

# DMS Newsflash

J a n u a r y 2 0 1 9

## Introducing NGSS Science at DMS!

Dear Parents & Guardians,  
Do you remember your elementary school science classes? Chances are, like most adults, you recall reading books and memorizing facts. Perhaps you may remember doing a project or two with a lot of guidance from your teacher. Some of you may not remember any elementary science lessons whatsoever. Well, that's all changing in Stonington with Connecticut's adoption of the **Next Generation Science Standards**. All elementary science teachers are piloting these new science standards in their classrooms this year.

The K-12 Next Generation Science Standards (**NGSS**) were developed to improve science education and raise interest, participation, and science achievement for all students. Within NGSS, there are three distinct and equally important dimensions to learning science. These dimensions are combined to form each standard – or performance expectation – and each dimension works with the other two to help students build a cohesive understanding of science over time. The three dimensions are eight Science and Engineering Practices, Disciplinary Core Ideas, and Cross Cutting Concepts.

Children are extremely curious and the NGSS relies on that curiosity. Each unit begins with students observing a phenomenon, something from the real-world that engages their interest. This phenomenon immediately raises questions such as, "Why did that happen?" Students then develop models, plan and carry out investigations, or design solutions to answer their questions. They analyze their data and then communicate their results and learning through science discourse using the evidence they discovered. This active way of instruction mirrors the way scientists and engineers actually work. For students, the NGSS means more "figuring out" and less just "learning about" science ideas. In this way, knowledge is retained and built upon for a lifetime.

Has your child come home talking about Doug? Doug is the creator/narrator of Mystery Science, a program that believes that if you take children's questions seriously and help them to investigate, their natural curiosity will develop into a scientific perspective on the world. Several Stonington teachers researched and piloted Mystery Science, and it is now used in Grades K-5 to reinforce the science concepts. Each mystery (unit) takes the students through the three-dimensions of NGSS in a thoroughly engaging way. Be sure to ask your child about what he or she is discovering in their science class!

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**Happy New Year!**



NGSS provides parent guides (Grades K-2, Grades 3-5) with specific grade-level information, descriptions about the NGSS vision, and ways to support your child's science success. Stonington School's science curriculum guides can be found on the district's curriculum page.

\*This special feature was written by Mrs. Jennifer Bausch, who has served as a long-time middle school science teacher and currently serves as 6-12 Curriculum Specialist for the Stonington Public Schools.

Happy New Year!



## Getting to know

### Gina Hetu Kindergarten Teacher

*Years teaching in Stonington: "19, 15 of which were at DMS."*

*Favorite thing about DMS: "The sense of community, the supportive parents and staff, and the amazing students! I also love the DMS traditions such as our bubble blowing send off on the last day of school."*

*Hobbies: "Traveling, reading, gardening, and collecting sea glass."*

*Fact about me: "I have always wanted to be an art teacher."*

*Best thing about kindergarten: "The students come in each day excited to learn and it's very rewarding to see the progress they make over the course of the school year."*



**GINA HETU & FAMILY**  
FROM WESTERLY, RI

## Important Dates

### January

- 10 Board of Education Meeting • SHS Commons • 7 PM
- 11 PTO Movie Night • 6 PM
- 15 PTO Meeting • DMS Library • 6:30 PM
- 21 Martin Luther King Day Observance • No School
- 27 DMS Winterfest • SHS
- 28-2/1 Great Kindness Challenge



### February

- 12 PTO Meeting • DMS Library • 6:30 PM
- 14 Board of Education Meeting • SHS Commons • 7 PM
- 18 Presidents' Day Observance • No School
- 19 Professional Development • Early Dismissal • 12:10 PM
- 22 PTO Movie Night • 6 PM
- 25-3/1 Read Across America Week
- 27 Math & Science Night

## Elementary Family Math Night



Grab your family and head to Stonington High School!  
It's time to have some fun with Math!

**SAVE THE DATE: Tuesday, March 12th 6 - 7PM**  
Elementary Family Fun Math Event (K-4)  
at Stonington High School Commons

# Holiday Food Drive



**What a great opportunity for our students to engage in service learning! Kudos to Ms. Sutera's class and the entire DMS Community for supporting this great event!**



students' efforts and collect cans. We were thrilled to surprise the United Way with a \$750 donation from the Cactus Jack Foundation. The Cactus Jack Foundation is a non-profit organization in Southeastern Connecticut that helps out individuals and families in need. The Cactus Jack Foundation learned about our canned food drive and wanted to add to our students effort to support the United Way.

Deans Mill School participated in a canned food drive to benefit the United Way Food Bank. The event was organized by Ms. Sutera's Grade 2 class and was connected to students learning about citizenship in Social Studies. Each homeroom was challenged to collect 25 canned goods in order to watch a Staff vs. Staff Basketball Game on December 20<sup>th</sup>. We are thrilled to report that each homeroom met the challenge and the school collected a total of 1,185 cans.

Representatives from the United Way came to the game to recognize our



# Spotted in December

**Gingerbread House Workshop**



**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade STEM Activity**



**PTO's Staff Appreciation Brunch**



**Double Rainbow over DMS**



**Holiday Gift Drive**



**Sunshine Committee Staff Cider Break**



**SHS Carolers Visit DMS**



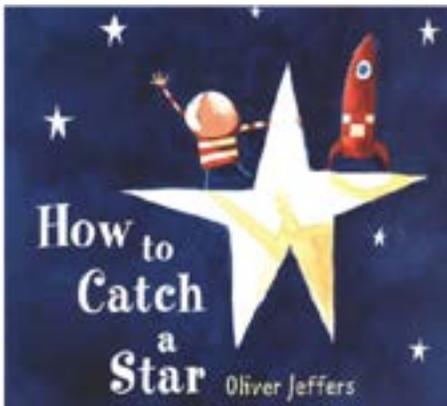
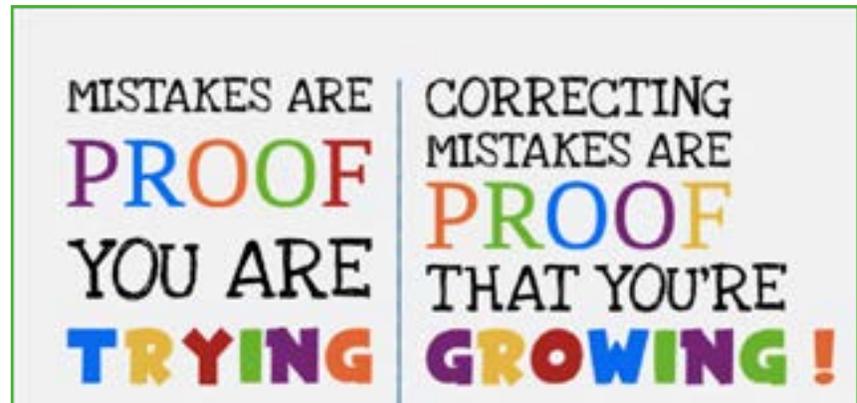


ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

**How can we use feedback to learn more?**

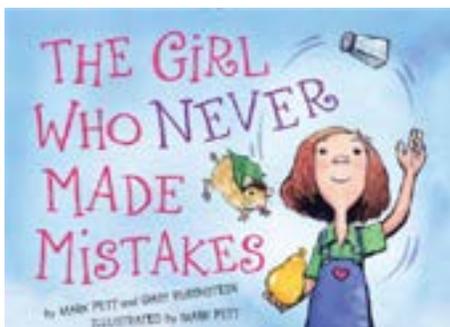
## Learning from Feedback

During January and February, we will be discussing how feedback can help us grow. Students will be learning about mistakes and how we can learn from our mistakes and failures. Our focus will be seeking out feedback from others to help us solve problems and improve.



### Grade K - How to Catch a Star by Oliver Jeffers

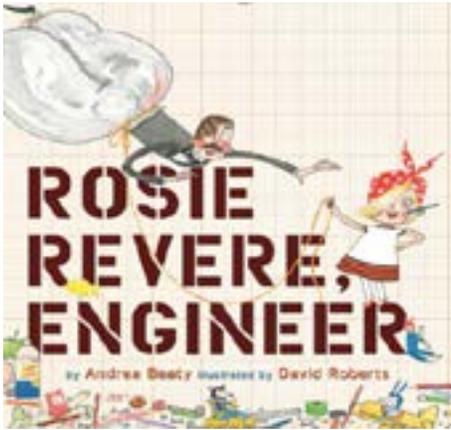
Oliver is a young boy who loves stars and wants one for himself. No matter how high he reaches, the stars he chooses are out of reach. Will Oliver learn How to Catch a Star?"



### Grade 1 - The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes by Mark Pett and Gary Rubenstein

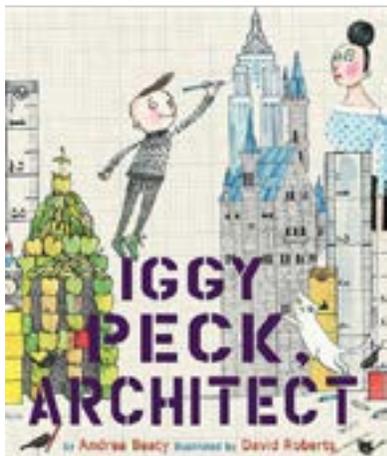
Beatrice Bottomwell has **never** (not once!) made a mistake. She never forgets her math homework, she never wears mismatched socks, and she **always** wins the yearly talent show at school. One day, the inevitable happens: Beatrice makes a huge mistake in front of everyone.

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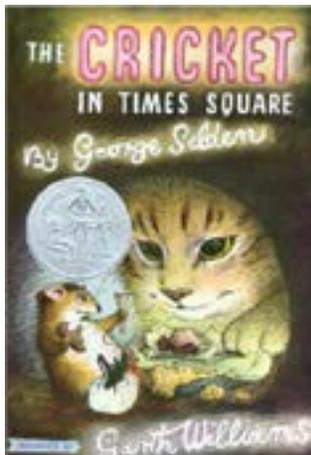
### Grade 2 - Rosie Revere Engineer by Andrea Beaty

Rosie Revere dreamed of becoming a great engineer. Where some people see rubbish, Rosie sees inspiration. Alone in her room at night, Rosie constructs great inventions from odds and ends. Afraid of failure, she hides them away under her bed- until a fateful visit from her great-great-aunt Rose, who shows her that the first flop isn't something to fear, it's something to celebrate.



### Grade 3 - Iggy Peck Architect by Andrea Beaty

Some kids sculpt sand castles. Some make mud pies, but none are better at building than Iggy Peck, who once erected a life-sized replica of the Great Sphinx on his front lawn! It's too bad that few people appreciate Iggy's talent- certainly not his second-grade teacher, Miss Lila Greer. It looks as if Iggy will have to trade in his T-square for a box of crayons... until a fateful field trip proves just how useful a master builder can be.



### Grade 4 - The Cricket in Times Square by George Selden

Tucker is a streetwise city mouse. He thought he'd seen it all. But he's never met a cricket before, which really isn't surprising, because, along with his friend Harry Cat, Tucker lives in NYC. Chester Cricket never intended to leave his Connecticut meadow. He'd still be there if he hadn't followed the entrancing aroma of liverwurst into someone's picnic basket. Now, like any tourist in the city, he wants to look around. He could not have found two better guides than Harry and Tucker. The trio have many adventures together. Chester makes a third friend too, a boy named Mario, who rescues Chester from the corner of a subway station and brings him to live in his parents' newsstand. He hopes to keep Chester as a pet, but Mario realizes that the cricket is more than a pet. Because Chester has a hidden talent and no one- not even Chester himself- realizes that the little country cricket might be able to teach even the toughest New Yorkers a thing or two.

*"When students master quick and accurate recognition of the syllable types, they can decode words in a systematic manner... Syllable types instruction teaches students to attend to spelling patterns in the English language... Each syllable type gives a clue about the vowel sounds, thereby aiding more accurate, independent decoding."*

KNIGHT-MCKENNA, 2008, PP.18-19

## Basic Early Literacy Skills: Stepping Stones



### Moving Students from Phoneme Awareness to Phonics

One of our Literacy goals at DMS this year is focusing on best practices in teaching Reading Foundational skills. Phonics is one of the stepping stones to becoming a reader. Phonics plays an important role in teaching students how to read and spell. Students throughout the grades are taught the six syllable types in English.

As part of your child's literacy instruction, teachers are explicitly teaching and practicing phonics skills from kindergarten through fourth grade. Students are learning specific strategies to decode words in isolation and are exposed to connected text that features the same pattern. Kindergarteners will learn about CVC words such as rat, sit, and hop where first through third graders will be exposed to multi-syllabic words such as sunset, locate, and signal. Students in fourth grade are learning about structural analysis, or the process of identifying meaningful parts within words, such as prefixes, suffixes, base words and roots, to build word meaning.

It is amazing how our students begin to blend the taught sounds together to read and spell words. At DMS, our students are even exposed to nonsense words in order to help solidify the student's knowledge of sound and syllable structure. These words have no meaning but follow the English spelling patterns and rules. Students are unable to memorize these types of words and are able to demonstrate their ability to apply their knowledge.

Further Reading: [https://www.education.com/magazine/article/Ed\\_Parents\\_Guide\\_Phonics/](https://www.education.com/magazine/article/Ed_Parents_Guide_Phonics/)

Mrs. Chimento & Mrs. Bowman  
DMS Reading Support Team

## Illness: the 24-Hour Rule

If a child complains of illness, has a temperature over 100 degrees, or is judged to be ill by the nurse, parents/guardians will be called. The child should remain home until the temperature has remained normal, without the use of fever-reducing medications, for 24 hours. The "24 Hour Rule" also applies for vomiting and diarrhea. Please notify the school nurse with information regarding illness/injury. If seen by a medical provider, please provide a doctor's note.

**Email: [dmsnurse@stoningtonschools.org](mailto:dmsnurse@stoningtonschools.org) • Phone: 860-535-2235 • Fax: 860-535-2392**

When calling your child's absence into the school office, **please be sure to provide an explanation of the absence.** If emailing the teacher or school office, please cc the nurse.

Please notify the school nurse directly if there is sensitive or confidential information regarding the nature of your child's illness. There are children and staff who require special monitoring (e.g. a child on medication that affects his or her immune system or who are particularly susceptible to viral illness) and the nurse needs to be notified as soon as possible to be able to take special steps to keep children and staff safe at school. Your cooperation is greatly instrumental in helping to keep the DMS community healthy.

## Cough Drops

A written note from parent/guardian is needed to allow student to have cough drops in school. Cough drops are to be kept in the Nurse's Office.

### Flu vs. Cold (from CDC)

Signs and Symptoms	Influenza	Cold
Symptom onset	Abrupt	Gradual
Fever	Usual; lasts 3-4 days	Rare
Aches	Usual; often severe	Slight
Chills	Fairly common	Uncommon
Fatigue, weakness	Usual	Sometimes
Sneezing	Sometimes	Common
Stuffy nose	Sometimes	Common
Sore throat	Sometimes	Common
Chest discomfort, cough	Common; can be severe	Mild to moderate; hacking cough
Headache	Common	Rare

## Allergy Awareness



## Family Flu Guide for Parents

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/family/flu-guide-for-parents-2018.pdf>

SEE PAGES 6-7



# The Flu:

## A Guide for Parents



Influenza (also known as flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat and lungs. Flu is different from a cold, and usually comes on suddenly. Each year flu viruses cause millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospital stays and thousands or tens of thousands of deaths in the United States.

Flu can be very dangerous for children. CDC estimates that between 6,000 and 26,000 children younger than 5 years have been hospitalized each year in the United States because of influenza. The flu vaccine is safe and helps protect children from flu.

### What parents should know

#### How serious is flu?

While flu illness can vary from mild to severe, children often need medical care because of flu. Children younger than 5 years and children of any age with certain long-term health problems are at high risk of flu complications like pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus and ear infections. Some health problems that are known to make children more vulnerable to flu include asthma, diabetes and disorders of the brain or nervous system.

#### How does flu spread?

Flu viruses are thought to spread mainly by droplets made when someone with flu coughs, sneezes or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people nearby. A person also can get flu by touching something that has flu virus on it and then touching their mouth, eyes, or nose.

#### What are flu symptoms?

Flu symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, feeling tired and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children than adults). Some people with the flu will not have a fever.



### Protect your child

#### How can I protect my child from flu?

The first and best way to protect against flu is to get a yearly flu vaccine for yourself and your child.

- Flu vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months and older every year. Flu shots and nasal spray flu vaccines are both options for vaccination.
- It's especially important that young children and children with certain long-term health problems get vaccinated.
- Caregivers of children at high risk of flu complications should get a flu vaccine. (Babies younger than 6 months are at high risk for serious flu complications, but too young to get a flu vaccine.)
- Pregnant women should get a flu vaccine to protect themselves and their baby from flu. Research shows that flu vaccination protects the baby from flu for several months after birth.
- Flu viruses are constantly changing and so flu vaccines are updated often to protect against the flu viruses that research indicates are most likely to cause illness during the upcoming flu season.

#### Is flu vaccine safe?

Flu vaccines are made using strict safety and production measures. Millions of people have safely received flu vaccines for decades. Flu shots and nasal spray flu vaccines are both options for vaccination. Different types of flu vaccines are licensed for different ages. Each person should get one that is appropriate for their age. CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend an annual flu vaccine for all children 6 months and older.

#### What are the benefits of getting a flu vaccine?

- **A flu vaccine can keep you and your child from getting sick.** When vaccine viruses and circulating viruses are matched, flu vaccination has been shown to reduce the risk of getting sick with flu by about half.
- **Flu vaccines can keep your child from being hospitalized from flu.** One recent study showed that flu vaccine reduced children's risk of flu-related pediatric intensive care unit admission by 74%.

- **Flu vaccine can prevent your child from dying from flu.**  
A study using data from recent flu seasons found that flu vaccine reduced the risk of flu-associated death by half among children with high risk medical conditions and by nearly two-thirds among children without medical conditions.
- **Flu vaccination also may make your illness milder if you do get sick.**
- **Getting yourself and your child vaccinated also can protect others** who may be more vulnerable to serious flu illness, like babies and young children, older people, and people with certain long-term health problems.

## What are some other ways I can protect my child against flu?

In addition to getting a flu vaccine, you and your child should take everyday actions to help prevent the spread of germs.

Stay away from people who are sick as much as possible to keep from getting sick yourself. If you or your child are sick, avoid others as much as possible to keep from infecting them. Also, remember to regularly cover your coughs and sneezes, wash your hands often, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, and clean surfaces that may be contaminated with flu viruses. These everyday actions can help reduce your chances of getting sick and prevent the spread of germs to others if you are sick. However, a yearly flu vaccine is the best way to prevent flu illness.

## If your child is sick

### What can I do if my child gets sick?

**Talk to your doctor early if you are worried about your child's illness.**

Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks enough fluids.

If your child is 5 years or older and does not have a long-term health problems and gets flu symptoms, including a fever and/or cough, consult your doctor as needed.

Children younger than 5 years of age – especially those younger than 2 years – and children with certain long-term health problems (including asthma, diabetes and disorders of the brain or nervous system), are at high risk of serious flu complications. Call your doctor or take your child to the doctor right away if they develop flu symptoms.

### What if my child seems very sick?

Even healthy children can get very sick from flu. If your child is experiencing the following emergency warning signs, you should go to the emergency room:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color

- Not drinking enough fluids (not going to the bathroom or not making as much urine as they normally do)
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu symptoms improve, but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with rash



## Is there a medicine to treat flu?

Yes. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines that can be used to treat flu illness. They can shorten your illness and make it milder, and they can prevent serious complications that could result in a hospital stay. Antivirals work best when started during the first 2 days of illness. Antiviral drugs are recommended to treat flu in people who are very sick (for example, people who are in the hospital) or people who are at high risk of serious flu complications who get flu symptoms. Antivirals can be given to children and pregnant women.

## How long can a sick person spread flu to others?

People with flu may be able to infect others from 1 day before getting sick to up to 5 to 7 days after. Severely ill people or young children may be able to spread the flu longer, especially if they still have symptoms.

## Can my child go to school, day care, or camp if he or she is sick?

No. Your child should stay home to rest and to avoid spreading flu to other children or caregivers.

## When can my child go back to school after having flu?

Keep your child home from school, day care, or camp for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone. (The fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) A fever is defined as 100°F (37.8°C) or higher.

**For more information, visit**

**[www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu)**

**or call 800-CDC-INFO**



**U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services**  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention

Our goal for the year is to encourage students to gain a better understanding of the ways in which they can increase their performance in the areas of art, library, music, and physical education. Students will be provided with ideas and challenges on specific skills to enrich performance. In addition we hope to share a variety of resources with you.

## Music

*Mrs. McMinn*



This month second graders will build on their note reading and listening skills. They will review reading pitches **so-la-mi** on a 3-line staff and will add **do** (what we sometimes call the “home tone.”) Ending on note **do** is what makes music sound like it’s the end of the song! Students will play the melody of “Apple Tree” (using pitches **mi-so-do**) on Orff instruments (xylophones, metallophones, and glockenspiels) and will play the fun game that goes with it. Second graders will hone their listening skills to identify the form of music (parts that sound the same/different) in the song, “Troika,” by the famous composer, Sergei Prokofiev. It is a great song for winter! We will also learn one of the students’ favorite folk dances, “Sasha.” It gets everyone up and moving and dancing with many friends in class! A **big** thank you to the Stonington Education Fund which awarded DMS music a new instrument, coming soon! We can’t wait to play the contrabass bar that is going to sound awesome with our Orff instrumentarium. It’s a low pitch that will be great for many steady beat activities as well as for accompanying students while they’re singing. Thank you, SEF!

## Physical Education

*Mrs. Castodio*



Second graders have been super busy this school year learning new warm-up exercises, engaging in longer run periods to increase their heart rates in a much larger gymnasium, and learning some new jump rope tricks as well. All of these activities take place within minutes of arriving at the gym, so they become very busy bees very quickly. Second graders have also been fine-tuning their eye-hand coordination skills through activities and games that involve bouncing and catching objects at high, medium and low levels. One example of this is the game of Four Square. Another favorite game of theirs is Gold Rush, where they can learn to enhance their game strategy skills and take them to the next level. More recently we have switched gears and have started to work on our rhythmic unit. Games like Freeze Dance, Circle Stoop, and Musical Snowballs teach students to move to rhythmic patterns while challenging their listening skills. At home students can turn up the music and have a dance party for a bit of heart healthy exercise. Give it a try! I bet you’ll enjoy the fun and your heart will thank you for it!

**Art***Miss Biernacki*

Second grade just finished up a lesson on Scandinavian folk art. We looked at pictures of wooden Dala Horses from Sweden as inspiration to make colorful, paper animals. The animals were decorated with symmetrical floral designs, a common folk art theme. We will continue learning about symmetry for our next project, which is inspired by Middle Eastern art. One of the artists we will explore is Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian. She creates beautiful and intricate kaleidoscope-like pieces. We will look at her work and discuss why artists might want to use symmetry in their art. Then, using simple geometric shapes, we will create symmetrical patterns on foil tiles. The finished pieces will be colorful, shiny, and unique!

**Library***Mrs. Anderson-Halbert*

January is National Hobby Month. What better month to learn something new! Being stuck inside during the cold weather can give you ample time to find a new hobby. The library is a great resource to learn something new, as we have cookbooks, books about computer coding, drawing, crafting, origami, scrapbooking, upcycling, and other fun activities like knitting, sewing, or collecting stamps, coins, or comic books! Of course my favorite hobby is reading – so why not check out a book about your favorite author from the biography section? No matter what your hobby is, the library is an excellent resource for you. The public libraries in town also have a great selection of books and programs to teach you new hobbies!

