt, second grade is rolling right along! It was exciting to see the creative 100 Day Projects. Grades K-2 "paraded" throughout the classrooms for everyone to see each others masterpieces displaying many personalities.

In math, students are entering the exciting world of subtracting with double-digits. Common Core requires us to teach various strategies to encourage deeper thinking of math calculations and problem solving. This improves our students abilities to explain their logic and solve problems. It also lays a good foundation for higher level math in future years. Reviewing concepts at home is always encouraged. Watch for math practice sheets reviewing skills taught - Math homework is Tuesday and Thursday night. Please return homework the following day.

In reading and writing, we recently assessed the whole class to monitor progress and will be creating new small groups based on individual reading levels. Currently, we are reading Fables. It is important for children to be practicing their reading skills daily at
home so that they become fluent readers and truly comprehend what they are reading. **Students are expected to read for 20 minutes each school night and record it on the Reading Log provided each Monday. The Reading Logs should have parent/guardian initials and returned to class on Friday.**

This year, second grade is excited to be sharing a grant with the 1st and 3rd grades providing us with a Mass Audubon/Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary school-based program. Ms. Beltran, from Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary in Eastampton, has already made 2 of 4 visits to our classrooms. During the first lesson, students learned about woodchucks and briefly went outdoors to find a shelter for pretend animals to see if they would survive the cold. The students started their Nature Journals and entered data from the Woodchuck Wobbles model demonstrating the woodchuck's needs in order to survive.

In social studies, we are learning about the oceans as we prepare for our second grade assembly. Save the date: Friday February 28th at 2:15 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center as we explore the oceans and their sea creatures!

Thank you for all of your support from home.

*** Save the date for our Second Grade assembly on Friday February 28th in the GPAC at 2:15! ***

News from Third Grade Ms. Fisk and Mrs. Bak

The third grade classes have been very busy this winter. Here are a few updates on what we have been doing, and what's in store for February and March.

We have finished our Winter Benchmark testing. The children were tested in reading and math.

The English/Language Arts and Math MCAS will be in the Spring. Students will be practicing test-taking skills with previous PARCC and MCAS tests in reading, writing, and math. There will also be a homework component to reinforce the skills learned in school.

In Writing Workshop, students just finished creating an informational poster about an animal. We are now practicing responding to single and multiple texts.

In math, it's all about multiplication. Students need to memorize their multiplication facts in order to be successful. Writing out their math facts and reciting them helps. Homemade or store bought flashcards are also effective in helping students memorize their facts. Please encourage your child to continue practicing their multiplication facts as it will be very helpful with multiplication, division, area, and perimeter.

In science class, students have been enjoying learning about animal traits and heredity. We will begin learning about weather in the Spring. In social studies class, students have been learning about the Native Americans and Pilgrims.
Our Plimoth Plantation field trip will happen this spring. Keep an eye out for notices regarding the trip. Please remember anyone who plans to chaperone MUST have a CORI check on file with Gateway Regional and a volunteer handbook filled out for Littleville Elementary. Please plan ahead as it takes time for the CORI requests to process.

A few reminders:

* Cold season is upon us. Please remind your child to keep their hands clean and away from their face. This will help prevent the spread of germs.

* Students have working snack time in the morning. Dry, easily consumable snacks that can be eaten in 5-10 minutes are best.

* We have outside recess everyday as long as the temps are suitable. Please make sure your child comes dressed appropriately to play outside. Also, please be sure to send a change of shoes as the winter boots are too warm to wear all day inside.

* At home if your child has any computer time, please have them practice keyboarding skills.

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News from Fourth Grade
Ms. Bates and Mrs. Hamaoui

Fourth grade students have been working hard and doing a lot of learning! We will continue our hard work as we begin 2020.

In math, we recently wrapped up units on long division and multistep word problems, as well as factors and multiples. Now we are working on learning about fractions. Students should still be studying multiplication facts at home on a nightly basis for 10 minutes. Math is going to get more challenging if students do not have these facts memorized. Math MCAS will be happening in the beginning of May.

Students have also been learning many new concepts in science. We have begun learning about the earth and different processes that shape it. We will be talking about weathering, erosion, and how they help to create specific landforms. During Social Studies we have been “traveling” throughout the Midwest and Southwest Regions.

Students have been improving skills during reading groups and by practicing different comprehension strategies. During writing, students have been developing persuasive essays. Fourth grade will take the ELA MCAS in the beginning of April. Please continue to have your child read for 25 minutes a night and fill out the reading log.

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News from Fifth Grade
Mr. Rotenberg, Mrs. Millin and Ms. Murray

It is hard to believe but our school year is already half way over which means your fifth grade students are already halfway to middle school. We still have a lot to cover in order to get us ready for this big next step. Here’s a little information about what we have been working on in class lately.

Writing: In writing we have been studying grammar, punctuation, dialogue and different types of verbs, specifically helping and linking verbs. We have also been learning how to diagram a sentence and can label the subject, predicate, nouns, verbs, helping or linking
verbs, articles, adverbs, and adjectives. We started our poetry unit last week. The first type of poem we studied was the free verse poem where students were asked to write a poem about their favorite place. Next week we will start studying the diamante poem and eventually study and write our own haiku poems. When we are between our writing units, we have been practicing our open responses in preparation for our ELA MCAS in April.

Reading: In our reading classes we are currently reading poetry and working on identifying and analyzing figurative language as well as the mood and themes the author uses to convey their messages. We are also taking time to study various Greek and Latin roots in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of the structure of multisyllabic words.

Social Studies: In Social Studies we have been learning about the colonies that the Europeans made in the New World as well as the reasons for doing so. We are starting to focus in on English colonies, their growth and conflicts leading to the American Revolution. At this point in the year Social Studies will focus on the growth of what will become the United States. During these studies we will be practicing the skills of using details to make a point, how to use information to support a specific argument, and how to defend a position.

Science: We are finishing up a large unit of the Earth’s systems with a focus on the atmosphere, geosphere, and hydrosphere. We have already studied the biosphere (all life on Earth) and the hydrosphere (all the water on Earth) and we will continue to study ways in which all these systems interact. The students particularly enjoyed learning about the horrible effects on the human body when it is exposed to high altitudes. We learned about this in the context of people climbing Mt. Everest. The students create informational posters warning potential climbers about the dangers they will face on their journey.

Math: The fifth grade is just finishing up our study of decimals. The next few chapters of math will focus on operations involving fractions. This will be a particularly busy time as we will be moving quickly to cover other topics such as graphing, data analysis, and measurement skills that are useful in the real world.

Not all skills that students need to acquire to be successful this year are academic. Students need to learn the important life skills of respect, responsibility and integrity. They need to take extra initiative to finish their work on time and what they are not able to complete in class they will have to take home to finish in order to meet deadlines. All of these are important life skills as well as skills that will help them in Middle and High School.

**Important Dates**
- April 8-9 ELA MCAS
- May 5-6 Math MCAS
- May 12-13 Science MCAS

**EARLY RELEASE IS MARCH 10**
**DISMISAL TIME IS AT 1:20 FOR GRADERS K-5**