

# WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS



## "Making a Difference"



### Calendar Change!

- Thursday, February 12th has been changed to a full day of school for students.
- School is now in session on Friday, February 13th. Friday will be an early dismissal day so that we can complete a teacher in-service program. No lunches will be served on this day. After care is available on Friday, February 13th.
- Schools Closed - Monday, February 16th - President's Day Holiday.

### Kindergarten Roundup!

If you have a child who will be 5 years old by October 1, 2015, please contact the Brass Castle main office at 908-689-1188 ext. 600 to be included on the mailing list to receive a registration packet. Please forward this information to any family that may have a child that will turn 5 by October 1, 2015.



### Mrs. Tierney & Mrs. Maurer selected as Teachers of the Year!

Washington Township School District has outstanding teachers, and the four teachers nominated for the honor of Teacher of the Year illustrate that fact! The four teachers nominated for this prestigious award include: Jennifer Borusovic, Elizabeth Burkat, Sue Maurer and Deb Tierney. A committee of parents, teachers, administrators and Board of Education members selected the two winners from the teachers nominated. This year's Teachers of the Year are Mrs. Tierney and Mrs. Maurer.

Mrs. Deb Tierney will represent Brass Castle as Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Tierney is a dedicated school guidance counselor who celebrates her fourth year at Washington Township. As many of you know, Mrs. Tierney wears several 'hats' working in both Port Colden and Brass Castle schools as our Guidance Counselor, in addition to working in the capacity of district HIB (Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying) Coordinator and 504 Plan Case Manager. Mrs. Tierney earned her undergraduate degree in Economics and International Relations from Lehigh University and her Masters degree in Counseling from Centenary College. At home, Mrs. Tierney is busy as a mom of four: Kyle, a sophomore at Yale; Shannon, a senior at Blair Academy and accepted early decision to Duke University for the fall; Caeley, an 8<sup>th</sup> grader and a competitive Irish step dancer, sailor and field hockey player; and the family's 'baby' Emily, a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader who also is an Irish Dancer, cheerleader, sailor and overall 'high energy' delight! Mrs. Tierney's thoughts on being

## An Afternoon with PARCC

On the January 16th early dismissal day teachers stayed after school to receive additional training on our upcoming PARCC testing. Teachers were provided an overview of testing tools and requirements from Mrs. Sigman, our district Technology/Curriculum Coordinator. Teachers will continue to receive training during our next in-service day on February 13th.

## PARCC for Parents

What is PARCC? PARCC stands for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness College and Careers. In short, it's a group of states partnered together to develop a set of common assessments for students.

Who will take the PARCC tests in NJ? All students in grades 3-11 are supposed to take a math and English/language arts exam.

Is PARCC still a "bubble test?" No, the tests are computerized. Some questions are multiple choice, but others may ask students to plot a graph, insert an answer or equation, and write short answers / essays.

-NJ Star Ledger 1/26/15

selected Teacher of the Year: "This is truly an honor and one that humbles me. I so enjoy spending time with each student in our district, find joy in meeting and getting to know our Township families and appreciate working with our dedicated teachers, staff and administration each day. Every day, my family will ask me, 'did you have a good day?' The answer is always 'great!' Even when the days are long, the conflicts challenging or emotional, I am so grateful to be a part of your children's lives in a positive way."

It is a pleasure to recognize Susan Maurer as the 2014-2015 Teacher of the Year honor for Port Colden School. For the past sixteen years, Susan has served as an exemplary teacher for the Washington Township School District. Following a successful earlier teaching career at Woodbridge Township School District and a ten year hiatus from teaching to raise her two children, she has emerged as a leader and master teacher for Port Colden School. Susan has been an active member in countless committees, programs and after school activities in order to better serve students and the community. It is evident with her unrelenting dedication and contributions to the staff and students that her focus as an educator is all about making a difference. She constantly advocates that she has the best job in the world, because she is able to work with children every day, to inspire students to accomplish amazing things and witness student's excitement about learning. Her gratification is knowing when students leave her classroom they have gained something that will stay with them forever. Bringing out the best in her students is her daily goal. She made it clear that being the Teacher of the Year for Port Colden School was not accomplished by an individual. Instead she shares her honor with the staff. She truly believes she collaborates with the best colleagues in the education field. Susan was very humbled by the honor because she feels there are so many outstanding, passionate and creative teachers in the district who challenge, inspire and support students every day. Even though she received the honor of Teacher of the Year, she wanted to reach out and thank her fellow colleagues, parents, community members, and especially the students.

It is no wonder that Mrs. Maurer and Mrs. Tierney are being recognized by their colleagues, administration and parents to represent their schools for this prestigious award. We are all very proud of their accomplishments and congratulate them! Both teachers will attend a luncheon to celebrate Teacher of the Year candidates from all Warren County school districts.

## District Testing

**Grades 3/4 - March 9th - 13th**  
**Grades 5/6 - March 16th - 20th**

**Grades 3/4 - May 4th -6th**  
**Grade 5 - May 11th -13th**  
**Grade 6 - May 11th - 14th**





### Mrs. Nalepa's Arctic Wonderland

Our class has been very busy over the months of December and January collecting, counting, washing, and drying milk jugs. We started building a life size igloo after the winter break using gallon size jugs and hot glue. Three weeks later, we have a HUGE igloo in our classroom! The students have not only learned about igloos and Inuits (people who live in igloos), but they also learned about water being a solid and a liquid. We are currently studying Arctic animals. The students love using the igloo as their new reading nook. Thank you to all the families that helped contribute milk jugs for our igloo...we used 532 gallons to complete our igloo!! We would love for you to visit and experience our Artic Wonderland!

### News from the Nurse's Office

#### Important Immunization Reminder!

All students are required to have a **Tdap** and **Menningococcal** vaccine prior to starting 6th grade. Do not wait until the summer to get these vaccines. Talk with your health care provider about getting these vaccinations during the school year. You must provide documented proof of these vaccinations before starting sixth grade. If you have questions, please contact the school nurse.

#### Absent or Running Late? -- Call the Absentee Line!

Please call your child out absent on the school absentee line. If they will be late, please call the line as well. If there is a scheduled day of absence, please notify the School Nurse, in addition to your child's teacher. Thank you.

**Port Colden School:** 908-689-0681 press "1" for the absentee line.

Janine Bazdines, RN: extension 507

**Brass Castle School:** 908-689-1188 press "1" for the absentee line.

Katie Wikander, RN: extension 607

#### FLU: What You Need to Know

The flu is a respiratory virus that infects the nose, throat and lungs. It can be mild to severe.

#### Signs and Symptoms:

- Fever/ feverish chills (not everyone will get a fever)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny / stuffy nose
- Muscle / body aches

## Warren County All-Star Band

Congratulations to our 2015 Warren County All Star Band Members! The Warren County All Star Band is a collection of the most outstanding sixth grade musicians from each school in Warren County. Students are selected through a rigorous audition process that stresses the benefits of practice and hard work. It is a great honor to be selected! This year's All Star Band members are Zachary Connell, Julia Fox, Angela Pawloski, Zoe Ozeriansky, Eva Tirado, and Amy Twohig.

As members of the All Star Band, students will participate in a rehearsal at Hackettstown High School on Tuesday, February 24, 2015 at 11:45am. The students will perform a concert the same night at 7:30pm. The snow date for this event is Wednesday, February 25th.

## Project Achieve!

Port Colden School Teacher, Sue Maurer and Project Achieve have teamed up to provide an after school program focused on PARCC preparation. The program allows third grade students the ability to become familiar with items such as keyboarding and basic computer skills. Students focus on such things as drag-and-drop, highlighting and utilizing dashboard tools, which are key elements on the computer based tests, students will tackle in March. In the hour sessions, students build stamina with typing. They are also learning to troubleshoot simple issues that can arise on the computer. The students are also working on sample test problems in preparation for the new assessments. Mrs. Maurer's Project Achieve group meets every Tuesday at Port Colden School. Mrs. Maurer indicates that student in attendance have become more confident and prepared to take the PARCC exams, which is the focus of the after school program.

## News from the Nurse's Office

### Spread:

- Droplets in the air when people with the flu cough, sneeze, or talk
- Less often: touching surfaces that have the virus on them

### Contagiousness:

- Can be passed on even before the signs and symptoms appear (one day before, and up to 5 - 7 days after becoming sick)

### Prevention:

- Vaccine is the best way

Adapted from [CDC.gov](http://www.CDC.gov)

### Parents:

Please review and remind your children:

- Handwashing with soap and water often
- Avoid touching nose, eyes and mouth
- Keep away from those who are sick
- Eat healthy, drink plenty of fluids, get rest
- Cover nose and mouth when coughing / sneezing with a tissue or in the crook of your arm
- Do not send your child in to school if your child has signs of the flu; keep them home until fever has been gone for at least 24 hours with out the use of fever-reducers.

Adapted from NJDOE





## Brass Castle Debaters

Recently, our 5th and 6th grade students participated in the Warren County debate at Blairstown Elementary School. Many of our participants were interviewed by our sixth grade newsletter writers, and not surprisingly, they had a lot to say about it!

Emily Kovascy explained, “the topic was about the amount of homework students in the USA get. My team was affirming that too much is a bad thing.” Some might feel doing a debate could be nerve racking, but actually, “I felt strong, confident, powerful, professional, and smart.” She did admit that rebuttals were “kinda stressful, but to prepare we were pulled out of class a few times to work on it. Then we stayed after school a few afternoons. We did research, wrote speeches, prepared quotes, took surveys and practiced. On the day of the event, I was really excited to come to school, I couldn't wait!”

From third place winner, Alex Yahara, his advice was “be confident, and use eye contact.” Ask Joey Accetturo if the doing this debate changed his point of view on homework and he said, “Yes, now I realize the right amount of homework can affect your grades.”

Fifth graders Katrina Kling and Sarah Schlaffer offered their thoughts. “I was excited and a little nervous,” said Katrina, “but I just tried to keep a positive attitude.” Sarah added, “this was fun and hard, but I think we did pretty well.”

“Having the experience of going last year as first timers helped Jonathan and me, and my sister went this year to be a timer - that was cool,” enthused Stephanie Dunlap. This was a good experience for Stephanie and Jonathan Knittel, partners on the Affirmative team. “I think we did well,” said Jonathan “and we’re proud we won two of our rounds.”



Joey Accetturo, Ryan Elbassiouny, Emily Kovascy, Alex Yahara, Jordan Damiano-Florez



Sarah Schlaffer, Katrina Kling, Stephanie Dunlap, Jonathan Knittel



## Port Colden - Field Hockey Club

Self-esteem can be enhanced by positive experiences in sports. Children's self-esteem can be improved by being a member of a team or in a particular sport they enjoy. Under the guidance of Coach Colleen O'Rourke members in her Field Hockey Club know that each member counts and to be a member of her team everyone must support each other. Coach O'Rourke thoroughly enjoyed her experiences as a student athlete from elementary school to four years of collegiate field hockey at York College of Pennsylvania. As a player and now coach she understands the direct link that families and teammates can have on bolstering an athlete's self-esteem by creating a supportive environment that celebrates the athlete's skill development and includes positive social relationships. Coach O'Rourke has also witnessed the other side of the coin, when children's self-esteem can plummet when they feel inadequate, unfit or unpopular. The Field Hockey Club focuses on not only development of stick handling skills but enhancing being positive, respectful and supportive to teammates. Coach O'Rourke takes these factors to heart when helping to build positive self-esteem amongst her players.

## Geography Bee

Do you know which continent the Ronne Ice Shelf borders? Did you know that Mount Rainier is the highest mountain in the state of Washington? Several of Brass Castle' geo-whizzes knew the answers to those and many other questions about geography and the world. They recently competed in a classroom level geography bee, and ten finalists went on to the school level bee. Congratulations to these finalists who competed on January 9th at an assembly at Brass Castle School: Shrenik Patel - 6 Penner, Noah DiNapoli - 5 Mahon, Dylan Mott - 5 Hussey, Nicholas Read - 6 Motzenbecker, Ryleigh Reagan - 5 Mikitiuk, Olivia Mencia - 5 Baxendale, Kevin McLaughlin - 4 Hulse, Ryan Galka - 5 Peterson, Elizabeth Schlaffer - 6 Galoppo, and Zoe Ozeriansky - 6 Pomeroy.

Congratulations to Shrenik Patel, our first place winner! After his win, Shrenik will take a written test from National Geographic. With this test, he can become eligible to move on to the state level geography bee. Second place went to Dylan Mott and third place was taken by Kevin McLaughlin.

## Spelling Bee

Can you spell 'EPICUREAN'? That was the last word given to Amy Twohig and Alex Yahara, our final participants standing at the Brass Castle Spelling Bee held on January 15, 2015. After an intense battle back and forth with words spelled correctly by both finalists, Amy successfully spelled "epicurean". To clinch first place, Amy then was asked to spell the final word. Quietly and slowly, she spelled out C-E-N-T-E-N-A-R-Y; the audience waited anxiously for the judge to proclaim a 'yes' or 'no'. The crowd sealed a big breath of air, as Amy was announced the first place winner!

All participants are congratulated for competing with their homerooms to win the honor to compete in this grade 5-6 spelling bee competition. In addition to being un-BEE-lievable spellers, all our participants demonstrated outstanding sportsmanship.

Spelling Bee Finalists: Amy Twohig - 1st Place, Alex Yahara - 2nd Place, and Anna Salameh - 3rd Place!

The 2015 Spelling Bee participants: Grade 5 - Gage Graba, Evan Heine, Donald Lauton, Olivia Mencia, David Oranye, Stephen Pringel, Lucas Ribeiro, Anna Salameh, Destiny Sheppard, Michael VanAlstyne, Alex Van Ness. Grade 6 - Eniola Ajayi, Emily Boniface, Isabel Bourne, Kaie Colligan, Cassidy Fredo, Shaun McGahey, Elizabeth Schlaffer, Amy Twohig and Alex Yahara. In attendance as alternates were: Julia Fox, Shrenik Patel, Matthew Sharo, Max VanOrman and Zoe Ozeriansky.

Many thanks to our PTA parents for organizing and preparing this event as well as to pronouncers, Mrs. Gustitus and Mrs. App, and judge, Mrs. Padilla. Thank you to Mr. Flumerfelt for providing the sound system.



## Winter Band Concert

On Wednesday, January 21st, our fifth and sixth grade band students performed brilliantly at our annual Brass Castle Winter Band Concert! Mr. Rizzo would like to congratulate the students on a fantastic concert. Also, Mr. Rizzo would like to thank all of the parents, faculty, and staff that helped make this program a success.

Our next concert will be the Spring Music Concert on Thursday, May 7, 2015 at Warren Hills Regional High School at 7pm. There will also be an Ensemble Night concert on Wednesday, June 3, 2015 at Brass Castle School at 7pm where selected musicians will perform in small groups.





## Meet the New Staff Members

### Mrs. Campagna - Kindergarten

Our kindergarten team has an overall bright, new personality with Mrs. Campagna coupled with Dr. Dugdale, formerly a first grade teacher at Port Colden School, joining veteran Miss Renner. Mrs. Campagna earned her bachelor degree in elementary education at Salisbury University. She then taught first grade in Virginia before coming to New Jersey. She is looking forward to getting to know all the amazing staff and students at Brass Castle. She loves seeing students grow throughout the year. One of her favorite parts about being a teacher is seeing each student's excitement over all they've accomplished by June. It is a pleasure to see her students eager to greet each school day with Mrs. Campagna.

### Miss Piccione - First Grade

Port Colden School is pleased to have Ashley Piccione join our school family this year. Prior to becoming a first grade teacher she taught third grade and kindergarten in the Phillipsburg School District and fifth grade in the Bethlehem Area School District. She graduated from Moravian College with an English Degree and a K-6 teaching certification. Her passion for working with lower elementary students is based on her nature to interact with each student's unique and wonderful personality. Miss Piccione sees endless possibilities and potential for each of her students every day. She brings out the best in every student so they can soar and shine as individuals. Her favorite thing about Port Colden is the sense of community that she felt from the first day she started. She expressed that the faculty is warm and inviting, which made her feel right at home, especially the first grade team. She truly enjoys how well parents, staff members and students work together for the overall success of each student. We, the staff and faculty, are happy to have Miss Piccione as part of our school community.

## Recess Time

Please make sure students are dressed appropriately for recess time. Even in the cold weather, students will usually go outside for recess. Please make sure that students come to school with a coat, hat and gloves so that they can enjoy recess outside. Children that do not have the appropriate winter clothing will not be allowed to participate in outside recess. Thank you for your attention in this matter.

## Honeywell Instant Alert

With the winter season upon us, the Washington Township School District may have the need to send out messages about weather or school related emergencies. It is imperative that parents / guardians make sure that contact information is up to date in our Honeywell Instant Alert System! Please make sure that you log into the Instant Alert system and make sure your contact information is up to date. If you need assistance, please contact Mrs. Kim Sigman at [ksigman@washtwpsd.org](mailto:ksigman@washtwpsd.org).

## PARCC Information / Practice

For more information regarding PARCC testing and for sample test items visit:

[www.parcconline.org](http://www.parcconline.org)



## COUNSELOR'S CORNER

### February 2015



*"We are a box of crayons,  
each one of us unique.  
But when we get together...  
The picture is complete."*

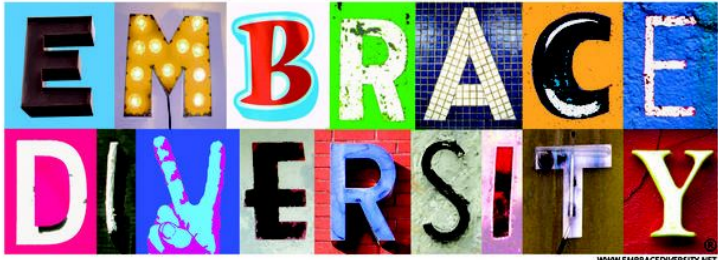
*The Crayon Box That Talked* is a simple, yet poignant story that I present to our second graders around this time of year. The children love the illustrations and really understand that it takes all 'colors' to make a beautiful picture. We talk about our differences (physical features, fashion sense, athletic ability, likes/dislikes etc.) and our similarities (we have dreams and hopes, we like to play, we all go to school.) It is really fun to watch our 7 and 8 year olds working with a partner and figuring out what two, very different students actually have in common! This is a continuation of our lessons on tolerance, acceptance and RESPECT! It would be wonderful to reinforce these life lessons at home by modeling patience toward others and showing acceptance, if not agreement, with other's choices.

March is just around the corner... and with it the beginning hope of spring, longer days and ...*standardized testing* for our 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders! I will share some test strategies and stress relievers with you all next month. In the meantime, if you know that your child is particularly anxious about testing, please call or email me and I will be happy to work with them ahead of time.

I am available at Brass Castle 908-689-118 ext 611, Port Colden 908-689-0681 or via email [dtierney@washtwpsd.org](mailto:dtierney@washtwpsd.org). Again, if you find it more convenient to contact me after school hours, please let me know and I will be happy to share my cell phone number.

Deb Tierney

# RESPECTING DIVERSITY- February

| Sunday | MONDAY  | TUESDAY   | WEDNESDAY  | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY  | Saturday |
|--------|---|---|--|---|---|----------|
| 1      | 2 This month select something unique about yourself to share with your classmates                                   | 3 As always - treat others as you want to be treated. The <b>GOLDEN RULE</b> Matters! | 4 Diversity is one thing we ALL have in common - Celebrate Differences!  | 5 Respect the rights of your friends to <b>be</b> different and to <b>think</b> differently     | 6 Kind thoughts become kind actions - keep it <b>POSITIVE!</b>  | 7        |
| 8      | 9 "Diversity is the art of thinking independently together."  | 10 Don't judge others by their clothing or hair color - get to know the person inside | 11 Respect each other's opinions - we don't need to agree to get along!  | 12 In recognition of President's Weekend - be a positive leader                                 | 13<br><b>Early Dismissal Teacher In-service</b>   | 14       |
| 15     | <b>16 NO SCHOOL</b>   | 17 Embrace what makes <b>YOU</b> special  | 18 Diversity keeps life interesting - we live in a multi color world not a gray one!   | 19 Think about it - We all smile in the same language!  | 20 It's ok to not like someone or not get along with them. It's <b>NOT</b> ok to be rude, disrespectful or unkind | 21       |
| 22     | 23 <i>"Be Yourself - because the people who mind don't matter and the people that matter don't mind."</i> Dr. Suess | 24 Laugh <i>with</i> your friends and not at them                                     | 25 'Others may forget what you said or what you did, but they will always remember how you made them feel.' Be Kind and Practice Respect | 26 What did you share with your classmates about yourself this month? How do you feel about it? | 27 We can learn from all types of people - have an open mind and <b>LISTEN</b>                                    | 28       |
|        |   |   |  |   |   |          |