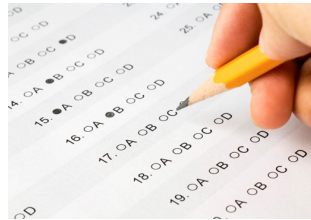




Monroe Center Grade School

February 2012

From the Principal's Desk



February News

Issue 5

Dear Monroe Center School Families,

Our 3rd, 4th, and 5th Grade students will be taking the state-required ISAT assessments March 5-9 along with any make-up testing March 12-16. The tests are part of the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and are given to all eligible students.

Here are a few ways that you can help:

1. Make sure that your child attends school every day during the testing week.
2. Make sure that your child gets a good night's sleep the night before each test.
3. Make sure that your child eats breakfast every morning.
4. Remind your child to ask their teacher questions if he/she does not understand the test directions.
5. Encourage your child and let them know that you have confidence in his/her ability to do their best.
6. Advise your child to stay calm and focused. All we ask is that they do their best.

Please feel free to visit the Illinois State Board of Education's web site <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/isat.htm> for more information about the annual ISAT assessment.

I know that our students will do their very best on these assessments. I look forward to sharing the Illinois Standards Achievement Test results with you this fall.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Leslie Showers
Principal

Upcoming Events

Early Dismissal~Feb 3 @ noon

PTO Mtg~Feb 6~5:45pm @ Highland

Valentine's Day Parties~Feb 14
KDG~12:30pm & 3-5~2:30pm

Presidents' Day~No School~Feb20

Market Day Pick-up~Feb. 15

3-4pm @ Highland

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Fourth Grade News!!

February is going to be busy as we prepare for ISATS!

Each class has a book report which is due on Feb. 27th

Be sure your child is reading every night.

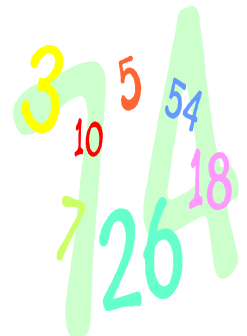
Remember to practice basic facts!

Understanding force and motion will be our focus in Science.

All Valentine parties will be on Feb. 14th at 2:30.

Reading goals are important in each class.

Yippee! We saw some great progress on our Winter Aims Web tests!



Title I Reading

It is important that your child read 3 different ways throughout each day as many days as possible. Children can choose independent books to read using the **Goldilocks' Method**:

Choose easy books to read sometimes. These are books where your child can read almost every word without help. If the book is a year or two below a child's grade level, he/she will build confidence, smooth reading, and expressive reading. Your child can read these books independently or aloud practicing expressive reading and even different voices.

Choose hard (or challenging) books to read sometimes. As a general rule, if a child reads the first page of a book and misses 5 or more words, that book is difficult for the child to read. Reading these books aloud to your child will build vocabulary, a sense of story, and excitement for what's possible. Plus, it's enjoyable to listen to someone read and then talk about books.

Choose "just right" books sometimes. If a child can read 9 out of 10 words on a page, that's a just right book. By missing one word every so often, your child gets a chance to try the strategies that he/she has learned. If he/she is missing more words per page, it will be difficult to get any meaning from the story he/she is reading independently. When your child comes across an unfamiliar word, he/she should try a variety of strategies to figure it out himself. However, the child should not get to the point of frustration. Reading should be fun!

Physical Education - Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Hager

All PE classes completed the first round of pedometer monitoring which went very well! The 3rd and 4th graders recorded their steps for four days, while the 5th graders recorded their steps for seven days. We are in the process of collecting all pedometers. We are hoping to be able to let every student know how many steps they averaged per day. Our next round of monitoring will be the week of February 20th.

On February 5th the High School and Highland will begin their first round of monitoring. We appreciate all the students efforts and how well they remembered to wear their pedometers daily and especially how the 5th graders remembered to log their weekend steps. Thank you all!!

Within the next 2 weeks all students will be taking a short survey on how many fruits and vegetables they eat on a daily basis. We will also be testing each student in the Pacer Test (more info. on that to follow).

LIBRARY NEWS-STARs, READING LEVELS AND A.R. POINTS

Star Colors

All the library books at Monroe Center Library are coded with colored stars to help student find a book in their reading level. For example, fourth grade level books have pink stars, and fifth grade level books have black stars. If a student has a reading range of 4.3 – 5.8, (fourth grade third month through fifth grade eighth month) they can easily narrow their search by looking for books with pink or black stars on the spines.

How are students' reading ranges determined?

Teachers use a variety of tools to determine the best independent reading range for students to grow as readers. The book levels in the range should be challenging but not frustrating. Teachers use the STAR diagnostic test, Aimsweb testing, and classroom observations to determine an appropriate range.

How are A.R. points determined?

The point value of A.R. books correlates with the number of words the book contains. The more words contained in a book, the higher the point value. It should take a student approximately the same amount of TIME to read two 3 point books as it would to read one 6 point book because the total amount of words read would be similar.

To determine how many points your student earns on an A.R. quiz, multiply the percentage correct by the total amount of points possible. For example, if a student scored 80% on a quiz for a 4 point book, they would earn 3.2 points because 3.2 is 80% of 4.

Mrs. Bartlett, Mrs. Burch, Ms. Dundas, Mrs. Green, Mrs. Mandzen, Ms. Thibodeau, and Mrs. Tompkins

The third graders are working hard on mastering their addition facts, and are really "Rocketing" through them. Please continue to encourage your child to practice these on a daily basis.

During the month of February and early March, third graders will focus on preparing for the ISAT. We will take several practice tests to familiarize our students with the ISAT format in general, as well as with several of the concepts covered on the test.

We will be sending ISAT Practice Packets home on the weekends during the month of February.

This is about that time of year when supplies are running short. Please remember to replenish your child's school supplies as needed. As always, thank you for your support in the classroom and at home.

MARKET DAY NEWS

Market Day is offering some wonderful buyer programs for the month of February. Receive a FREE 4 pack of Cookie Dough Cups with a \$40.00 purchase, plus receive 1 lb. of Chicken Gems FREE with a \$90.00 order. Please order online at www.marketday.com and use **Promo Code: FEBBONUS** to receive these delicious items. Our **Frequent Buyer** program is back for the spring. Make two purchases of \$40.00 between February and April. Then place a third order of \$40.00 in May to receive a FREE Cooler Tote at our May sale. Online order deadline is Saturday, February 11th. Our sale will be from 3:00-4:00 at Highland School on Wednesday, February 15th. Thank you to all of the wonderful Market Day volunteers. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Fifth Grade News

Our school-wide spelling bee was held on Friday, January 27. Congratulations to all of the classroom representatives and a special congrats to Kilton R. from Mrs. McDevitt's Class. Kilton was the overall winner of the school bee and will represent Monroe Center at the county bee to be held in Dixon.

We would like to wish everyone a Happy Valentine's Day! Our classroom parties for Valentine's Day will be on Tuesday, February 14th at 2:30.

Please keep checking with your child to make sure that any assignments not finished at school are being brought home to complete. Your cooperation in this area helps your child's success tremendously. Encourage your child to continue developing good organizational and study skills. This is something that we are continually emphasizing at school, for these attributes are invaluable to students as they enter the next steps of their educational careers.

We recently completed our winter AIMSWEB benchmark testing in reading and math. Although the results of these tests were generally good, we feel that there is always room for improvement. You can help your child strengthen his or her reading skills by encouraging reading at home. This can be as simple as 15 minutes of read-aloud time per night and 15-20 minutes of silent reading. Research indicates that more time spent reading will result in an increase of practical reading skills. If your child is reading books at home, ask questions such as:

"What's that book about?"

"Who are the characters? Can you tell me something about them?"

"What is one problem that the characters in the book have? How do they solve it?"

If your fifth grade student has siblings, they could spend some time reading a book together with one of them. This is a practice that will actually be beneficial to both children. Also, taking time to freshen up on basic facts of all four functions (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) and solving problems using these functions will help increase math proficiency now and for the future.

We are rapidly approaching the time of year for ISAT testing. We are working in the classrooms to ensure that the students will have the skills necessary for successful testing this year. Testing will be taking place March 5-9. You can help your child have a more enjoyable and successful week by making sure he/she has breakfast before leaving for school and that the child gets plenty of sleep each night during testing week.

Kindergarten News

Can you believe that we have already been in school 100 days? The kindergarten classes celebrated the 100th day of school on Jan. 30th.

The Valentine's Day party will be at 12:30 on February 14.

The children are also progressing quite well with their pre-reading skills. We have word walls in the rooms that contain our sight words that the students can use to help them read. Centers activities are filled with games or projects to help prepare them to read. Small groups are happening where they are reading at their reading level. They can also improve their reading skills by continuing to take advantage of the Book It! Incentive Program. There are only two months left! They are working extra hard to prepare themselves for the first grade!

Thank you, parents, for your continued support and involvement in your child's kindergarten experience!



Please have your child check out the lost & found rack. We are planning on donating items that are left to a good cause very soon. Thank you!!!



February, 2012

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