

# Quabbin Regional Middle School Newsletter

October-November-December 2009

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## FROM ADMINISTRATION:

Mrs. Susanne R. Musnicki, Principal and Mr. Todd D. Stewart, Assistant Principal

Middle School fundraising has started. In the eighth grade, the Great American sale took place during September. Hebert candy sales will begin later in October. Half of the total of each student's sales will be deducted directly from his/her Washington, D.C. field trip. Seventh graders will be participating in a group fundraiser this October. Just in time for Thanksgiving! They will be selling frozen "Butter Braids" and "Break and Bake" frozen cookie dough. The sale will run from October 13th through the 27th. Both products are \$11.00 each. Products will be delivered on Nov. 12th. Students who sell large orders will need to be picked up from school that day at 2:00pm. Money raised will help lower the cost of seventh grade field trips. Thank you for your support of our fundraisers!

Please put the following MCAS spring test dates on your calendar:

<u>MCAS Dates 2010</u>		
Gr. 7	ELA Long Comp	March 23
Gr. 7 & 8	ELA	March 24, 25
Gr. 7 & 8	Math	May 12, 13
Gr. 8	Science	May 18, 19

## FROM THE GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT:

We are excited about the opportunity to work with you and your children this school year. Our goal is for everyone to have a successful and productive year. The counselors for the middle school are: Mrs. Chris Daviau for grade 7 students and Mrs. Barbara Page for grade 8 students. Please feel free to contact us at 978 355-5042 if you have concerns, questions and/or you want to share information regarding your child. Remember to check the middle school guidance link on the school's website ([www.qrsd.org](http://www.qrsd.org)) for updated information.

Although your child has moved on to middle school and is gaining independence, it is still important for you to be involved. Please ask to see your child's agenda book and his/her assignments on a regular basis. It may also be necessary for you to help your child with organizational and time-management skills. There are many books, notes, papers and assignments to keep track of and middle school students are notorious for losing things. Encourage your child to ask for help and/or clarification if he/she is unclear about class expectations or assignments. Helping students to build strong study skills and gain positive life-long habits is an important goal of middle school.

Mrs. Page has been in classrooms with 8<sup>th</sup> grade students recently to discuss the option of attending a

vocational/technical high school vs. staying here at Quabbin. This discussion takes place early in the school year in preparation for Monty Tech's Tour Day, which will be held on October 19th. The tour day for Pathfinder will probably take place in early December. Information about the voc/tech schools in our area and their tour days will be disseminated to interested students when it becomes available. If your child has any interest in a voc/tech school, encourage him/her to participate in these free field trips and explore the opportunity. Please be aware that voc/tech schools have become quite competitive over the past few years. Students interested in attending should plan ahead to demonstrate solid academic effort, based on good grades, attendance, discipline record, and teachers' recommendations. (Showing improvement from grade 7 to grade 8 helps!)

The towns of Barre and Hubbardston are currently member towns of the Monty Tech school district. Hardwick and New Braintree have joined the Pathfinder district. Although Oakham does not belong to any school district, Pathfinder has traditionally been willing to accept some of these students after their member town quotas have been satisfied. Although Oakham students can still apply to Monty Tech, they have not been accepting students from nonmember towns in recent years.

Mrs. Daviau visited seventh grade classrooms recently to introduce the Middle School Guidance program and to discuss

strategies for having a successful middle school experience. She will be meeting with all 7<sup>th</sup> grade students individually over the next several months.

First quarter progress reports will be distributed on October 5. The first marking period ends on November 6 and report cards will be sent home with your child approximately 10 days later. Second quarter progress reports will be distributed on December 10. Please be aware of athletic eligibility requirements. Students must earn a passing grade in every class in order to be eligible to play sports the following quarter.

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#### **FROM THE NURSE....**

We will be performing scoliosis screening on middle school students during physical education classes in late fall or early winter. If you do not want your child screened please advise our office immediately in writing.

This is a quick, simple, non invasive, visual exam of your child for any curvatures or asymmetry of their spine, shoulders or hips; as well as checking for any abnormal moles or skin lesions. All of which could cause difficulties later in life.

We will notify you in writing of any abnormal findings.

#### **GRADE 7 ENGLISH**

*Ms. DiMartino, Mrs. Inman and Mrs. Petty's Grade 7 English Classes*

We are delighted to teach your children this school year. It has become very busy with interviews, writing, papers, vocabulary, novels and homework. Please check the AGENDA BOOK to be certain that all homework is being completed. Also, every night students should be reading 20-30 minutes. The absolute deadline for AR is October 28. If your child has difficulty understanding the reading book, have him/her write down 3-5 sentences about what happened in each chapter. At the end of the book, your child can reread the sentences before taking the AR test. The official AR list can be found on the website [www.qrsd.org](http://www.qrsd.org). Scroll to the Middle School and the AR program.

Thank you very much for your diligent effort concerning your child. Feel free to write a note in the agenda book or send an email if you have any questions or concerns.

#### **GRADE 7 MATH**

*Mrs. Allain Thomas, Mrs. Como, Mr. Hall and Mrs. Leroux's Grade 7 Math Classes*

Our journey into seventh grade math is well underway. We have finished our pre-testing to help us understand the strengths and weaknesses of individual students. This fall we will focus on learning standards from the grade seven Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for the strands of Number Sense and Operations, and Patterns, Relations and

Algebra. Students will compare, order, estimate, and translate among integers, fractions and mixed numbers, decimals and percents. Pre-Algebra classes will learn the basic language of algebra. They will be working on evaluating expressions, solving integer problems, and graphing on the coordinate plane. Homework can be expected each evening, as these concepts can be challenging and require practice. MCAS practice will also be provided weekly.

Our textbook is online. Students can access all pages of the book as well as online tutorials and homework help by going to [www.pearsonsuccessnet.com](http://www.pearsonsuccessnet.com) and entering the user name and password that was provided by their math teacher.

Students seem to have made the transition from 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> grade with confidence. However, if you or your child has a question, comment or concern, please feel free to contact us. We are available for extra help during SSR and/or on Wednesday's after school until 3:45 pm.

#### **GRADE 7 SCIENCE**

*Ms. Holwell, Ms. O'Bryan and Mrs. Vyce's 7th Grade Science Classes*

In science, students started the year by talking about what a scientist is and about stereotypes people have about scientists. They each drew a picture to show their ideas of a scientist at work. There were some very artistic and creative ideas in these pictures!

Next, we studied the features of living things in order to answer the question, "What does it mean to be alive?" This will be important for all the units we study in life science this entire year.

Students will soon complete a unit of study on ecology. Science classes visited the pond which is on the school grounds. Observations were made about what things live in and around the pond and then food webs were created using these organisms.

Students will also study the scientific method. That unit will conclude with students designing their own experiments to test the effects of different variables on the growth of radish sprouts. Students will present the results of this research to their classmates with a lab report of their experiments.

#### **GRADE 7 SOCIAL STUDIES**

*Mr. Groner, Mrs. Stevens, and Mr. Smith's 7th Grade Social Studies Classes*

Students in 7th grade geography have studied major elements of geography. These include landforms, climates, latitude and longitude and the five themes of geography. Now they are studying the continent of South America. Part of our curriculum focuses on connecting world geography and current events. An on-going assignment involves students

staying up to date on the news through the completion of "news notes" while watching Channel One News in homeroom.

### **GRADE 7 STUDY SKILLS**

#### ***Mr. Hall's 7th grade Study Skills Class***

The first few weeks in the grade 7 classes are designed to help students ease into the routine of the more demanding schedule of middle school. The main focus of the study skills class is to help students keep up with the workload assigned throughout the curriculum. Test taking strategies, organizational skills, and time management concepts are introduced early in the term.

Students have been introduced to study groups, individual help, and the variety of resources available in the classroom. Students can sharpen comprehension skills by participating in the Accelerated Reader program if they are caught up on their work.

### **PROJECT INVOLVE**

#### ***Mrs. Renaud's Project Involve Class***

The Project Involve class is off and running this year! Our seventh graders have begun studying MCAS topics in Math, Science, and English classes. Writing is a skill that all of the students are working on in all subject areas as well as in English class. We have been reviewing the Writing Process and will continue to write for improvement in all subject areas. Writing often includes use of a computer or an Alphasmart in addition to writing by hand. Word problems, coffee shop, graphs, and review of seventh and eighth grade math skills are an important part of the math program. In Science class, we have reviewed the scientific method and are working on a unit of study about cells. The Bluebonnet Coffee Shop will be opening soon for staff and faculty. Students prepare food and coffee, set up and clean up the coffee shop.

### **OTHER 7TH GRADE NEWS:**

#### **Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF**

Students in 7th grade will be given an opportunity to participate in the "Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF" program in October. Money raised through their efforts will support poor children around the world. This is an annual 7th grade service project.

### **ACTIVITIES FOR BOTH GRADE 7 & 8 STUDENTS....**

#### **Geography Club**

Starting on Wednesday, October 7, interested students are invited to join the M.S. geography club. We will meet every Wednesday there is a late bus. We learn more about geography and study all parts of the world. We will participate in the Quabbin National Geographic Bee in

December. See Mrs. Stevens for details.

### **GRADE 7 & 8 ART**

#### ***Mrs. Hengst***

Seventh grade began the quarter by creating colorful names for their art lockers. From there they learned about the color wheel and color theory. They made their own color wheels out of cookies and frosting, and then got to eat them when they were done. They also learned to blend colored pencils just like paint. We will apply that knowledge to our next project, which will include proper colored pencil techniques. Artist trading cards are due for this quarter on the following dates: 9/24, 10/16 and 10/28.

Eighth grade began the quarter by creating colorful names for their art lockers. After that they learned how to draw a person in proper proportion. After completing the proportional drawings, they created gesture drawings. Currently they are applying their knowledge of both proportion and gestures to three-dimensional wire people. Artist trading cards are due for this quarter on the following dates: 9/23, 10/15 and 10/29.

### **Grade 7 & 8 COMPUTER APPLICATIONS**

#### ***Mrs. Gardner's Computer Applications Classes***

Students in grade 7 started out learning computer concepts. Students then learned some basic features of Microsoft Word, concentrating on skills such as formatting documents, and editing. Students did creative writing stories, and also had some fun creating cartoons in Word. We will turn our focus to Excel where the students will create simple worksheets with formulas. We will use Excel to apply math skills such as the order of operations, and percentages. The final application will be PowerPoint where students will learn how to use the creative tools of PowerPoint to prepare presentations for the class. Students will end the quarter with a project that will combine all applications learned.

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade also spent some time with computer concepts, learning terminology that is prevalent in computers today. Students spent some time enhancing their skills in Microsoft Word by creating newsletters and brochures. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade will also work on projects where Excel will be used to find statistics of deforestation and findings on Earthquake simulations. We will be focusing on the needs and uses of these applications to assist in further learning and real career life situations. The students will end the term working on a research project which they will learn how to find creditable web sites and the correct way to site information on a bibliography.

A reminder to students starting next quarter you will need to remember your password, if you have forgotten please stop by the library to get your password.

## **Grade 7 & 8 NUMERACY**

### **Mrs. Stankaitis' Numeracy Classes**

The students have finished their pretests and their strengths and weaknesses regarding math skills have been determined. Students are using various computer programs, rotating through various stations in the room, and working together to reinforce and strengthen their skills. Some skills being worked on include multiplication facts, word problems, understanding of decimals, operations with decimals, and understanding of fractions.

## **GRADE 7 & 8 PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

### **Mrs. Dickson and Mr. Majoy's Physical Education Classes**

Welcome Back!

Both 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade physical education classes will begin the school year by getting locker room locks and lockers. The students are responsible for maintaining their locks and lockers for the entire year.

Both grade levels will also receive their 2009-2010 fitness journal folders complete with PE information and fitness journal forms. All students are to maintain their fitness journals throughout the year as well as turn them in at the end of each quarter for a grade.

7<sup>th</sup> graders will start a unit on track and field during September as well as an introduction to a fitness unit.

8<sup>th</sup> graders will start units on pickleball, field games and fitness.

Please remember PE clothes and sneakers.

## **GRADE 7 & 8 READING**

### **Mrs. Lapati's Reading Classes**

Seventh and eighth grade reading classes have completed pretesting and are now focusing on vocabulary development. Students are learning strategies that will strengthen their active reading skills. Utilizing a variety of curriculum materials and computer assisted individualized reading software programs; students have the opportunity to practice skill areas that need reinforcement.

Homework is not assigned unless a student misses class or does not use class time wisely and needs to complete assigned work.

## **GRADE 7 & 8 SPANISH**

### **Ms. Hall's Spanish Classes**

#### **Seventh Grade**

Bienvenidos a español!

The 7<sup>th</sup> graders have started off the year with an alphabet project, and are learning about the Spanish Speaking World.

Soon we will be starting a recipe project. We can't wait to taste their creations! They have also learned some basic Spanish words and phrases. They will soon be learning more conversational vocabulary as well as the numbers, classroom commands, months and days. Students should be studying nightly using flashcards or other study guides.

#### **Eighth Grade**

After reviewing last year's vocabulary, we have moved on to classroom and bedroom objects and are learning to express needs, and wants. Students have been writing and acting out skits and creating small projects. Since more grammar is involved in Spanish this year, nightly studying is a must! Buena suerte!

Keep up the good work! We look forward to a great semester of Spanish!

## **GRADE 8 ENGLISH**

### **Mrs. Derr, Mrs. George, Mr. Sacramone and Mr. Verrochi's Grade 8 English Classes**

The eighth grade English teachers welcome all new and returning students to Quabbin! Different classes are very busy with a variety of current reading selections, which include The Outsiders, A Day No Pigs Would Die, Nothing But the Truth and The Call of the Wild. In addition, we are reviewing or learning literary terms and figures of speech.

All students have a weekly vocabulary list as well, with a quiz every Friday. It would be very helpful if parents could help students review for this. AR requirements are in place each term, so students should have an AR book to read with them at all times.

We look forward to a very successful year in English class!

## **GRADE 8 MATH**

### **Mrs. Blaszczyk, Mr. Gareau, Mr. Hall and Mr. Morello's Grade 8 Math Classes**

Students are transitioning from grade 7 math to grade 8 math by incorporating their understanding of rational numbers with their knowledge of one and two step equations. Applications of proportions and percents will follow.

Homework is an essential component of the learning process. It is important that our students recognize the negative consequences of missing/late assignments. These consequences include an immediate effect on their homework average, but more importantly, failing to complete homework in a timely manner prevents them from participating in class, and preparing for upcoming quizzes and tests.

We recommend that students have a binder that is used exclusively for math class. We have found that students lose important resources and notes when they try to "stuff" all

their math materials into a binder that is shared with another class.

We look forward to working with you, and your child, to prepare them for their freshman year in high school.

### **GRADE 8 SCIENCE**

#### ***Mrs. Carroll Pascale, Mr. Donofrio, and Ms. Latka's Grade 8 Science Classes***

All students are expected to be prepared for class, which includes having their textbook (covered), notebook, agenda, and a writing utensil, everyday. Class Expectations sheets have been distributed to all students.

Students began the school year in Earth Science class with an introductory unit that explored the interactions of our earth and its features. Activities were centered around the following topics: branches of earth science, how scientists work and lab safety, mapping hurricanes of the 2009 season, measuring matter using the metric system, and ways to calculate density of common objects.

This fall, we will focus on topics relating to Astronomy, our beautiful earth, moon phases, planetary systems, galaxies, and the evolution of our universe. Students will also explore and investigate topics relating to Geology. Topics include, layers of the earth, mapping & topography, plate tectonics, earthquakes, and volcanoes.

The Egg Drop Project has been assigned to all 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Due dates vary with classes.

#### Mrs. Pascale's Classes:

G + D: Thursday, 10/8/09

A + B: Friday, 10/9/09

All Lab Reports due: Tuesday, 10/13/09

#### Ms. Latka's Classes:

G + D: Wednesday, 10/14/09

A + B: Thursday, 10/15/09

All Lab Reports due: Monday, 10/19/09

#### Mr. Donofrio's Classes:

G + D: Tuesday, 10/20/09

A + B: Wednesday, 10/21/09

All Lab Reports due: Friday, 10/23/09

Monthly sky calendars will be given to all students each month. Please encourage your son or daughter to use the charts daily. Students are also encouraged to watch updates with the weather, hurricanes, and storms.

Thank you to Ray Ray Zalneritis for giving us a great show as a professional stunt man on his 4-wheeler! This show reinforced the learning of physical science as it involved key factors such as, speed, balance, and acceleration during his demonstration. His skill of riding and being safe was a hit with the 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

### **GRADE 8 SOCIAL STUDIES**

#### ***Mr. Mark Castriotta's Grade 8 Social Studies Classes***

Students in Mr. Castriotta's World History classes have begun the year by studying the Middle East and the religion of Islam. We have had lots of class discussion regarding the events of September 11, 2001, and its connection with Islam. We will follow up our Islam unit with a short unit on Judaism. Students will study the conflict between Muslims, Jews, and Christians. We will take a close look at the Holy City of Jerusalem. By the end of October, we will begin a Unit on China during the Middle Ages. Students will explore many of the Chinese Dynasties during this time period and their contributions to the World.

I hope your son/daughter has gotten off to a good start this year!

#### ***Mr. Matt Castriotta's Grade 8 Social Studies Classes***

All classes are currently learning about life in China during the reign of the Sui, Song, Tang, Yuan, and Ming dynasties. Once finished, all classes will learn about life in Medieval Japan.

Please be sure to check your son or daughter's agenda nightly since homework is assigned at least twice a week.

#### ***Mrs. Pelletier's Grade 8 Social Studies Classes***

We have started our study of India this year. This quarter we will also look at China and Japan in the Middle Ages. Students should be organizing their binders by keeping the pages with letters first and then the pages with numbers. Look for a yellow paper that is their table of contents/grade sheet. Students will update this weekly to know what their grade is and what papers they should have in their binder.

### **GRADE 8 STUDY SKILLS**

#### ***Mrs. Derr's 8th grade Study Skills Class***

Students in the Study Skills class will be reviewing and developing their academic skills. They will be utilizing a variety of study strategies to help them become independent learners. Some effective study habits that will help your child become independent learners are:

1. Set a side a portion of your day for studying.
2. Select a quiet place to study, the same place every day
3. Collect all the materials you'll need before you begin
4. Don't wait for inspiration to strike it probably won't (just keep trying)
5. A well kept notebook can raise your grades
6. Make a careful record of your assignments (agenda)

- 7. Useful tips for successful studying:  
Flashcards - make flashcards to help you study important terms.  
Divided Page - Make a dividing line down the center of your notebook paper. Then write important questions on one side and the answers on the other side. Cover the answers to test yourself.  
Cover Card - Read information from a textbook then use a cover card to check if you remember what you have just read.
- 8. Good notes are your insurance against forgetting.
- 9. One secret of remembering is over-learning
- 10. Frequent reviews pay off.

**ATHLETICS...**

**Quabbin Regional Middle/High School  
Winter 2009-2010 Athletic Sign-ups**

Registration for the winter 2009-2010 athletic season for both middle and high school student athletes will take place on Tuesday November 17, 2009 and Wednesday November 18, 2009 from 6pm-8pm in the high school gym lobby.

The Quabbin Athletic Health Information Form as well as the Massachusetts School Health Record is available for download at the Quabbin Regional High School web site, [www.qrsd.org](http://www.qrsd.org) (Athletic page) and information must be brought to the sign-ups.

Athletes must have all completed forms on file in the health office and an \$80 Participation Fee paid prior to participating in athletic tryouts. Please make checks payable to QRSD and one check per student. **CASH WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.** Please call the athletic or nurse's office at 978-355-4651 with any questions.

*Fall Athletic Awards Night:*

*Monday, November 16, 2009*  
*7:00pm in the auditorium.*

**Middle School Yearbook**

It's time to think about the Middle School Yearbook. This year due to additional production costs, the yearbook will be available for \$25.00. The yearbook includes school pictures and candid photographs of both seventh and eighth graders as well as clubs, sports and more! It's important that you order NOW to insure that you will get a copy at the end of the school year.

Also available this year is the World Book Supplement. This supplement includes color pictures of events that occurred this year throughout the world. This supplement was included at no cost last year as a one time offer. This year it can be ordered for an additional \$4.00. **The supplement can only be ordered until December 11th.**

To order a Middle School Yearbook, fill out the form below and mail it to QRMS, or have your child return it to the Middle School Office or to Miss Hall. A certificate for a yearbook would make a nice holiday gift.

Please write checks out to **QRSD.**

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Homeroom \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ yearbook (s) at \$25.00

\_\_\_\_\_ World Book Supplement \$4.00 (must be ordered before Dec. 11th)

\_\_\_\_\_ total amount enclosed      \_\_\_\_\_ cash      \_\_\_\_\_ check# \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Please send me a certificate to be used for a gift.