

Smitty's School News

Volume 2, Issue 3

November 2011

Mrs. Lawson's Message

Dear RRS Families,

It is so hard to believe that Thanksgiving is right around the corner! I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude and appreciation for all the wonderful teachers, students and families that we have here at RRS! Each person, from our custodians, secretaries, school nurse, teachers and monitors plays a critical role in your child's success. Take some time to talk to your children about who they are thankful for. Encourage them to express their gratitude in a variety of ways such as saying thanks to someone that helps them, writing a thank you note or by doing something unexpected for someone that they appreciate.

In a few short weeks, we will be holding parent/teacher conferences. Please make every effort to attend and learn about your child's progress over the last quarter. Report cards will be given out at the conferences. They will be placed outside your child's classroom so you can look it over before meeting with the classroom teacher.

As always, I encourage you to reach out if you have a question or concern.

Happy Thanksgiving!
Mrs. Lawson

Save These Dates

- 11/11 No School—Veterans Day
- 11/15 PTA Meeting at 7:00 pm
- 11/21&11/22 Early Release—Parent Teacher Conferences
- 11/23—11/25 No School—Thanksgiving Holiday
- 12/9 K-12 Early Release ~ Superintendent's Conference Day
- 12/24—1/2 Winter Recess



Character Education: Responsibility

This month, students will be learning about responsibility. Responsibility means being accountable for your actions

1. Think before your act. Ignore bad ideas that might pop into your head.
2. Obey the rules and laws in your home, school, and community.
3. Show others that you are responsible and you can be counted on to do the right thing.
4. 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 concerns.



Did You Know?

Facts From Around Our School and the District



Did you know that there will be a district-wide referendum in December? Residents will vote on improvements to the FDR HS athletic facilities as well as boiler replacements at the schools. Be sure to exercise your right to vote! Voting will be December 6 at Haviland Middle School.

Book of The Month



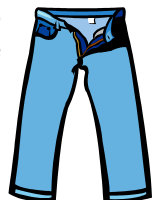
Each classroom teacher will be given a book every month of the school year to share with the class. It will help the building share a common language as we discuss and learn about being a person of good character. Be sure to ask your child about these wonderful books!

This month's book is Just a Dream by Chris Van Allsburg. In this book, Walter imagines the future filled with robots that do all of the work for everyone. In the present, Walter is a litterbug who can't be bothered to sort the trash for recycling. One night, Walter and his bed travel to the future, and Walter is bothered by what he sees.

From the Desk of Mrs. Ray

Now that we have had our first snowfall, you've all been reminded that on snowy days the students still go out for recess. Be sure that your child has boots, snowpants and gloves or mittens. The children look forward to going out at recess, so be sure they are dressed appropriately. Only those children with doctor's notes may stay inside for recess.

If your child has borrowed clothing from the health office, please launder and return to school as soon as possible so it is available for another student. Kindergarten students should have a change of clothes to keep in their classrooms.



Reading Room

Monthly Reading Strategy

This month's reading strategy is **See Words I Know**

This is a fluency strategy to help students read quickly and smoothly.

You can prompt for:

- * Do you see a little word you know? Look and say the word.
- * You know that word. Show me that word.
- * Do you spy words you know? (Play "I spy with my little eye" on the page.)
- * Can you see the word in your mind's eye? (Look up and to the right.)

Have fun reading!



Classroom News



Kindergarten Students Visit Dubois Farms

The students of Mrs. Kelly, Mrs. Thompson, and Ms. Turletes visited Dubois Farms in Highland recently. In the days before their trip, the students in the three classes worked on activities relating to pumpkins and apples. While at the farm, the students picked pumpkins, found their way through the corn maze, visited the petting zoo, and toured the farmer's Tiny Town.

Mrs. O'Brien's Reading Workshop

Mrs. O'Brien's second graders have been learning to identify the different genres of books they read during Independent Reading.

Fiction ("made up") categories include:

Fantasy: A story including elements that are impossible such as talking animals

Realistic Fiction: A story using made-up characters that could happen in real life

Mystery: A suspenseful story about a puzzling event that is not solved until the end of the story

Traditional Literature: Stories that are passed down from one group to another in history

Historical Fiction: A fictional story that takes place in a particular time period in the past. Often the setting is real, but the characters are made up from the author's imagination

Science Fiction: A type of fantasy that uses science and technology (robots, time machines, etc.)

Non-fiction ("real") categories include:

Informational: Texts that provide facts about a variety of topics

Biography: The story of a real person's life written by another person

Autobiography: The story of a real person's life that is written by that person

Understanding the characteristics of each of these categories helps us to make predictions before reading and make sense of the story during and after reading. Second graders are using genres to help become super readers this year!



Music Notes



The 4th and 5th grade chorus is singing with a beautiful tone this fall! We are preparing for our first concert, which will take place on Thursday, January 5 at Roosevelt High School. All chorus members should have received a Chorus Information Sheet. Please detach, sign and return the bottom of the sheet if you have not already done so. If you have not seen the form, please ask your son or daughter to ask for another one. Please contact Mrs. Vanderlee at nancy.vanderlee@hydeparkschools.org if you have any questions or concerns, or leave a message at school.

Fall into Fitness

Fall is a time when RRS students begin to focus on fitness. It's a theme that will extend through the whole year. In class, we are beginning to prepare all students for assessment of their cardio-respiratory endurance, flexibility, muscular strength and muscular endurance. At home, parents are invited to join in and help their children complete a fitness calendar that is distributed to all grade 2-5 students. Just exercising three days a week entitles them to be called "Fitness Fanatics" if they return their calendar to Mr. Moughan. The names of the Fitness Fanatics are also announced to the entire school on our morning announcements.



Code of Conduct

All students received a copy of the district Code of Conduct to bring home. The last page is a signature sheet that is to be signed by a parent and returned to school. If you haven't yet done this, please return this form as soon as possible. If you have misplaced either the book or just the signature sheet, please let our office know that you need a replacement.

Student Pick-up

Our school day is from 9:30am until 3:40pm. Students who are being picked up by their parents are called at "All Call" at 3:30pm. Unless it is an emergency, we prefer that your student remain in class until 3:30pm. Not only is it disruptive to the rest of the class to be interrupted to call children out early, but those children are missing valuable educational time.

Community Service at R. R. S.

Veteran's Day

The third, fourth and fifth grade students are helping former RRS teacher Mr. Tim Millard with preparations for a Veteran's Day dinner dance. Each student has created a place card for each veteran's seat recognizing or thanking them for their service.

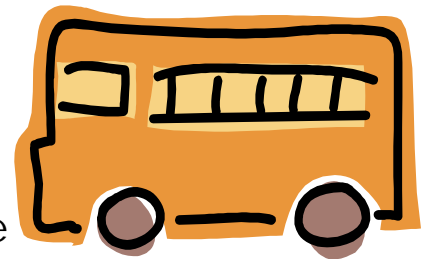


Project Fala

Our students will be joining other students throughout the District making items such as holiday cards, poems, wreaths, origami trees, and letters to be forwarded to the service men and women aboard the ship USS Roosevelt. We hope to bring some cheer to them!

Stuff the Bus

Once again we will be participating in the Stuff the Bus Food drive to benefit the Hyde Park Food Pantry. Collection boxes will be in each classroom, and items will be collected November 7-15. The two classes that collect the most items per student will win the privilege of STUFFING THE BUS on November 16!



Mrs. Ardalan's class at Ralph R. Smith Elementary School, along with other schools in the Hyde Park Central School District, is sponsoring a Toys for Tots drive, which is part of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program. The goal is to collect **new, unwrapped presents** to be distributed as Christmas presents for needy children in the community. Your contribution of a **new, unwrapped gift** will be deeply appreciated. Send in the toys to school with your child. There is a collection box in the main hallway. The deadline is December 15th. Thanks for brightening a child's day!

Mrs. Ardalan's class

3 Steps in Making Good Choices

1. Think *before* you act.
2. Gather the facts.
3. Decide which choice is best for *you* and the right thing to do.



6 Ways to Make Responsible Choices



Consider what might happen—think before your act.

Help yourself be responsible by getting and staying organized

Obey rules and laws in your home, school, and community.

Ignore bad ideas that pup into your head. Change what you're doing or think about something good instead.

Choose the choice that's best for you and for others ~ the one that feels right inside.

Earn people's trust by showing that they can count on you.

REPORT to PARENTS

Raising Responsible Children

Raising a child means more than helping him or her grow up healthy and happy. It's important that, by the time they're ready to leave home, children have learned to be self-sufficient and responsible. Those kinds of lessons take an entire childhood to learn, but they're among the most important legacies you can pass on to your children. Here are some ways to start:

Make them Calendar Girls (and Boys).

Give your child his or her own calendar. Have children mark when a test or project due, or when a sports or group activity is scheduled. Each child's calendar should be posted in a visible spot, and get them in the habit of checking it every day – either adding new events and deadlines or crossing off things they've completed.

Keeping Track. As tempting as it is to bail out your children if they forget their homework or put off an assignment until too late, those mistakes can be excellent tools to teach responsibility. If the project is due the next day, fight the urge to step in and help get it done. Children only need a few such lessons, and some serious follow-up discussions from their families and teachers, to realize that it's not worth it to be irresponsible.

Helping Others. No matter what your child's situation in life, there always are others in greater need. Get your child involved in helping those less fortunate by working through community, school, or religious groups that focus on community service. Show that you believe in what you're teaching by volunteering yourself as well.

Pet Smarts. Taking care of the family pet is an excellent way to learn responsibility. Children quickly learn consequences if they forget

to take the dog out, forget to feed the cat, or let a caged pet stay out unattended. Your children need to know that their pets depend on them.

Get to Work. Assign weekly chores to everyone in the house, rotating them so that, eventually, everyone has a turn at doing the dishes, putting away laundry, and taking out the trash. Divide the jobs by age, with older children doing the harder jobs, and make sure to never list anything as a "girl" job or a "boy" job.

Save for the Future. Financial responsibility is easy to teach if you start when your children are young. From their very first birthday money, teach them to set aside a certain amount for the future. A good rule of thumb is to put half away for savings and save half for spending, either on things they want right away or things they'd like to buy in the future.

Consider Matching Funds. If your children are saving for something that's a big-ticket item, consider setting up a matching fund, where, if they earn the first half, you'll chip in the second. Even though it sounds like the same concept as saying you'll split the cost with them, it's actually more effective to have them demonstrate to you first that they've worked and saved enough to pay for their share.

Finally, remember that the only way to teach your children responsibility is to model the behavior yourself. Make sure they know that they can depend on you to follow through on promises. Help them see that you value your contributions to your job, your community, and your family.

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REPORT to PARENTS

Successful Parent-Teacher Conferences

It doesn't matter if you're the student, the teacher, or the parent, parent-teacher conferences are bound to cause some anxiety. Yet these one-on-one meetings are priceless opportunities for families to get a better understanding of their children. By preparing well for your meetings with teachers and following up with both your children and their teachers afterward, you can strengthen your children's school success.

Before the Conference

Listen. Any time you hear your child talking about something he or she is doing really well in or is having trouble with – either with school work or with classmates – make a note of it. When it's time for the conference with the teacher, you'll have a ready-made list of things to discuss.

Ask. When it's time to schedule the conference with the teacher, sit down with your child and ask him or her what you should discuss with the teacher. Encourage your children to open up and tell you what it's like for them in the classroom. Do they feel like they're falling behind academically? Do they feel like they need a challenge? Are there any troubling issues with any of their classmates? One thing that's guaranteed to get your children to open up is asking them what they think their teacher is going to tell you about them.

Bring notes and papers. Write down questions you want to address with the teacher. Bring copies of any assignments you have questions about. Think ahead of time how to be tactful and kind in wording concerns you have about the teacher or the class.

During the Conference:

Be on time. Schools tightly schedule parent-teacher conferences because there's only so much time available and dozens of families to see. Show up at least a few minutes early, so you know you'll be set to begin when it's your turn.

Hire a baby sitter. It's important to make sure that your time with the teacher is as productive as

possible. Having other children in the room is distracting. Either hire a baby sitter or trade off with another parent so that your children don't tag along.

Take notes. In addition to presenting the questions and concerns you brought to the meeting, make sure to take notes about what the teacher is telling you about your child. Be sure to address these important areas: strengths, weakness, social skills.

Keep emotions out of it. It is always difficult to hear that your child isn't exactly the person you thought he or she was in the classroom. Keep your cool and bear in mind that the teacher is offering constructive criticism.

After the Conference:

Talk to your child. Sit down with your child and tell him or her what you and the teacher discussed. Emphasize the positive things the teacher said. Remember that it's important for your child to feel positive about learning, the teacher and the school.

Follow up. If there were important issues that need to be dealt with, such as beginning additional academic support or getting counseling for your child, make sure to follow up in writing with the teacher soon after the conference. Specify exactly what you discussed with the teacher, what steps will be taken, what your responsibilities and the school's responsibilities will be, and what the timetable is for action.

Remember the principal. If, after meeting with your child's teacher, you still feel like you have serious issues that weren't adequately addressed, set up a time to talk to the principal.

Follow through. Once you know what you can do at home to help your child succeed in school, make sure to do it. It's understandable that finding the time might be difficult, but remember – your child needs you.

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