

# Dyer Elementary School

"A New Adventure In Learning"



Principal:  
Colleen Fleming  
Secretary:  
Katie Durkee  
Contact:  
799-4845

May 6, 2009

Dear Families,

Historically this is one of those busier times of the year with so much going on both at school and outside of school including the start of new sports seasons. This spring is no exception and from now through June 17, which is the last official day of school, (a half day with dismissal at 12:00 and no lunch), our agenda is filled. It may be wise to grab a pencil and calendar before making your way through this letter!

By now you have received information from the district outlining our response to the current Swine Flu virus, also known as H1N1. Your children's safety is our number 1 priority and to that end we are all encouraging proper etiquette with respect to coughs and sneezes and reviewing handwashing. In addition, Sue, our nurse, is including a wonderful resource in today's totes to help with the challenges in discussing sensitive topics with our children.

For those with children in grades 3-5, the MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) or often otherwise referenced as the NWEA, is scheduled for the week of May 11. This assessment examines children's math and reading proficiency and spring data is compared with results from the fall version. The assessment is taken in our computer lab with no time constraint attached. The results will be shared with you later this spring.

I am proud to report that our enrichment program, Healthy Me, Healthy ME, has been selected by the Maine Governor's Council on Physical Activity as a runner-up of a 2009 Maine Fitness Award! You've certainly been hearing quite a bit about all we've been doing this year, and the Health Fair May 21 will be a huge celebration! On our behalf, Sue Morneault will be attending a celebration in Augusta later this month.

Staff Appreciation Week marks a very special time during which we acknowledge our sincere appreciation to all our staff for everything they do each and every day to ensure that our children's adventure in learning is a positive one. Thanks to the dedication of our PTA, the leadership of parent volunteer, Tricia Neat, and the continued support of all of you, there is a wealth of special "thank you's" organized throughout this week. I encourage you to take a moment to share your personal thanks with someone who has made your child's school experience memorable and/or outstanding in any way.

Plans are really shaping up for our special Health Fair Thursday, May 21, from 2:00-4:30! Invitations have gone home in totes, and I want to really encourage you to come and experience the great variety of booths and activities with your children. We have so many community folks volunteering their time with us and on behalf of everyone at Dyer, I send them our sincere thanks. If you are not able to attend, your children will take the bus home or walk home as usual. Kicking off this event on May 20 will be a musical production

entitled "Dyer Healthy Kids" written and produced by Mrs. Regan's fourth graders. Two performances are scheduled: one at 2:00 and one at 6:30 p.m.

Sarah Plummer, the Education Coordinator at the Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District, has been visiting both 4th grade classes frequently this spring to facilitate a hands-on water quality education program as a supplement to the study of water in science. Her lessons help the students to make connections between their classroom learning and the many ways in which water affects their lives.

The mini golf course, a collaborative third-fourth grade project, is coming together! Students have been excitedly gluing, painting, and creating mathematical score cards in preparation for the grand opening. Thanks to a generous donation by Kim and Harlan Michaud whose children attended Dyer, each hole will be covered with professional mini-golf astro turf! Parent volunteers have been coming in weekly to help construct and paint the course. A warm thank you to all for such tremendous support!

In early June we will begin our annual classroom placement process which includes input from classroom teachers, specialists, administration, and guidance. The following criteria guides this placement process: gender balance; a balance of achievement levels; a balance of behavioral and emotional needs; participation in special programs (special education and/or academically gifted); social needs. If you have any information you wish to share about your child as a learner and as it relates to these guidelines, you are invited to submit a letter addressed to me no later than Friday, May 15, 2009. Please do not request teachers by name as it undermines the collaborative and balanced placement process described above.

Staffing plans are not yet in place given the continued potential for shifts in enrollment. What I can report is that there will be (2-3) kindergarten classes; three (3) first and three (3) second grade classrooms; two (2) third grade classes; three (3) fourth grade classes; two (2) fifth grade classes. Given the need for an additional classroom space, our computer lab will become a classroom. When the building schedule is developed, priority will be given to scheduling art and computer first since the art room will be used as a lab when Mrs. Odom is teaching at Kaler School. Using our laptops, computer classes can also be scheduled within classes that already have smartboard technology.

For our fifth graders this is a particularly exciting time of year as they begin looking toward middle school and the new adventure that awaits them. To facilitate this major transition, there are scheduled meetings between the staffs of our elementary and middle schools. This Friday Memorial Principal Megan Welter and some Dyer Alumni will meet with our students to highlight aspects of the middle school transition and to field questions from our children. A folder of useful information will be provided to your children. Please review this with them. On Wednesday, June 3, from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the Memorial Library there will be a special Parents Meeting at which time a team of teachers and staff will answer your questions about the middle school experience including a Camp Kieve program. On Thursday, June 10, from 9:15-11:30 our students will visit Memorial for a full morning orientation. Further information will be provided in totes at the end of May. Several other fifth grade events are scheduled and a detailed letter from the teachers is included in today's totes.

On Wednesday, May 13, at 6:30 p.m. we have planned a special program for parents of new kindergarten friends who will be joining us in the fall. If you know of anyone with a child who will turn 5 on or before October 15, 2009, please invite them to join us for an informative program designed to address those questions and concerns that always accompany the start of school. May 13 is also a special day for fourth graders who head off to Saco to participate in a special Ropes Course that will serve as the culmination of their Adventure Based Learning Program this year. A special thanks to PTA for helping defray the cost of this program.

Grade 1 is gearing up for yet another wonderful musical that ties in with our enrichment theme. The production of "How Does Your Garden Grow" is scheduled for June 11 at 6:30. Our young friends will also be hosting an Authors' Tea June 5. Details will follow.

Grade 2 has a business partnership with Junior Achievement and members will be meeting with the children to discuss "neighborhood" which is a second grade theme. The children will be creating models of our Dyer School neighborhood. In addition, they are creating interactive placemats for the Health Fair! You will certainly learn from these about balanced meals!

The 3rd Grade classes will present a musical entitled "Communication" on Monday, June 1 at 2:00 for the entire school and 6:30 for parents, family, and friends. The theme of the play uses music and comedy to engage the audience on a historical journey of some of the methods used by humans to communicate. The songs and dialogue are sure to delight audience members and put a few tears in the eyes of proud parents.

Field Day is always a much anticipated school-wide event and we certainly hope you will join us for the Cookout on that same day. An order form is in today's totes and must be returned by May 15 for planning purposes. Ms. K., our gym teacher, provides leadership to Field Day which involves the children in a variety of fun, engaging activities. We thank her and hope many of you will be able to join us for lunch!

You will notice a new parent information display in our lobby. All the resources in it are free for the taking and come to us compliments of the Maine Parent Federation.

Finally, please note that the City Council will be voting on the School Budget June 1 and then on June 9 the community will go to public referendum voting on both the budget and bond issues. Voting will take place at the Community Center from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

So, I expect you're glad you grabbed a pencil and calendar! It just goes without saying that this is a busy place with no shortage of energy! If you have any questions about any event outlined in this letter, please call me or e-mail me at [flemingo@spsd.org](mailto:flemingo@spsd.org). As usual, our continued thanks for your support of our work with your children.

Sincerely,

Colleen M. Fleming, Principal