

Special Interest Articles

What's the Buzz?

Grade Level News

PTA Information

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, February 1st-
Jungle Book (PTA Cultural
Arts event) at 9:30 a.m. in
the gym

Thursday, February 2nd - SIT
Meeting at 7:30 a.m. in the
library

Friday, February 3rd-
PATRIOTS DAY (no donation
to wear your N.E. pride)!

Thursday, February 9th- PBIS
Meeting at 7:30 a.m. in the
library

Thursday, February 9th- PTA
Meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the
library

Friday, February 10th- Dr.
Gordon dental visit

Tuesday, February 14th-
Valentine's Day

Friday, February 17th-
Pajama Day for \$1.00. All
proceeds go to the
American Heart Association

Monday, February 20th-
Friday, February 24th-
February Break: NO SCHOOL

The Principal's Buzz

February is an important time for us as we anxiously await the results of the fall NECAP testing to be released to the public.

As a school leader, I have two main goals: 1. That students are safe and comfortable and 2. That students are engaged in the most rigorous curriculum so that they can succeed.

I am pleased to announce that each year, we continue to get better and better when being assessed by state and national standards.

Historically, Blackrock students

outperform the district and the state in many categories. I look forward to sending this year's results out via the list serv and posting them on our website. Additionally, I will present these and other assessment results at the March PTA Meeting (3/8/12 at 7:00 p.m.).

We are so proud of our students' accomplishments and look towards continuous improvement!

Following vacation, you will receive your child's

individual NECAP results (grades 3-5). Please take some time to analyze these results, as they are key in determining how well students are meeting grade level expectations.

Also, please answer the West-Ed family survey. Your input is important to us. The online survey is open until February 16th. Thank you!

Have a great month!

Mrs. Alicia Reniere-Castle ☺
Principal



A word from the Nurse's Hive

Greetings from the health office!

February is Dental Health Month. Our school dentist will be here Friday, February 10th to screen those children whom have not returned a yellow dental card.

We've been very fortunate with our weather this year; the real nasty viruses and germs have for the most part left us alone! We have had only a few cases of strep throat, conjunctivitis (pinkeye), and the stomach flu. I am seeing more stuffy noses and coughs now.

Please remember if your child does test positive for strep throat, he/she must be home at least 24 hours after the antibiotic has started. Also, if your child has the stomach virus, the same 24 hour rule stands.

Have a great day and look forward to February vacation!

Mrs. Denise Hennessy,
School/Nurse Teacher

**Start saving your
PENNIES!**

**MARCH is PENNIES
FOR**

PATIENTS MONTH!



"Some favorite expressions of small children: "It's not my fault. . . They made me do it. . . I forgot." Some favorite expressions of adults: "It's not my job. . . No one told me. . . It couldn't be helped." True freedom begins and ends with personal accountability."

- Dan Zadra

Kindergarten

Kindergarten is on a roll. In reading we have finished all of our capital letters and have moved on to the next step which is tapping out words. Guided reading groups are beginning too. Keep practicing those sight words. We have started journal writing, beginning with writing a complete sentence working our way up to two complete sentences by the end of the year. Math has us continuing

problem solvers, working on the teen numbers (boy are they tricky) and simple addition and subtraction up to ten.

In science our focus has been on the weather and seasonal changes. We incorporate our discoveries in our morning message, daily graph, stories and shared writing activities.

Winter coats are sometimes very hard to zipper. The students try

very hard to do them independently and are having great success; we can tell they have been practicing at home keep up the good work.

Mrs. Linda Cersosimo & Mrs. Jan Talbot

Grade 1

First grade is at the half way point of the year. Our 100th day of school will be on Friday, February 10th if there are no more snow days. We will be doing different activities to acknowledge the day.

At this time of the year students should be very competent in using reading strategies to decode words and provide meaning. When your child reads to you at home ask him/her to retell the story in the order of which it happened. They should also be able to tell you the main characters as well as the setting of the story.

Children should be secure in number counting,

patterning, measurement, telling time to the hour and half hour, and counting like coins (pennies, nickels, and dimes). At this time students are developing number models to represent word problems. We are also learning about shapes and measurement.

At this time of the year writing is done more frequently. Students are expected to use their spelling strategies from our Foundations program and to link their ideas and thoughts more fluidly. Their sentences should begin with an upper case letter and end with an ending mark.

Reading groups will be altered over the next few weeks as we assess the students in reading using the DRA (Diagnostic Reading Assessment), as required by the district. New groups will be made according to the results of the testing. As always we thank you for your continued support in our partnership in your child's education.

Finally, we ask that all children come to school each day dressed to participate in outdoor recess. Please be sure that appropriate coats, hats, and gloves are worn. Children will not be allowed outdoors without them.
Mr. Jeff Stevens, Mrs. Mary Leyden, & Mrs. Paula Jacquard

Pre-School

Happy February! Winter has finally arrived. The children have been quite excited to see the snow.

During the month of February we will continue with our winter theme in rooms 29 and 30. We will be getting excited for Valentine's Day and creating some projects with

hearts. February is also Dental Health month. We will be talking about how important it is to keep our teeth healthy and clean. Our letters for the month will be V, M, O, and Q. Please practice letter writing at home.

A few reminders for the month of February. We have break week from Feb.

18-Feb 27.

Please have your children's jackets, hats, and mittens labeled. This makes things easier for us in case things get misplaced in cubbies. Thank you for your cooperation.

Mrs. Jen Cohn & Ms. Tara Renfrew (soon to be Mrs. M.)

Grade 2

Happy 2012! Hopefully your holiday season was a relaxing, pleasant time spent with family.

We are now at the halfway point of second grade. As we head into the second half of the year, we begin to look for some changes in the students. These include their ability to work more independently, to have better fine motor control as demonstrated in handwriting and drawing, to be organized and neat with their written work and materials, and to be responsible, ready, and participating students in classroom discussions and lessons. As we look for these learner qualities to be progressing, so should you as you review homework and schoolwork that comes home each day.

We continue to work hard to meet the rigorous expectations of our 2nd grade curriculum in basic skills such as reading, math, and written language. Our new science kit (Sand, Pebbles, and Silt) has arrived. Also, social studies stories, lessons, and discussions will focus on topics such as Martin Luther King, Presidents George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, along with other important events in our country's history. The children seem to enjoy learning about these topics especially as we relate them to their own lives.

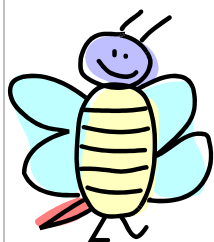
Continue to read each night with your children and, just as importantly, discuss what they are reading to help support comprehension. Reinforce math skills such as coins, telling time on an analog clock, and math facts on a regular basis. Your support is both appreciated and necessary to your children's success. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact us.

Mrs. Jill Pare, Mrs. Valerie Bishop, & Mrs. Lori Romano

Grade 4

The 2nd trimester Book Jack Report was assigned to all fourth grade students earlier in January. The students will be working on the genre of historical fiction. A very detailed information packet regarding the project was handed out to students. Many models of the project were also shown, so there should be no question regarding the expectations of this project. Books have already been chosen and students should be doing daily reading of their books. Students will need to be working on this project consistently until the due date of Tuesday, March 6, 2012.

Our new science kit, Electric Circuits, has been delivered and will be rolled out shortly. 'Bee' listening for your child to be talking about new information gained from



Children in third grade have been busy bees! At this point in the school year, they know their classroom routines and what is expected of them. They are taking on more responsibility for their learning, including self-monitoring their progress towards personal goals.

In English language arts, children are learning about the "Word Choice" trait. While third graders expand their vocabulary, they are learning how to use precise, rich language to effectively convey their message to the reader. The words children choose to use in their writing are important. Students strive to select words that are powerful and accurate. Use colorful language at home too, as children say what they hear.

Children are working hard on their trimester two book projects. We are looking forward to learning about many important peace makers, presidents, inventors, athletes, pioneers and artists. Encourage your child's creativity, especially with the costume or puppet!

While math facts should be studied daily at home, now is a great time to incorporate variety into your nightly homework routine. For instance, if you normally practice facts with flash cards, perhaps playing a game on a math website would be a welcome change of pace. Your child should be studying facts that are just right for him; if you're unsure about which facts to practice, just ask the teacher. Multi-digit addition and subtraction with and without re-grouping are skills that all third graders are striving to master. Also, telling time on an analog clock to the nearest five minute interval is a real life skill that can be practiced at home.

This is a fun time in science! While students are wrapping up their studies on simple machines, they are diving into the water unit. Children will observe and explore the properties of water in liquid, solid and gaseous states, consider components of the water cycle and investigate how water can be used to do work, among other topics. This unit will surely make a splash!

Though short, February is a productive month. It is an appropriate time to revisit the learner qualities. At school, your child is supported and encouraged to be a self-directed learner. Praise your child for producing quality work and every so often, ask your child, "What are you wondering about at school?" The answer may be a springboard that opens up a meaningful dialogue about what your child is learning at school.

Mrs. Kerry Bruno, Mrs. Diana Lachance, & Mrs. Heather Matarese

this exciting, hands-on science kit! Bee safe!!!

Some students may be tested this month using the DRA2 (Developmental Reading Assessment). As you may recall, this test determines your child's independent reading level at mid-year. Encourage your child to do their best work.

Because we are at the middle of the school year, please check in with your child if any school supplies need to be replenished. Folders are torn and pencils are few. Some binders need to be **repaired** or **replaced** and even require some **reorganizing** at home. Bee ready!!!

Homework enhances lessons taught throughout the school day. It is an essential component of student success. Fourth grade district guidelines require up to 45 minutes of homework. Please be sure to check your child's agenda **each night** for any homework that is due. It is imperative that the homework be completed and returned the next day. Many students are starting to fall behind in this area, and **parent help is needed, essential, and appreciated** to help your child succeed. Bee responsible!!!

Mrs. Anne Barter, Mr. Ray Raboin, & Mrs. Christyna Bousquet

Grade 5

February will be a busy month for some of the fifth graders being tested in Reading using DRA's. All of the children should be reading to achieve their goal of 16 Book Blurbs for the end of the trimester on March 13th.

Please let your child's fifth grade teacher know, in writing, prior to February vacation, if you are interested in chaperoning a field trip to Mystic Seaport and the Safety Patrol trip in June. Just a reminder that you will have to have a completed BCI check in order to chaperone these trips. As of this date, we have not heard from any parents that they would be interested in chaperoning nor any completed background checks. We will only need a couple of chaperones and when you let us know the above information has been completed, we will give you the details about the trip date and cost.

The fifth grade will be completing the Science unit titled Biomes in four weeks. In this Unit we will discuss the Echinoderms, Crustaceans, Mollusks

and Fish. The children will enjoy observing the living organisms found in the Narragansett Bay. In Writing and Social Studies, the students will be doing research about Explorers. They will use their research to teach their classmates about the important aspects of their Explorer

Thank you – Ms. Michaela Wells, Mrs. Linda Cohen, & Mrs. Jayne Bailey



The Reading Nook

Happy Winter, Blackrock Readers! We hope everyone was able to enjoy some great reading over school vacation. In honor of Valentine's Day, check out this website that has list of children's books for Valentine's Day (<http://www.apples4theteacher.com/holidays/valentines-day/kids-books>)

We welcome Mrs. Abraham to the Reading Room. Mrs. Abraham is here subbing for Mrs. Sansone. She is a retired Coventry Reading specialist who brings us vast experience and is already very familiar with our students and routine.

All students, K-5, will be screened in reading as part of our SWAT assessments that occur three times per year. Students are screened on word identification skills, oral reading fluency, and comprehension. Younger students will be screened on grade level

curriculum words and their ability to name letters and their corresponding sounds. This information will help us determine which students need extra support in any area. Contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Please continue to support your child's reading development by encouraging their attempts and setting time aside for reading and/or practicing word lists. Repetition and review are crucial and will benefit your child. Don't forget that the Coventry Public Library has wonderful children's programs and fantastic books. If your child can write his/her name on the card, they can have their own card. Check out their website for more information (<http://www.coventrylibrary.org/>) Bee- A-Reader!

Mrs. Pires, Mrs. Sansone, and Mrs. Abraham
Reading Specialists

PTA News

The boys had a great night out at Town Lanes Saturday night. Thank you to MaryEllen Morelli and Nurya Amaral for organizing such a great event.

Let's also thank Michelle Gauvin our cultural arts coordinator bringing back the Navy Band for another terrific show, they "party

rocked" the house. We look forward to Shakesperience on Feb 1st with their presentation of "The Jungle Book".

Don't forget to keep sending in your Campbell's soup labels and box tops. We are having a record year in box tops collections thanks to box top coordinator Keith Wilson. Stay tuned for a new classroom

incentive.

Remember it is never too late to join PTA. We still have many events to plan for the remainder of the school year and will have two offices up for election in April, Vice-President and Treasurer.

The next meeting will be held

on Thursday, February 9th at 7:00 p.m. in the school library

Jill Alberigo
President, Blackrock PTA

The Arts (Art and Music News)

ART

The art room is a buzz with so much creating! Students in all grades have been working on their Original Works Art projects with much success! Packets will be sent home in the beginning of March for families to take a look at the artwork of your aspiring artist to see if you would like to order a product with your student's artwork on it- i.e. coffee mugs, pillow cases, etc. There is no pressure to buy, as we understand the economy is a bit tricky of late. This is an annual fund raiser for Black Rock school/PTA.

Students have also been working on their art content curriculum...

Grade 5 - pen and ink/calligraphy unit integrated with the Science Biomes unit.

Grade 4- Line study abstract art
Grade 3- One point perspective drawing
Grade 2 - The abstract work of Henri Matisse
Grade 1 - painting with warm and cool colors and color mixing

It is a joy to work with your children! As the year has progressed, so has their art work and behavior in art class. When the rules of our Bee Bucks are followed "Safe, Ready, Responsible, Respectful", the art room can run smoothly and beautifully!

Mrs. Michaele Gauthier & Mrs. Sarah Hemindinger, Art

MUSIC

The month of February is all about preparing for the

chorus's annual outing at the Dunkin Donuts Center to perform prior to a Providence Bruins game. The game itself does not take place until March, but ticket information will need to go home and be returned likely all before February vacation. The one thing you need to know here is that even if per chance you miss our deadline for ordering tickets, you and your chorus performer or performers can still participate. It simply means that you'll order your tickets at our price and be seated in our section, you'll just do all of it through the Bruins and not through us here in Chorus Land.

Mr. Nick Zammerell, Ms. Maria Dinitto, & Mr. Norm Rosenfield, Music



Do you have a question for our Reading Specialists that could also be used in the Reading Nook section of the monthly newsletter? If so, please email it to:

castlealicia@coventryschools.net

Physical Education and Library/Media

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

P.E. class News! This past month your child took part in Dance, Dance, Revolution which is an exercise video game. Now, I do not advocate playing video games however I am trying to show your children that when they are not able to go outside and exercise there are other fun ways to move their bodies while they are inside the house. While they (Grades 3-5) were participating in this activity they were also wearing a new piece of equipment that we just purchased for the PE Department, Pedometers. The pedometers showed them that while they were doing DDR they were accumulating steps which in turned they learned how the more steps they did the more exercise they got.

In the month of February every class will be participating in Jump Rope for Heart. This is an event where we as a school try to raise money for the American Heart Association to help fight Heart Disease. You will be receiving paperwork on this in the coming weeks. Any questions please just contact me at school anytime.

Mr. Derek Hitte & Mrs. Shirley Hall
P.E. Teachers

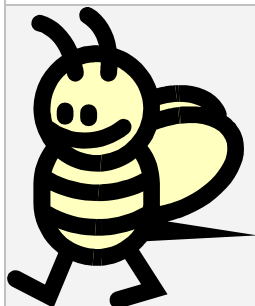
LIBRARY/MEDIA

The fifth and fourth graders have started to use an online classroom system, called Edu 2.0, for several assignments. This is a great tool that not only allows students the opportunity to learn appropriate communication with their peers, but also gives them experience participating in

online discussions, creating blogs, and much more. Edu 2.0 is a safe and closed environment that only students can access by password and is closely teacher monitored. Despite the many features and the fact they've just begun, students are doing a remarkable job utilizing this resource.

Third graders are also working on technology skills with the focus of accessing information. They've used the online library catalog extensively and are now in the midst of utilizing both print and non-print versions of the dictionary. After concluding our biography unit, second graders are working on "Who Am I?" along with word processing skills. Additionally, first graders have recently finished a Fairy Tales unit and are doing a great job learning about the differences between fact, fiction, and opinion.

Ms. Bethany Davies & Ms. Rita Anderson
Library Media Specialists



"It is not only what we do, but also what we do not do, for which we are accountable."

-Moliere

ULSS (Unified Learning & Support Services)

Reading + Math = success!! What do the ABC's have to do with the 1-2-3's? Plenty! These ideas can help your child do well in math **and** reading.

Number words- Suggest that your child make a poster showing the numbers 1-20. Next to each number, help him write out the word (*one, two*) and add an illustration (*one star, two hearts*). Let him hang the poster over his desk or on the fridge to practice.

Math books- You can find picture books about almost any math topic, from addition and subtraction to patterns and money. Read one to your child and try some of the math. For example, read Pattern Fish (*Trudy Harris*) and then look for patterns around the house. Or try Once upon a

Dime: a Math Adventure (*Nancy Kelly Allen*) and let her sort coins.

Story problems- Your youngster needs good comprehension when he reads problems such as "*Mary has 4 cookies. Tom has 3 cookies. How many cookies do they have altogether?*" He should go back and underline words that tell how to solve it. For example, "How many altogether?" means to add, while "How many are left?" means to subtract.

Mrs. Carrie Baris, Mrs. Cara Capalbo, Mrs. Sharon Eagleson, & Mr. Jason Parker
Unified Learning

MATH CORNER

Practicing math facts is a necessary, but boring drill. It especially becomes monotonous when you do it for a long period of time. When you are working with your child on math facts try to break it up into five minute intervals for two periods on the day you practice with your child. A good way to begin fact drills is start with adding zero to each number. Then move onto adding one to each number, then two and so on. When your child has a fact that he/she has trouble with remove it from the pile and put it somewhere in your house where it is visible at many times during the day. Tell your child that every time the fact is seen to say it three times repeatedly. This will help him/her to retain the fact. After a while of practice with your child you will see the growth and the retention of facts. At that time you can begin to remove the facts that your child can easily recall. Keep it simple and have fun watching your watching your child learn his/her facts.

Mrs. Mary Vandervelde, Math Specialist



PBIS News

This month our focus will be on "Bee Responsible". What does responsible mean? A responsible student attends school and is on time. They are able to share important information with their parents and teachers. They are also able to ask an adult for help when doing homework. Remember our "Bee-Bucks" can be used while your child is doing their homework, or helping you around the house. Thank you for your

continued support!

The PBIS Team

Expectations:	Home-School Connections
Bee Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend school every day on time Follow directions Ask for help Share important school or home information