

Smitty's School News



Ralph R. Smith
Elementary
School

Volume 2, Issue 2

October 2011

Mrs. Lawson's Message

Dear RRS Families,

It is so hard to believe that it is already October! Our routines have been established and the students are engaged in learning. We are so pleased to have a new supply of leveled texts to provide students with quality reading instruction at their level. Ralph R. Smith now has a bookroom with over 2,000 titles to use for guided reading instruction. Be sure to ask your child about what they are reading in school!

October is safety month at RRS. We will have a visit from the fire department to talk about fire safety. In addition, this is a good time to talk with your child about things like bus safety, "stranger danger", and internet safety.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some new initiatives at RRS. We will begin student council in grades 4 and 5. Each class will elect one student to represent them. These students will meet during lunch once a month to plan activities and service projects. In addition to student council, the BLT will be exploring a weekly alternate recess program. This will be an opportunity for students to sign up for enrichment activities. The program will require parent volunteers who are willing to run an activity. More information will be sent home from the BLT in the upcoming weeks. Please consider volunteering for this opportunity for our students.

This month will end with the annual Halloween party and haunted house put on by the PTA. This is a fun evening for our students and takes a tremendous amount of effort to put together. I encourage you to join PTA and volunteer in any way possible.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Lawson

Save These Dates

- 10/7 Go Home Early drill
- 10/10 No School—Columbus Day
- 10/11 PTA Meeting at 7:00 pm
- 10/13 Board of Education Meeting at RRS
- 10/17 Fire Safety Day
- 10/28 RRS PTA Halloween Party
- 11/3 Picture Re-Take Day



Character Education: Safety



This month, students will be learning about safety. Safety means being free from harm or risk. We will focus on three important things you can do to keep yourself safe.

1. Know the safety rules and guidelines to follow at school, home, or on your own.
2. Know what to do in an emergency.
3. Make good choices when you're in an unsafe or tricky situation.

There are some charts that may be helpful and they are attached to this newsletter for you to keep and refer to at home. Please feel free to contact the school if you have any questions or concerns.

Did You Know? Facts From Around Our School and the District



Did you know that every child in our school can have a free breakfast daily? It's true!

Every day, children are offered a healthy meal to begin their day. All foods served are baked and not fried. Whole grains are used in our rice, pasta, and bread products.



From the Desk of Mrs. Ray

October is here and with that arrival comes the chillier weather. Please make sure the children are dressed in layers for these days that start out cool in the morning and warmer in the afternoon. The children look forward to going out at recess, so be sure they are dressed appropriately, too.

Physicals are due for new students, as well as all 2nd and 4th graders. Your child will be bringing home a notice if one is due for them. If we do not receive one, our district Nurse Practitioner, Mrs. Freeman, will be doing a physical. They are scheduled in November for RRS.

On the lighter side, I would like to share a little reminder of what makes a perfect lunchbox meal. I have a wonderful book called Healthy Lunchboxes for Kids by Amanda Grant and it is full of great ideas for a kid's lunch. It is easy to do if you keep in mind a simple checklist: 1 serving fruit, 1 serving of vegetables, 1 dairy, 1 protein, 1 carbohydrate and 6-8 oz. of milk or water. Have your child help you plan out the lunchbox menus and make it colorful!! A balanced lunch will keep your child's energy up to stay alert and get through a busy afternoon at school.

Book of The Month



Each classroom teacher will be given a book every month of the school year to share with the class. It will help the building share a common language as we discuss and learn about being a person of good character. Be sure to ask your child about these wonderful books!

This month's book is Officer Buckle and Gloria by Peggy Rathman. Officer Buckle has a passion for teaching students about safety, but his audiences tend to doze off during his lectures. They awaken, however, when police dog Gloria joins Buckle onstage.

Reading Room



Monthly Reading Strategy:

This month's strategy is **Switch the Vowel**

This is a word-solving strategy to help students decode words quickly and accurately.

You can prompt for:

- * What sound does the vowel stand for in this word?
- * What do you think that (vowel) sounds like?
- * What other sound can you try?
- * Is that a word you know? Is it a real word? Does it make sense?
- * Try changing the vowel to the (short/long) sound.
- * Flip the sound.

Have fun reading!

Classroom Notes



Mrs. Cole's and Mrs. Molella's Author Study

The 4th grade class of Mrs. Cole and Mrs. Molella are currently working on an author study revolving around the Chris VanAllsburg book series (he wrote *Jumanji* and *The Polar Express*, among others). The students are learning effective reading strategies such as inferring, comprehending, decoding, understanding illustrations and critical thinking. They will then compose a compare/contrast essay using the books and the movies.

Mrs. Ader's Writer's Workshop

Mrs. Ader's class is very busy launching Writer's Workshop. It is a structured process and the children are working very hard. First we brainstormed and talked about strategies to use when we don't know what to write about. Our strategies are:

- * Sketch a memory
- * Look around the room and remember
- * Read someone else's story and remember

After we put many little entries in our notebook, we spent some time reading through them. We asked ourselves two questions:

1. *Do I have more to say about this?*
2. *Is this really important to me?*

We then chose the "one" and "lifted it" out of our notebook and wrote it on draft paper. We are now busy adding details, adding feelings, showing not telling, and working on good leads and endings. We will then edit our work and finally publish our stories.



We are going to become awesome readers and writers this year!

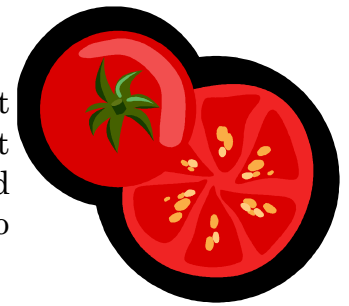


Physical Education

RRS students have “hit the ground running” as the new school year begins. We have been talking about jogging and dancing as “heart healthy” activities. Students in grades K-2 have been working on locomotor movements including walking, running, skipping, hopping, leaping, sliding, galloping, and jumping. Grade 3-5 students have been working on football passing, catching, and punting. Everyone has tried lawn games including bocce, badminton, croquet, horseshoes, ladderball and Frisbee. Everyone has also been working on the ‘Cupid Shuffle’ and ‘Party in the USA’ dances for an all-school assembly held in early October. Ask your son or daughter to show you some of the moves!

BLT ~ It’s not just a sandwich!

In school-district lingo, it stands for **Building Level Team**. That is a group of RRS staff and parents who meet once a month to set goals for our school. We are looking for a few parents who would be interesting in joining this important group. If you would like to join, or would like more information, please contact Mrs. Lawson.



Marist Volunteers



We are so fortunate and excited to have 13 graduate students from Marist College volunteering in our building. These students are studying reading and are here not only to learn about teaching reading, but also to work with students of all levels. This is a great opportunity for our students !

Goodbye!

Ms. Jenna Kelly is finishing up her student teaching experience here at RRS this month in first grade. She is a former student of Mrs. Daniels’. What a wonderful addition she has been. Good luck in your next placement, Ms. Kelly!

Ms. Stegville is completing her student teaching experience with Mrs. Vanderlee at RRS and NPE. We wish her well in her next placement.

