

Honey Bunches of Notes

A Monthly Newsletter

February, 2011

Upcoming Events:

February 4th & 18th: 2/3 classes are holding bake sales to benefit the Humane Society

February 11: Professional Development, 1/2 day

February 16: Board Meeting, 6:15pm

February 21-25: Mid-winter break



News From the Director

Greetings,

The great blizzard of 2011 has swept through, and our students are back in the classroom developing academic skills and acquiring greater knowledge, but how does Honey Creek assess a student's learning? In October, Honey Creek students participated in the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP). The MEAP gives us the opportunity to assess student learning and evaluate our instruction; however, the data from the MEAP is not made public until late March. This means that the assessment information is five months old by the time it gets to your child's teacher, and is often received too late to derive the maximum benefit.

In the past, Honey Creek evaluated learning through the use of the Performance Series computer adaptive assessment; however, a comprehensive review of the data indicates that the validity of this assessment diminishes when students perform above average on the assessment. For this reason, I have been evaluating a number of assessments to measure student achievement. My priorities have been to identify an assessment that is both highly valid and highly reliable, while addressing the Michigan Curriculum Framework. We also require assessment scoring with a rapid turn around so that we can use the data to address individual student needs. Finally, student performance needs to be ranked on both a local and national level, so that we can be certain that Honey Creek students are prepared to compete with students throughout the country.

After reviewing several assessments, I have concluded that the TerraNova 3 is the appropriate assessment to meet our needs. This assessment offers more challenging content. The content assesses higher order thinking skills, basic and applied knowledge, and is more relevant to our students. Scoring of the assessment takes approximately ten days, which means our teachers will have access to fresh data to better address student needs.

Students in the second through eighth grade will be assessed in Reading, Language Arts, and Mathematics. I will forward the assessment schedule to you once all of the materials have arrived, but I anticipate administering the assessment in late February or early March.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions that you may have.

~Al

Phoenix Rising Campaign

There is now an option to use a direct debit form to contribute to Phoenix Rising. Using the ACH will make contributing to Phoenix Rising easier for some people! Please return the completed form/voided check to Shellee Almquist or Karen Giltrow. Your information will be kept safe. Thanks!

Scrip News

Thank you for continuing to support our scrip sales - we will be continuing to sell every Wednesday and Friday morning. We now have scrip from Nicola's Books in Ann Arbor so now you can support our local, independent book store and our school at the same time!

Our next order will be submitted on Wednesday, 9th February so please drop your order off or e-mail it to me by noon that day.

Alex Foulis and the Scrip Committee
alexfoulis@hotmail.com

Board News

The Honey Creek Board of Directors gathered for its regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, January 26, 2011.

This month's meeting included a review of our December 2010 Financial Report, as prepared by Shellee Almquist. We will continue to monitor the budget carefully with our fiscal stability in the forefront.

We also reviewed the operating committee reports including the Fund Development Committee, the Finance Committee, the Governance Committee, the Outreach Committee and the Strategic Planning Committee which are in full swing and making progress. There was much hard work and planning put forth! Thank you to those community members serving in this capacity in the interest of our Honey Creek children.

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 16, 2011 at 6:15.
 Libby Sheldon
 Secretary

Board Kudos

-to Sharon Paskus for all of her STEM Committee work and getting so many important programs for our children and families off of the ground!

-to Hannah Hotchkiss and Amy Brooks for distributing flyers to local preschools and helping with our enrollment efforts

-to Johnny Thompson, Sue Hofbauer and many others who helped in making our American Red Cross Blood Drive a huge success! Thank you to our students, parents and staff for recruiting so many donors, helping run the event and to the donors for sharing in this important service work.

-to Johnny Thompson, Amber Byers and the Class Captains for a meaningful MLK Jr. Day assembly.

-to everyone involved in carrying out and supporting our very successful Enrollment Meetings including, Al Waters, Shellee Almquist, Karen Giltrow, Sue Hofbauer, Cam McCord, Teresa Gonzalez-Woods, Alexa Korpala, Stephanie Boling, Barbara Naess, Mary Bassett, Tammy Hall, Joe Griffith, Cindy Wauer, John Baek, Liz Scott, Will Hathaway, Kelly Krawke and Lara Thomas.

-to Bill VanLoo, Jon Baek, Tammy Hall, Cheryl Quinn, Elaine Economou, Nadine Wang, Sharon Paskus, Dave Melcher and all the students on the LEGO teams for another great job in the LEGO competition.

Honey Creek Community School ACH Authorization Agreements

Direct Payment Withdrawal Authorization Form

I hereby authorize the HONEY CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION to initiate debit entries, from my account indicated below, for payment of the amount listed on this agreement. I, also, authorize HONEY CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION or CHELSEA STATE BANK to reverse any debits made to such account in error. This authority is to remain in full force and effect until HONEY CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION has received written notification from me of its termination in such time and in such manner as to afford HONEY CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION and CHELSEA STATE BANK a reasonable opportunity to act on it.

Date _____ Name (Print) _____ Financial Institution Name _____

Employee Number/SS# _____ Account Number _____ Financial Institution Number _____

IMPORTANT! CIRCLE TYPE OF ACCOUNT: CHECKING or SAVINGS

Please Withdraw \$ _____ from my account

once a week, on the _____ day of the week

or

once a month, on the _____ day of the month

or

every _____ months on the _____ day of the month

Signature _____ Amount _____

CHECK ONE:

I am not currently participating in the Direct Payment Withdrawal Program

ADD - Withdraw my payment from the account shown.*

I am currently participating in the Direct Payment Withdrawal Program

CHANGE - Change financial institutions and/or account number.*

CANCEL - Stop my participation in the program

TAPE YOUR VOIDED CHECK HERE

NOTE: Always get the Financial Institution Number from a check; never use the information from a deposit slip.

Early Elementary News

Early Elementary students have been hard at work! In Math, we are working on Comparing and Ordering Numbers and using the 100 Chart (in preparation for the 100th day of school). First graders have begun to learn their math facts up to 10+10 using the relationship between the numbers in fact families (e.g. $2+3=5$, $3+2=5$, $5-3=2$, $5-2=3$).

We are beginning a non-fiction unit in Writing Workshop, and in Reading Workshop we are beginning to use post-its to write down the connections we make as we read (to our lives, to other books, and to the world).

Last week we started Word Study. This is a time when we focus on the decoding, word recognition, and spelling skills the children will need to become successful readers and writers.

We have finished our theme, "My Journey Through School" and started "My Journey through the Community". In "My Journey Through School," the children focused on developing service project ideas to continue later in the year, used maps for a variety of activities, discussed germs and conducted experiments to test hypotheses about where the most germs could be found in the classroom.

For "My Journey through the Community," we began with a unit on Fairness, centered around Martin Luther King Jr. Day. In this unit, we read age-appropriate books about different forms of discrimination (patterns of unfairness), and they learned how people throughout history have stood up to unfairness and gotten laws changed to make things fair for everyone (women, people with disabilities, people with different religious beliefs, African Americans). The children then make the connection to how they make sure things are fair in our school community, how they use "I Statements" to resolve differences, and how they can stand up for justice when they see something that is not fair.

As always, we help them make the connection to our big understandings of the patterns they observed and how understanding patterns can help them make better choices.

Middle Elementary News

We are excited about our upcoming bake sales on Friday, February 4th and February 18th. We will be making delicious goodies in each classroom using many skills in math, reading, working in a group and hygiene. If you are able to provide extra, individually wrapped baked goods on either day, please send them in on the Thursday before or on Friday. In addition, the students will be helping sell the items, count the money and advertise for our sale. Our students decided to donate all of the proceeds to the Humane Society.

In social studies, we are learning about the French voyageurs, explorers and early economics in Michigan. Is anyone willing and able to teach us a few simple French songs? We are also looking for 2 or 3 inflatable rafts to borrow later in February. They should hold at least 2-3 kids and have paddles. Kristin is willing to let us use a swimming period to pretend to be voyageurs, practice our paddling skills in the pool and see how hard it was to propel groups in a canoe. We are excited to make history "come alive" in 2nd and 3rd grade!

Sound is our current topic in science and we are excited that Bill is incorporating sound into his Technology lessons as well.

Language arts finds us reading and writing on a daily basis, as always! We will be exploring legends, folk tales and other traditional literature as well as getting ready to write a fiction story. These stories will be made into books for the many younger students in our building. We would like to welcome, Mary Katherine as our new reading specialist. She will be providing support to students at all levels in all three classrooms.

Geometry and fractions are the focus topics in math this month. Of course, we are always practicing the basic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. We do many things to build conceptual understanding and strategies for finding accurate answers quickly in the classroom, but our students can always use extra support in practicing basic facts at home.

Later Elementary News

We've had a terrific start to 2011 here in the 4/5s and hope that your new year has been productive and enjoyable as well!

Students are in the middle of studying government and civics in social studies. They recently completed posters explaining the role of each branch of government. We've spent a great deal of time talking about the concept of "checks and balances". We've had some great discussions about the role of government, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Students provided some very thoughtful responses to their homework dealing with how life would be different without a federal government, and over the next several weeks students will be thinking about how the Bill of Rights impacts decisions that are made at the governmental level. They'll also continue to evaluate real life and every day situations when Constitutional rights come into play. Throughout February we'll be talking about the role of the citizen in American democracy.

In science, we are continuing our exploration of the human body. Recently, Kelly Krawcke came in to discuss the circulatory system. Throughout the month of February, we'll have various speakers talking about the muscular, skeletal, nervous, and respiratory systems. There's a lot of new vocabulary kids are learning throughout this unit - feel free to ask them questions about the new words and ask them what they're learning about the various human body systems.

Students just began the book, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, in language arts. This book deals with some weighty and important issues surrounding justice, equality, racism, and bigotry. Kids will most definitely come home with some interesting ideas and topics for discussion. This book relates well to our social studies unit on civics and government, particularly when talking about the Bill of Rights and other amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Feel free to start some conversations with your child about what they're reading throughout this novel and how it relates to their study of the Constitution.

As always, feel free to touch base with your child's math teacher if you have any questions or concerns!

Again, we hope this new year has started off well for everyone! Thanks for all you do! Warm regards, The 4/5 Team

Middle School News

Language Arts

For the past several weeks, students have been pursuing their own interests in the reading and writing workshop. They have chosen independent reading books, which they have been blogging about on the class moodle site, and have been choosing their own topics and genres in their daily writing. Through this process, we have really been investigating what it means to be a writer, and have been examining the processes of some more famous authors, such as John Green and Chris Crutcher. It seems that we are even going to get lucky enough to have Chris Crutcher visit us by Skype and talk to us about his wiring!

In the coming weeks, we will be writing book reviews, and students will get to choose whether to publish through either Teen Ink, Voices From the Middle, or send their review directly to the publisher. Publishing to real audiences is an exciting and frightening task, so please support your adolescent as they embark on this process.

Social Studies

In Social Studies students have been learning about the Constitution, specifically the process by which it was created, the branches of government, and the Bill of Rights. Students assumed roles as delegates at the Constitutional Convention and participated in a debate covering the compromises discussed, namely representation in government and slavery. They will also be putting on a simulation for the 4/5 classes and Tammy's 2/3 class, covering the branches of government and how a bill becomes a law. Following the Constitution unit, students will be continuing with American history, focusing on the challenges and opportunities that the new nation faced in the decades following their independence from Britain.

Thank you to Gretchen Zale and her husband for purchasing 70 pocket-sized Constitutions for the middle school. Every student was very excited upon receiving them and had to use them for their first homework assignment.

Mathematics

February finds us quite busy in math classes:

Algebra - we've been working with the many aspects of Linear Functions specifically, and will begin working with Systems of Equations.

Course 3 - we are beginning the month working with Exponents and Roots and will end the month solving multi-step Equations and Inequalities.

Course 2 - we will be moving from Patterns and Sequences on to Proportional Relationships with a "big" project included.

Course 1 - we have been learning the rules in Integer Operations and will be using these rules in solving simple Algebraic Equations.

Science

Lights! Sound! Action!

The middle school scientists just finished up learning about sound waves, and now are looking at light and how "it" works. This will lead to a personal project that will incorporate both sound and light and how our bodies respond to these forms of energy. If there are any parents out there that work with light, we would love to hear about how you use science in your profession. You can contact me at jbaek@hc.wash.k12.mi.us.

One treat that we have coming up is on Friday, Feb 18th, when the middle school will head to campus and experience science demonstrations with Daniel Levin (Oren's father) from the University of Michigan. If you are a middle school parent and want to join us for this as well as lunch at local eateries afterward, please let me know if you would like to chaperon. Friday, Feb 18th from 10 - 11 AM is the demonstration, and lunch from 11:00 - 1:00 PM.

Music

Music is filling up the classrooms and hallways of Honey Creek as the 2/3 and 4/5 classes continue the recorder unit. Each class is developing a good understanding of music, music concepts, and reading music. I'm extremely impressed by how quickly everyone is learning how to play the recorder. We will be continuing learning the recorders through mid-winter break.

K/1 students just finished learning about Jazz and many different jazz artists such as Louis Armstrong. They were all very surprised with how many of his songs they recognized. We will now switch gears a little and begin learning about music theory and how to recognize notes and rhythms.

Band I and Band II are both learning new songs and techniques from our lesson books and soon I will begin rehearsing our concert songs. In choir we have a new group of songs, so they are learning how to sight-sing and how to recognize the correct singing part. They, too, will soon begin working on concert songs.

Physical Education/ Swimming

All of the students did a wonderful job participating in yoga! We followed along with yoga videos, played yoga games and used Yoga Pretzel Cards. I'd also like to thank Mario Jordan for volunteering his time to teach the kids about Sun Salutations.

Next up for February is floor hockey. Students will learn about stick handling, passing, shooting, goal tending, and offensive and defensive strategies. In swimming the students are continuing to improve their strokes (backstroke, freestyle, and breast stroke).

Parents: Please help your student remember to come prepared to class. Students MUST have gym shoes in order to participate in PE. Students also need to come prepared with swimsuits and goggles on their swim days. Thank you for your cooperation.

Media Center

Recess-in-the-Media-Center is a new and very popular option for students. Middle School students are welcomed in during their recess on Tuesdays through Fridays, 2/3s may come in Tuesdays and Thursdays, and 4/5s come in on Wednesdays and Fridays. Many students from the elementary grades are choosing to earn service hours by doing whatever library jobs need doing that day. Several students have also been trained to check in and check out material for their fellow students. Most students are enjoying a chance to read for a while in the middle of the day, and there have been very few problems. The problems are mostly of the physically-horsing-around variety; these students are asked to choose the playground instead.

The student workers who have been helping during recesses have been labeling the collection with various stickers indicating genre. This will be a big help for readers who especially enjoy a certain genre, or those who have been assigned to read a genre. We're also in the process of adding some reading-level indicating labels, so that teachers can help direct students to material that suits their level of interest and ability. This ongoing project is one I really wanted to move forward and, thanks to many student hands, it's making good progress.

The Media Center's Amazon.com wish-list is growing, and is always available for anyone who wants to donate useful material to us. One good way to help us grow our collection is for those who are recognizing a student, a family member, or a special occasion, to donate an item in honor of that person. And, please keep your suggestions coming for materials that we need to add to our collections. The aim is to be as strong a support to our curriculum as is possible.

We will be upgrading the library's Alexandria software this week, and are looking forward especially to one feature of the new version: it will allow us to have our catalog (Alexandria Researcher) visible on the Internet. You will be able to see everything we have available just as simply as at the public libraries. We hope

that this will be a feature that you will find valuable in class planning.

I've been doing a lot more cataloging of new materials this month, and have set up a "new books" display area for them. A few more appear each day, and they are proving popular with readers on all levels.

Art

Hope everyone has been staying warm amidst all of the cold weather! The good thing is, we've been using the cold and snow as inspiration for some art projects! K/1 classes just finished some beautiful winter trees and learned about basics of perspective. We will be moving onto another painting project, learning about tints. 2/3 classes just finished a project which involved a great deal of creativity, turning ink splats into monsters, inspired by Stefan Bucher and his website, dailymonster.com. 4/5 classes are working on their tessellations and they are turning out fantastic! Middle School classes are finishing up a group project, inspired by Jasper Johns, which will be displayed in the showcase by the cafeteria. Each student in Middle School had a contribution to this project, and it will be exciting to see everyone's work come together. We'll be moving on to a Wayne Thiebauld project soon after. Elective class is finishing up their Giacometti sculptures, created from wire, modeling clay, tin foil, and ink. You can view all of the projects as they are completed on our school's Artsonia page, at www.artsonia.com/schools/HoneyCreekCommunity1. Thanks again for all of your continued support of our art program! The students love reading the comments on the page, and the money raised from the site has allowed us to get some great new books and supplies.

After School Programs

ON-SITE EXTENDED DAY STUDENT CARE WILL BE AVAILABLE ON THE FOLLOWING “EARLY DISMISSAL FRIDAYS:” February 11th; March 4th & 11th; April 22nd; and May 6th. Please register 1 WEEK BEFORE in order to receive the Early Bird Discount. Also, please remember that you MUST give us 48-hour WRITTEN notice to cancel any pre-registered care without being held financially responsible.

SPECIAL CLUBS There are still openings for the following after school special clubs:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Music Lessons	Music Lessons	Music Lessons	Music Lessons	Music Lessons
Dance (starts February 7th)	Italian	Choi Kwang Do	Basketball 4-8	Swim Lessons
	Basketball K-3	Theater-FULL	Music Lessons	
	Photography-FULL			

Please pick up a registration form from the after school programs bulletin board or online. **IMPORTANT:** You must give 30-day written notice to change / cancel your regular after care schedule. You may email your changes to: afterschool@hc.wash.k12.mi.us.

4H Basketball Chess Baking/Cooking Baseball Music
 Writing Drums Football Yoga Swim Lessons Art
 Gymnastics Knitting/Sewing Violin Crafts Fitness Theater
 Orchestra Tech Study Skills Soccer Tutoring Scouts/Campfire
 Dance (ballet, hip hop, international, tap) Language Rockets & Robotics
 Lessons (Chinese, French, German, Spanish)

PLEASE CARE WHAT YOU WEAR. Recess will be outside everyday. Except for hazardous weather conditions (lightning, severe storms, wind chill below -10° F), we will always go outside for recess. There is limited indoor space that allows the children opportunities to move around energetically. Children should always dress for the weather. Students must wear snow pants, boots, coat, hat, and mittens or gloves in order to play in the snow and sled.

ACADEMIC SERVICE-LEARNING

Hopefully you've heard the good news--our blood drive was an overwhelming success!! Thank you to all students, staff, families and friends who helped us reach our goal and kept the day running smoothly. Our goal was 31 appointments and 25 pints of blood but we had all of our appointments filled and had to turn people away. We gathered 33 pints of blood and several people who couldn't make it here donated throughout the week around Ann Arbor. What an amazing community we have!

As always, with AS-L it isn't about gaining recognition or counting hours, but we do like to celebrate our success and measure our accomplishments so that we can continue to push ourselves each year. There is now an AS-L bulletin board located at the end of our main hallway. On it, you will see a graph that will track students' progress toward their AS-L hour goals. As a school, they set a goal of 6,050 hours. This number was chosen by asking every Honey Creek student to set a personal goal and then adding them all up. So far they are about 17% of the way to their goal. Please encourage your student to track any AS-L hours and fill out an AS-L log to hand in so their hours can be added to the graph.

Thank you for all the support, without great role models our students wouldn't be as civic minded as they are!

Honey Creek Community Schools

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We're on the Web!

<http://honeycreekschool.org>

Need to submit something to next
month's newsletter?

Email submissions to Amber Byers at:

abyers@hc.wash.k12.mi.us

by the last Friday of the month!