

Washington Township Schools



"Making a Difference"

Important Calendar Changes

Due to the continued use of snow days we will be modifying our school calendar. Listed below are the changes to the 2014-15 calendar that will be adopted.

Updated School Calendar:

- Friday, March 20th will be a full day of school.
- School will be in session on Thursday, April 9th and Friday, April 10th. Our spring recess will now be Friday, April 3rd through Wednesday, April 8th. Thursday, April 2nd is still an early dismissal day.
- Thursday, April 23rd will be a full day of school.

Additional emergency closings may necessitate further changes to the school calendar. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the changes in the calendar, please contact your child's school.

PARCC Testing Dates 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

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.

Kindergarten Valentines

Ms. Renner's Kindergarten students were very busy making Valentine's Day cards for our seniors at Warren Haven Nursing Home in Oxford, NJ. Children wrote various caring messages and well-wishes with intentions for a happy Valentine's Day for all. The Activities Director at Warren Haven said there are plans to have a Valentine's Day party on the 14th and the cards would be a delightful treat for the participants!



Miss Piccione's Class Visits the Old School House

Miss Piccione's first grade class was learning about what school was like long ago in social studies. What better way to learn about school life in history than to visit the District's Old School House. The students enjoyed visiting the classroom and experiencing school life in 1869.



Greek Week Wax Museum

Students in sixth grade were "frozen" in time and became a historical figure from Ancient Greece. Students researched their person, wrote a speech from the character's point-of-view and designed a costume with props that portrayed that character. Students were characters such as Greek Gods and Goddesses, the author Homer and Alexander the Great. Each student did a spectacular job of being a character from another time period!

Warren County Spelling Bee

On February 19, 2015 our top three spellers from Brass Castle, Amy Twohig, Alexander Yahara, and Anna Salameh went on to the County's competition in Phillipsburg. Congratulations to our students for a great showing and kudos to all your wonderful efforts in being the best spellers you can "Bee"!

"I just don't want to get out on the first round!" These were the words from Alex Yahara, this year's Warren County Spelling Bee Runner Up. He was part of a record 16 round-spell-off and 5 championship word attempts! Alex studied hard and put his nerves aside as he went for the win one more time. We are very proud.

6th Grade All Star Band

On Wednesday, February 25th sixth graders Julia Fox, Angela Pawloski, Zoe Ozeriansky, Eva Tirado, and Amy Twohig were part of the Warren County All-Star Band. Members of the band put on a fantastic show for parents and special guests. Congratulations on a great show!



Scholastic Storyworks

Jonathan Knittel, a 5th grader in Mrs. Peterson and Mrs. Mitch's class, recently won a Scholastic *Storyworks* writing contest. Jonathan read a historical fiction piece titled "Thatagirl", and wrote an essay telling how many historical facts he learned from reading the story. The Assistant Editor of *Storyworks* praised Jonathan's use of details from the story to support his writing. His prize was a copy of Rebecca Behrens' novel, *When Audrey Met Alice*. Jonathan's reaction to learning he had won the contest was one of pride, especially since he knew he had a lot of competition from other students. Way to go, Jonathan! We are proud of you, too.



Warren County Sixth and Seventh Grade Convocation

February 5, 2015

"Oh the Drama!!!" That's what you would see, hear, and feel if you were at this year's Arts Symposium Convocation. Our students participated in writing, drama, and music sessions as they learned how to put it all together in their own original skits! These wonderfully creative students, Natalie Boyd, Emily Leidner, Emily Kovacsy, Amy Twohig, Nick Reed, and Mckenzie Patti participated in this wonderful event put on by the Warren County Consortium for Student Enrichment.

Author Visits PC

Recently, the third grade gifted and talented students had the opportunity to read Colonel Washington and Me. This book was written by Mr. Jeffrey Finegan, a local historian, business owner, and personal friend of Mrs. Tonilynn Melhem. This book is about George Washington, his slave William Lee, and their incredible journey together. It's a story of freedom! After reading the story, we were fortunate to have Mr. Finegan visit our school. He had lunch with the gifted and talented students.



During lunch, they were able to ask him many questions that they had after reading the book. Mr. Finegan even autographed copies of his book for these students. Mr. Finegan then spoke to the entire third grade about his book and being an author. Mr. Finegan was kind enough to donate some books to our school. Students will also get the chance to purchase his book if they would like. The highlight of the day for the gifted and talented students is when Mr. Finegan surprised them with a copy of his second book, Tis Well, The Life and Death of George Washington. They cannot wait to read it!

Chess Tournament

Sitting with Alex Yahara and Lucas Ribeiro at the impressive and historical Rutherford Hall, we are anxiously wondering about the results of our Chess tournament. "It was fun and hard," said Nic Reed, our third time veteran of the WCCSE Chess Tournament.

"I went three and two, I'm shocked with myself." 5th grader Lucas Ribeiro was worried he wouldn't do well, but obviously underestimated himself!

"It was fun even though I should have won a match that slipped through my fingers! I had him in check!" noted our humble Alexander Yahara.

In a word, the tournament was "Fun," said Jennifer, "and I learned some new rules and strategies."

No one would have known how Alex Stanneck was feeling by looking at his record for the day, "So nerve racking." Alex was undefeated with a record of 6 - 0. A first for Brass Castle!

Finally, our students after hours of playing chess came to a consensus, "we want a chess club at school!"



Nic Reed, Lucas Ribeiro, Haru Watts, Jen Drevitch, Alex Stanneck, and Alex Yahara

Brass Castle School Welcomes New Staff Members!



A very enthusiastic addition to Brass Castle School is Miss Davey in our Intermediate Multiple Disabilities classroom. She attended East Stroudsburg University and earned a bachelor's degree in English Literature and earned certificates in elementary education and teacher of students with disabilities from Centenary College. She gained valuable experience working in pre-school disabilities, first grade and second grade resource classrooms and Warren Hills Middle School's multiple disabilities program. She is looking forward to creating a wonderful experience for her students, but also building relationships with other students in the school. She is as excited to become part of the Washington Township family as we are to have her!

Mrs. Mitch is not actually new to Brass Castle. Last year she was a long-term substitute in sixth grade. We are thrilled to welcome her as a permanent member of our staff as she joins our fifth grade team. She attended the University of Richmond and gained her bachelor's degree in K-8 education. She is also certified in special education. In addition, she is currently working towards her masters in special education at William Paterson. Mrs. Mitch brings valuable experience from teaching in both Bergen County and Phillipsburg School Districts for several years. Mrs. Mitch finds the faculty, staff and students at Brass Castle School wonderful to work with. She is looking forward to the new adventure of co-teaching with Mrs. Peterson and sharing their love of learning with our students.



After spending time at home raising her family, Mrs. Nisivoccia couldn't wait to get back into the classroom. We are fortunate to add her to our sixth grade team, co-teaching with Mrs. Galoppo. She earned an Associate's Degree from Ocean County College, Bachelor's degrees in psychology and elementary education from Caldwell College and a special education certification from Centenary College. She is looking forward to a successful school year where she can make a positive impact on the students academically and help them grow and succeed. Teaching to her is a job that brings new and exciting things each and every day.

Port Colden School Welcomes New Staff Members!



This year Sarah Bettenhausen also joined our Port Colden family. She previously taught at Brandywine Heights Elementary School as a kindergarten and second grade teacher. She graduated from Bloomsburg University with a dual major in elementary and early childhood education. Mrs. Bettenhausen's passion for being an educator is to plant learning seeds, one student at a time, and to help all students become motivated for school and to learn. She understands that the students will be the future of our society and for that reason her favorite thing about school is learning that first graders in her class have diverse learning needs, therefore, her lessons focus on that diversity. Each day in talking with her first grade students she learns something new about them. Listening to her students not only allows her to alter and adjust her lessons to better fit each student's learning styles and needs, but also aides in building a nurturing and trusting bond with her students. These are just some examples why Mrs. Bettenhausen is a welcome addition to Port Colden School.

Tiffany Page is another new and valued member of our Port Colden School family. She joins us after completing a third grade teaching position in Montgomery Township. She is a graduate of Rutgers Graduate School of Education with a certification in Elementary Education and Social Studies Education for grades K-8. Her passion to become a teacher encompasses her enjoyment for passing on knowledge and helping students grow academically, socially and emotionally. She feels rewarded when she is able to inspire students to learn and become independent thinkers and to help students gain an understanding of new concepts. Ms. Page's favorite thing about Port Colden is how well everyone in the school works together to help all children be successful and how the whole school feels like one team. One of her favorite things about teaching third graders is their imagination, creativity and that each student brings their own experiences and prior knowledge to share with everyone else. Ms. Page is a valuable addition to third grade and Port Colden School.



The Washington Township School District is fortunate to have these passionate, knowledgeable educators join our school family.

Counselor's Corner

March 2015

This winter our little corner of New Jersey has been rough in many ways. There are pot holes on every street (and I'm pretty sure I've hit every one,) ice in the gutters, and our children have been cooped up inside for months... It's often hard to find the positive in sub-zero temperatures. Somehow it's just easier to smile when the sun is shining down on us and we are wearing flip-flops...

However, it is worth reflecting on where we are at this moment. Sadly, we lost some wonderful Washington Township family members this winter (parents of students and former students.) I am reminded that every moment is special and becomes part of our story, our journey... sure, toes in the warm sand beat the crunch of salt on the ice but the spring will be that much sweeter having gone through the dark and cold. Be positive and embrace where we are now (in the middle of the ice, snow and endless snow days...) because "Every day may not be good, but there's something good in every day."

I will be reminding our students to focus on the positive as well. March's Character Calendar has daily reminders and thoughts to 'Be Positive.' This comes just as we are entering the first round of standardized testing.

This year grades 3-6 in Washington Township will be taking the PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) test (Grades 3-4 March 9-13, Grades 5-6 March 16-20.) This test differs from the test used in past years (NJ ASK) as it is computer based and uses interactive questions assessing math and language arts/literacy.


It is very normal for our children to feel a bit anxious about the upcoming testing. Our older students may even be aware that there is controversy over the PARCC test itself. Even students who are very well prepared academically may still show signs of 'test anxiety.' Please keep in touch with me in this regard and I will be happy to work with him/her to ease their mind (and yours!)

A few pre-test tips include:

- stick to your routine; consistency is important and test week is not the time to try a new schedule
- eat a healthy breakfast in the morning; a mix of carbs and protein is a wonderful brain booster!
- take every opportunity to build your child's self confidence; Be Positive!

Thank you for sharing your wonderful children with me. I can be reached by email dtierney@washtwpsd.org or at Brass Castle 908-689-1188 ext 611 or at Port Colden 908-689-0681...

Be Positive! MARCH 2015

Sunday	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	Saturday
1	2 What positive choices will you make this month?	3 Your character is your choice - make it positive	4 Surround yourself with positive people and keep your words (and texts) KIND!	5 Keep an attitude of patience with others. Be helpful.	6 Show your positive attitude with a SMILE	7
8	9 Positive attitudes are catching - share yours J	10 "...life is 10 percent how you make it and 90 percent how you take it."	11 Success doesn't come to you... you go to it	12 Be positive about your ability to succeed	13 Excellence is not a skill it is an ATTITUDE!	14
15	16 Attitude is a little thing that makes a BIG difference	17 There is power in positive thinking - THINK POSITIVE!	18 Focus on your successes NOT your failures - Be positive... it matters!	19 A positive outlook makes each day happier	20 Words have power so choose them wisely - be positive and respectful to your friends and family	21
22	23 Walk into school each day with a positive attitude - you can do THIS!	24 Things turn out best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out - Have a positive attitude!	25 Believe in yourself - Have a positive self image. (make sure your texts and posts are respectful too!)	26 With a positive attitude you will not lose your temper as often	27 Positivity is the key to success - be happy with yourself and know you are doing your best!	
29	30 Look for the positive, good things in your friends - don't focus on the negative	31 Stay positive - spring is right around the corner - April here we come!				

***"What is the difference between an obstacle and an opportunity?
Our attitude toward it. Every opportunity has a difficulty
and every difficulty has an opportunity." J. Sidlow Baxter***