

Churchill Junior High School



February-March 2008

Parent Newsletter

Issue 4



From the principal's desk.....

In the near future, we will be holding a forum to inform parents of a grant we have been awarded and what we are planning on accomplishing with the implementation of the social and emotional learning standards (SEL). SEL involves processes through which children and adults develop fundamental emotional and social competencies to recognize and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations constructively. These skills, for example, allow children to calm themselves when angry, initiate friendships and resolve relationship

conflicts respectfully, and make ethical and safe choices.

To best develop these capacities, children need to experience safe, nurturing, and well-managed environments where they feel valued and respected; they need meaningful interactions with socially and emotionally competent others; and they need positive and specific guidance. Thus, SEL takes place within the context of safe school, family, and community environments that support children's development and provide opportunities and recognition for successfully applying these competencies.

SEL is based on the knowledge that our emotions and relationships affect how and what we learn. It is grounded in research findings that social and emotional skills can be taught and that they promote positive development, reduce problem behaviors, and improve children's academic performance, citizenship, and health-related behaviors (Greenberg et al., 2003). Academic outcomes promoted by SEL include greater motivation to learn and commitment to school, increased time on schoolwork and mastery of subject matter, improved attendance and graduation rates, improved grades and test scores, and better prospects for constructive employment and work satisfaction (Zins et al. 2004).

Intrinsically, learning is a social process. Students do not learn alone, but rather in collaboration with their teachers, in the company of their peers, and with the support of their families. Emotions can facilitate or hamper children's learning and ultimately their success in school. Because social and emotional factors play such an important role, schools and families must attend to this aspect of the educational process for the benefit of all students.

SEL is also a framework for school improvement that focuses both on teaching social and emotional learning skills as well as creating and maintaining safe, caring learning environments. Many excellent SEL programs are available that provide sequential and developmentally appropriate instruction in SEL skills, and structure opportunities for children to practice, apply, and be recognized for using these skills throughout the day.

We look forward to seeing you at this upcoming forum.

Bart Arthur

2008 Geography Bee Winners



Marc Cooper, First Place
Emily Hastings, Runner Up

MLK Essay Winners

What would you do if you were the governor of Arkansas and were ordered to desegregate your school? This was the question posed to Churchill students who wrote essays for the Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration contest. First, students' essays were judged by a committee at Churchill and Nathan Marfell, Henry Ward, Stephanie Saey, Sage Yelm, Mason Dean, and Shelby Wignall won top honors. All essays written by Churchill students were then sent to the MLK Day Celebration Committee for judging. Stephanie Saey won 1st place and received a \$500 US Savings Bond. Mason Dean won 2nd place and received a \$200 US Savings Bond. Chloe Anderson and Evan Chance received honorable mentions. Congratulations to the winners.



BackRow: Henry Ward, Nathan Marfell, Shelby Wignall **Second Row:** Stephanie Saey, Mason Dean
Front Row: Sage Yelm.



November FISH Winners
(L to R) Kyle Fall (8th), Raven Ayers (7th), Matt Young (6th), and Mr. Barshinger (staff)



December FISH Winners
(L to R) Colton Woolsey (7th), Shelby Bleyeart (8th), Mrs. Hickey (staff), and Angelica Deluna (6th)

Important Dates

February

- 4 Spelling Bee prelims 3:00 PM
- 7 Spelling Bee Finals Period 9
All School Dance 6-8 PM
- 10 District Choir Festival at GHS 2 PM
- 14 1:55 Dismissal
- 15 Student Council Blood Drive 2-6 PM
Midterm of 3rd Quarter
- 16 Knox County Geography Bowl 1 PM
- 18 No School-President's Day
- 22 Midterms mailed
- 24 District Band Festival at GHS 2 PM
- 29 Knox County Spelling Bee 1 PM

March

- 3-14 ISAT Testing
- 14 End of 3rd Quarter/1:55 Dismissal
- 18 Parent Teacher Conferences
3:30-7:00 PM
- 19 Report Cards Distributed
- 20 No School
Parent Teacher Conferences
7:45-11:15 AM
- 21-28 Spring Break
- 31 Back to School
IAA Testing

April

- 1-11 IAA Testing

May

- 22 8th grade Recognition 6 PM
8th grade dance 7-9 PM
- 26 No School Memorial Day
- 29 No School
- 30 Report Card Day

The Write Stuff

For the third year, through a grant Churchill received from the Illinois Reading Council, we were honored to have a nationally known author speak to our students. Candace Fleming, author of *Ben Franklin's Almanac* and numerous other titles, shared her writing experience with Churchill students. All students read *Ben Franklin's Almanac* prior to Ms. Fleming's visit. We were lucky enough to have Ben Franklin himself (portrayed by Larry Pennie) come and share facts about his life. Ms. Fleming told students to write what they know, that one of the best things of her job is working in her pajamas, and that she often rewrites her books over twenty times before they are published. She shared that she acts out scenes from her book to



help her visualize what she will write--even portraying a 100 year old turtle. Ms. Fleming also worked with 36 students in a invitation only session going into greater detail about her writing process. Many thanks to Mrs. Scott who wrote the grant and all the teachers who helped Churchill students have this wonderful experience.



In accordance with NCLB standards, we are providing notice to all parents that they have a right to review their child's teacher's certification and degree qualifications. If interested, please contact the Galesburg CUSD #205 Office of Human Resources, 932 Harrison Street, Galesburg, Illinois 61401.

ISAT 101

We've all heard that the ISAT tests are being given, but do you know what the ISAT tests are? Here is some helpful information to better understand the ISAT test and how your child do his or her best work.

What is it?

Standardized tests have been used to measure student achievement and ability for many years. Over the past few years, due to the passing of No Child Left Behind legislation, these tests have become more important than ever. All schools in Illinois are judged by how well their students perform on the Illinois Standard Achievement Test, and severe consequences will be imposed on schools when students do not meet standards.

What should parents be asking about standardized testing?

When will the tests be given? March 3 – March 14, 2008 at Churchill Junior High

What areas are being tested?

Subject areas tested in Illinois are Math, Reading, and Science. All 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students will take three sessions of Math and Reading. The 7th grade students will take two sessions of science. The 6th and 8th grade students will take 2 sessions of writing.

How will the results be used?

To measure how well our students have learned the standards in math, reading, writing, and science as compared to other children in Illinois.

How and when will I get the results?

Normally, we send results home with the students with their first quarter report card each year.

What can I do at home to prepare my child?

In the months preceding the test:

- Find out when the tests are to be given. Write the dates on your calendar and avoid scheduling appointments or trips during these times.
- Ask your teachers what you can do at home to help your student prepare.
- Encourage your child to read. The easiest and best way to prepare your child for doing well on tests is to read often, and then discuss what they read.

Right before the test:

- Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep. Provide a good breakfast.
- Have your child dress in layers - kids do better on tests if they don't have to think about how hot or cold they are.
- Don't be too anxious. Say, "This test is important. I know you will try hard and do your best." Your confidence will be contagious.

On the DAY of the test give your child these tips:

- Skip a question and move on if you don't know the answer. You can always come back later. Maybe you will be ready to answer that question then.
- Always answer the questions. An educated guess may be correct. No answer will always be wrong.
- Check your answers carefully. Make sure the numbers of your answers correspond to the numbers of questions on the test.

Great Website for ISAT samples:

<http://www.isbe.state.il.us/assessment/isat.htm>

Free Internet Websites to help your child with math homework:

Ask Dr. Math - <http://mathforum.org/dr.math>

CoolMath Algebra - www.coolmath.com/algebra/

Frank Potter's Science Gems - Mathematics - www.sciencegems.com/math.html

Churchill staff members do not report for morning supervision until 7:35 AM. During periods of rain, snow, cold or bad weather, we open the doors at this time. Please make sure your children do not arrive too early.

Unless students are with a teacher, they are to leave the building after school by 3:05 PM and should be off school grounds by 3:15 PM. Please make arrangements accordingly.

Churchill Front Drive

The driveway in front of Churchill is now one way. Please enter through the south entrance only. Parking is allowed on the east side of the drive only. Do not park on the sidewalk. For the safety of our students, the driveway in front of Churchill will not be open to cars from 7:30-8:00 AM and from 2:45-3:15 PM. We appreciate your cooperation.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Because of spring break and conference day scheduling this year, please note the change in our normal conference routine. Conferences will be held on Tuesday, March 18 from 3:30 PM-7:00 PM and Thursday, March 20 from 7:45 AM-11:15 AM. Contact the school office if you would like to schedule a conference with your child's teachers.



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