

January 13, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Happy New Year! We hope everyone had a great vacation and holiday. We are all back refreshed and ready to learn and accept all new opportunities. We look forward to seeing parents and guardians this Tuesday for PTO's presentation of Puzzle Pieces.

Grades K-5 are all busy. Students in grades 2-5 are taking their second session of the MAP Assessment. Grades K-2 will complete their second session of DIBELS by Thursday of this week. On Monday, Ms. Corcoran and other staff members will start our ACCESS testing for all EL students. I'd like to thank the teachers at Merrymount for all their hard work setting up sessions, managing the Chromebooks and carts and especially for making students feel our assessment window.

Mr. Rogan kicked off the fifth grade Fantasy Reading League and it has been a hit! Each team is so competitive and looking to win the ultimate title. Thank you to parents for supporting this interactive and positive league. It has been so fulfilling to see students meet and discuss the books they are reading. Student conversations have included the purpose of the book, the author and the awards they have received and of course their reflection and opinion of the story. Thank you to Mr. Rogan for his creativity, thoughtfulness and time he has put into designing and running this league. Also, thank you to all the coaches (staff members) who volunteered to have a team:

Mrs. Ehrlich, Ms. Orsino, Ms. Jones, Mrs. Colleran, Ms. Forrester, Ms. Kirby, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Lanham, Mrs. Ciardi, Mrs. McLaughlin, Mrs. Guerriero, Ms. Mulcahy, Ms. Mitchell and Mrs. Campbell

As a reminder, I ask that if you are bringing an animal to drop off or pick up, please keep your animal on the perimeter of the building and out of the way of students. I ask this solely for student safety as there are students who are afraid of certain animals and some students have allergies.

Thanks,

Ms. Courtney A. Mitchell

Principal

EXCITING NEWS FROM OUR CLASSROOMS:

KINDERGARTEN:

We hope that you had a relaxing and memorable holiday vacation! December was such a fast and exciting month in our kindergarten classrooms. We talked a lot about giving and doing kind things for others. We discussed family traditions and shared different ways that families celebrate occasions. It was a lot of fun to learn about different cultures and family traditions. We ended the month with Polar Express Day and enjoyed relaxing in our pajamas while watching the movie.

January is another very busy month. Throughout the month in literacy, science and social studies we will be focusing on Weather/Seasons, How Things Move, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Chinese New Year. In writing the students are really trying hard to remember capitalizing the first word in a sentence, ending a sentence with a period, and remembering to use spaces between words. Teaching them to learn to read and write is such a joy for us as we measure their growth over these next months of school.

Our next DIBELS assessment is currently taking place. Students will be assessed in Letter Naming, First Sound Fluency: identifying the first sound in a word. Phoneme Segmentation: separating sounds in words we hear by tapping out each sound. Nonsense Words: decoding 3 letter made up words- EX: vut.

Thank you for the work you are doing with the sight words at home to help your children develop a strong sight word vocabulary.

FIRST GRADE:

Happy New Year to all Merrymount School families! We are excited to begin a new year and we are running full steam ahead. It was great meeting with parents and guardians for December conferences to discuss your child's progress. The communication between teachers and parents is important for your child's success and it is great when we work together. We strongly encourage reading at home with or to your child each night. The first graders have had a lot of practice with addition and subtraction strategies and next we will study the relationship between both addition and subtraction. We have begun multiple science topics and will continue to explore more such as life science and animal habitats. We also will be studying Asian Heritage through literature and ways Chinese New Year is celebrated. In January Merrymount is focusing on Fairness. In first grade we are beginning to understand that fair does not always mean equal. The students are learning to see situations clearly and understanding that one child may need something different from another in order to succeed. Thank you all for your ongoing support!

SECOND GRADE:

Happy New Year! Welcome 2020! During this month, second graders will be learning about animal habitats and how animals adapt to their surroundings. We will also discuss how animals migrate, hibernate, and adapt to their surroundings during the cold winter months. In Math, we are learning subtraction with regrouping. Please have your child practice basic subtraction facts at home. Our special homework assignment is a book report in which your child will identify the main events of a chapter book by completing a Story Map book report page. Your child can choose any chapter book that is appropriate for their reading level. Please refer to the second grade January newsletter for some suggested books and the book report form.

THIRD GRADE:

It's an exciting time in 3rd grade! Students are busy learning about their Hero in History. Boys and girls love sharing facts they are learning about their hero. Just a reminder, except for reading and costumes, this is an in-school project. Students have been asked to read about their Hero at home for reading log. If they have finished their book they could reread or take notes and this will count towards reading log. It's also important for students to try to find a costume (this does not need to be store bought) to portray their character. Please ask your third grade teacher if you have any questions.

In math we continue to learn multiplication and are beginning division. Students will continue learn a new multiplication as well as a division fact weekly. Third grade scientists are experimenting with force and motion. In ELA students are comparing texts. They are currently comparing two different nonfiction narrative texts, Balto and Rags. Both dogs are famous. Ask your third grader how they are alike and different.

The schoolwide Typing Agent competition ends on January 24. Let's keep typing third graders!

FOURTH GRADE:

The students are so excited! They received their states for the State Fair! Ms. Kirby will be sending home information regarding the project this month. Also, winter MAP testing will occur in January. They will be tested in ELA (1/10), science (1/15), and math (1/17). In ELA, students will wrap up Because of Winn-Dixie and will begin our unit on narrative writing. The focus in math this month is algebraic reasoning. Students will be investigating prime and composite numbers, order of operations, and patterns in mathematics. In science, students will be doing a unit on Earth science. We wrapped up the unit on the Northeast in social studies and will begin learning about the Southeast.

FIFTH GRADE:

2020 is here, and as usual, we are keeping busy. This month in science, the fifth graders will begin working on a month-long project studying the phases of the moon. In ELA, the kids are working hard to read and complete various reading challenges, hoping to become the 2020 Fantasy Reading League champions. Thank you to the 14 amazing coaches who are helping to make it all possible. In math, the fifth graders will be exploring mathematical concepts through hands-on activities and centers. Winter MAP testing will give us some valuable information as a mid-year check-in on our progress in reading, mathematics, and science. With middle school closer than ever, we're continuing to emphasize the importance of self-advocacy, meeting responsibilities, organization, and time management.

ENGLISH LEARNERS: (Ms. Corcoran)

This month our ELs will be taking the annual ACCESS for ELLs assessment, (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners). We have been actively preparing for this test since the beginning of the year. ACCESS measures our students' proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking in English while also showing the progress they are making in learning English. All grades, with the exception of Kindergarten, will be taking ACCESS online this year as opposed to paper as we've done in previous years. I'm excited to see the progress all of our hardworking ELs have made this year!

LITERACY: (Mrs. Higgins and Mrs. McLaughlin)

Happy New Year! With the New Year brings our next round of benchmark assessments. MAP testing for Grades 2-5 and DIBELS Next for Grades K-2. We are eager to see how much growth our students have made since September! Our literacy groups continue to work diligently. All groups are continuing to practice their phonemic awareness and phonics skills. Grade 2 has practiced closed syllables and working on identifying the VCCV pattern (in words, such as, *goblin* or *tablet*). Grade 3 has been building fluency in *Read Naturally* by reading informational text passages (such as *Walt Disney* or *How to Make Lemonade*). The winter is a great time to grab a blanket, hot cocoa and a good book - so cozy up with your kids and dig into some stories! Happy reading!

Nurse's Update (Mrs. Ehrlich)

'Tis the season for the flu and colds! Remember, if your child has a fever or is vomiting, they must remain out of school symptom free (without medication) for 24 hours before they can return to school. If they have been diagnosed with an illness that requires antibiotics, they must be on the medication for 24 hours before they are able to return to school. If you are unsure if your child can come to school, please call or email me and I will get back to you as soon as

possible. Hand washing is the best way to prevent illness. Preventing illness helps keep students in school and learning.

The Big Smiles Mobile Dentist is coming to our school on February 6th and 7th. Any child who does not regularly see a dentist or who has not seen the dentist in the past six months is eligible for an appointment. The dentist will do a cleaning as well as fluoride, x-rays, extractions, fillings and any other as needed procedure. The forms have been sent home with your student. Please be sure to complete these as accurately as possible and return them to me as soon as you can. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out. You can also visit the website at www.bigsmiles.org.

We completed 100% of our health screenings in November. If your child received a referral (hearing, vision, postural), please have your doctor complete this and get it back to me as soon as possible. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out!

Please be sure to update your students health information with me if anything changes. It is also important to make sure Mrs. Mazzini has your email address. Often times, important updates go home through email and it is important that we have yours so you receive the information in a timely manner.

If we haven't met yet, please feel free to email or call at anytime with any questions. My office is on the first floor next to the main office. If you ever have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out at (617) 984-8925 or mollieehrlich@quincypublicschools.com Be sure to check out my Aspen page for updates as well!

Attendance

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act requires districts and states to collect chronic absence data and report it publicly. Massachusetts has adopted chronic absence as a measure for school accountability. Like every school in Massachusetts, Merrymount school has been designated a target percentage for growth.

With this data in hand, schools, families and community partners can together determine the causes of chronic absence, and implement approaches that address barriers to getting to school. The challenge of improving attendance is to avoid making the incorrect assumption that chronically absent students or their parents simply do not care. By working together, all of us – schools, public officials, public agencies, families and students – can ensure all children can get to school every day so they have an opportunity to learn, flourish and realize their dreams.

I will be communicating with families in order to strategize so that attendance rates improve here at Merrymount. I am hoping to begin a dialogue with families about the barriers to daily attendance. Thank you for your continued support.

Outdoor Classroom

The Merrymount Outdoor Classroom Project has been put out to bid again. The announcement was in this week's Quincy Sun.

We are asking and encouraging anyone with connections to landscape construction companies to let them know about the project.

Below you will find the link to the City of Quincy Purchasing website for additional details- Please scroll down and we are the first bid - Merrymount Outdoor Classroom
https://www.quincyma.gov/govt/depts/purchasing/current_bids.htm

Thank you for any help and we have our fingers crossed that we will have this project under way soon!! As always feel free to reach out with any questions at mmoutdoorclassroom@gmail.com

School Council

All parents and guardians are invited to join the next School Council meeting on Wednesday, January 22, at 3:15pm in the school's Media Center.

Also, please consider volunteering for one of the school council's new subcommittees, which aim to help the school on communicating with parents, on supporting diversity and inclusion, and on events for families to learn about what's happening in our school! If interested reach out directly to committee chairs listed below:

Communication: Christian LoBue (cwlobue@gmail.com)

Diversity: Shivpreet Singh (tolusingh@yahoo.com)

Events: Tim Glynn-Burke (timglynnburke@gmail.com) and Jen Dawe (jendawe@comcast.net)

Lastly, stay tuned for more information on the next Parent Night, which will focus on math! If you haven't yet please take 5 minutes to fill out this quick survey at <https://forms.gle/3aszuB38YgHPaEKx6> and offer your feedback on October's Parent Night, which focused on learning technologies. We want to hear your ideas on how we can keep improving our communication with parents and families!

A Message from PTO:



JOIN US TUESDAY, JANUARY 14th at 7:00pm

Media Center

A special guest from Puzzle Pieces, LLC in Quincy will be speaking about common mental health issues that children deal with in elementary school and how parents can help them navigate through. Supervision will be provided for children (in the Gym).

UPCOMING EVENTS:

January 28- Family Skate (Quincy Youth Arena) 1:00-2:30 PM

February 20- UNO's Dough Raiser (Braintree UNO's) Lunch and Dinner

Get Involved. Get Excited.



"At the end of the day, the most overwhelming key to a child's success is the positive involvement of parents."

Merrymount School January 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 New Year's Day NO SCHOOL	2 All Quincy Public Schools Re-Open	3	4
5	6 Map / Dibels Testing Grades 2-5	7 Scholastic Book Fair Map / Dibels Testing Grades 2-5	8 Scholastic Book Fair	9 Scholastic Book Fair	10	11
12	13	14 PTO Meeting 7:00-8:00 p.m. Media Center	15	16	17	18
19	20 Martin Luther King Day NO SCHOOL	21	22 School Council Meeting 3:15 p.m.	23	24	25
26	27	28 PTO Family Skate	29	30	31 PBIS Assembly	

When forecasters predict inclement weather, check your local TV stations 4-5-7-22 for school closings or delayed openings.



MERRYMOUNT FAMILY SKATE DAY

JANUARY 28 FROM 1:00-2:30PM

QUINCY YOUTH ARENA

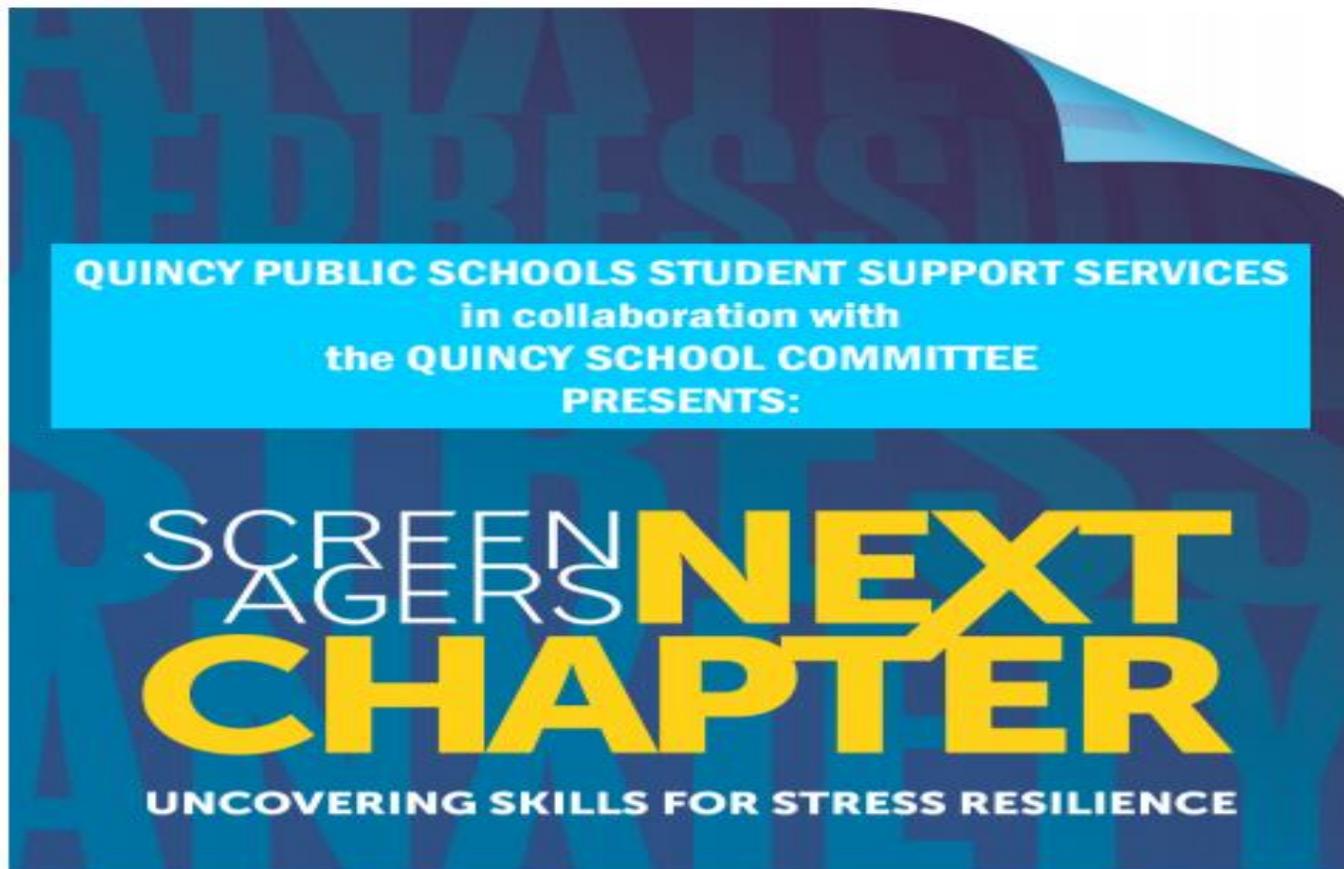
60 MURPHY MEMORIAL DRIVE, QUINCY

- ❖ **FREE EVENT!**
- ❖ **No rentals available**
- ❖ **All kids must wear a helmet**
(bike or hockey acceptable.)
- ❖ **Kids must be accompanied by an adult**
- ❖ **A signed waiver will be required**

SEE YOU ON THE ICE!



The following presentation will be held at Central Middle School. Although we do not recommend students in grades four and five to view the presentation, we encourage parents of fourth and fifth graders to attend.



- * Thursday, January 23, 2020 at 6:00-7:30 pm
- * Central Middle School, 875 Hancock Street
- * Sponsored by Mayor Koch's Health & Wellness Fund

screenagersmovie.com