



DMS Newsflash

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After-School Opportunities

Dear Parents/Guardians,

With the addition of 5th Grade to Deans Mill School this year, we have been able to increase after-school opportunities for our students. Through consideration of past programming and innovative thinking from our staff members, we are able to introduce some fun learning, leadership, athletic, and social opportunities for our students.

Activities include:

INVENTION CONVENTION

Invention Convention will provide 4th and 5th grade students with opportunities to develop critical-thinking and creative problem-solving skills through invention and innovation, instilling the spirit of ingenuity in students now and for the rest of their lives. Each session will highlight the NGSS science and engineering practices through the process of invention and innovation. A school-based judging process will identify exceptional student inventors. This activity will take place weekly from February to April. Letters were sent home to notify students/parents earlier this month.

BUDDY PROGRAM

The goal of the program is to establish partnerships between 5th Grade (mentors) with Kindergarteners (mentees). This program allows the fifth graders to take a leadership role in their school community while helping and encouraging kindergarteners. Students involved in this program will participate in three activities a month— a Buddy Lunch, Buddy Learning, and a Buddy Activity (after school). This program is off to a great start!

STUDENT SENATE

Student Senate is a student organization dedicated to school and community service and assisting in special school-wide events and activities. Student Senate members will be working together to learn skills associated with leadership, decision-making, cooperation, and effective communication. 5th grade students can apply to be senators and are chosen from a lottery. Student Senate is available to 5th grade students and there will be a fall and winter session that meets weekly before school. Sign ups have already taken place and our Student Senators are hard at work organizing school-wide events.

FAIRY TAIL STEM

Fairy Tale STEM Challenges is an after-school program that will integrate literacy, math, science, and social studies. Students will listen to a variety of Fairy Tales and work cooperatively on STEM challenges as an extension of the stories. The goal of the program is for students to collaborate in order to design structures, problem solve, and think creatively. Fairy Tail STEM will be offered to students in Grades 2 and 3 and will meet in the winter weekly after school. More information will be sent home in December!

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CROSS FIT KIDS

CrossFit Kids is a fitness program designed to help 4th and 5th grade students develop and improve general physical fitness in order to prepare kids to be safe in sports and life in general. The class combines fun and functional fitness together to create a motivating atmosphere for students to foster a lifelong love of physical activity. There will be two sessions held before school in the winter and spring. Sign ups are taking place now!

SCRAPBOOK THEATER

Scrapbook Theater is a PTO-sponsored activity that is putting on a production in January of Aladdin Kids. Students in Grades 2 through 5 had the opportunity to participate in this program where they have the opportunity to learn acting, singing, and dancing skills. The group has practice after school twice a week to prepare for their production. We look forward to their performance on Wednesday, January 29th.

UNIFIED THEATER

Unified theater looks to establish connections and foster friendships between students with and without disabilities in Grades Kindergarten through 2nd. Unified Theater uses theater games, pantomime, children’s books and dramatic play to enhance students’ creativity, teamwork and social skills. Unified Theater took place this fall and students did a great job role playing and showing their creative sides!

UNIFIED SPORTS

We are able to conduct Unified Sports programs for students in Grades Kindergarten through 2nd and in 3rd through 5th grades. Unified Sports is a program where disabled and non-disabled peers work together to foster relationships and develop skills while participating in athletic activities. Both programs will run in the spring. More information will be sent home closer to the start date.

UNIFIED SOCIAL CLUB

Unified Social Club is an after-school opportunity for disabled and non-disabled peers to participate in a variety of activities and cooperative games for students in Grades 3 through 5. Students will work together to create projects, play games, solve problems, and create new friendships. This program helps foster positive attitudes, compassion for others in the school setting, and leadership. Unified Social Club will take place in the winter. More information will be sent home closer to the start date.

More specific information about each program and contact information will be posted on the Deans Mill School website under the Student Life tab. Our staff will continue to share out these outstanding opportunities through the DMS Morning News, social media, and general news blast.

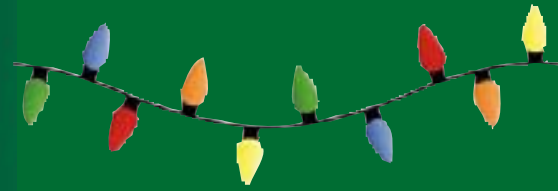
Happy Holidays,



Important Dates

December

- 12 Board of Education • District Office • 7 PM
- 20 Spirit Day: Wear Your Favorite Holiday Clothing
- 20 Early Dismissal • 12:10 PM
- 23-1/1 Holiday Recess



- 9 Board of Education • District Office • 7 PM
- 20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day Observance • No School
- 27 PTO Meeting • DMS • 5:30 PM
- 31 PTO Trivia Night • Westerly Yacht Club • 6 to 8 PM



Specials Update

Our goal for the year is to keep families informed about grade level curriculum in Art, Library, 5th Grade Band, Music, and Physical Education, and how they can support their children at home.

Art

Miss Biernacki



First grade students have been learning about visual texture. Texture refers to how a surface feels. Sometimes when we make art we have to create the appearance of texture, even if we can't really feel it. We will start our exploration of texture by painting snowy winter trees. We'll feel pieces of tree bark for inspiration. After that, we'll start a collage project. We'll look at some examples of artists who use collage in their art, like Eric Carle and Lois Elhert. We'll paint and manipulate papers to create our own textures. Ask your child to identify different textures around the house. Look for soft, fluffy carpets or rough brick walls. Can we predict how something will feel before we touch it? Texture is all around us! This project will allow your children to explore different materials while expanding their art vocabulary.

Library

Mrs. Anderson-Halbert



Digital Citizenship is an important part of being responsible online. Through December we will talk about what that means for us in our virtual communities. Third graders will talk about building strong passwords and what the norms and goals of different online communities are. Fourth graders will discuss finding a healthy media balance and types of information that is personal or private. Fifth graders will discuss click bait and cyberbullying. In addition to digital citizenship, fifth graders have been exploring some computer science terms such as pixels, algorithms, and computational thinking.

For digital citizenship activities for home and parental media reviews, please visit: <https://www.commonensemedia.org/>.

Physical Education

Mrs. LaPalme



First grade students have been working on throwing and catching skills through the use of games and activities. The students have worked on rolling, throwing underhand and overhand to self and to a target. Throughout the year, we will be continuing to work on teamwork and working with others through good sportsmanship. Ask your child what s/he can do to show good sportsmanship throughout the day. We will be starting to work on kicking and dribbling a ball along the ground. We will play a variety of games that enforce keeping the ball close and keeping your eyes up and off the ball.

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Music

Mrs. McMinn



This month first grade students will continue to do a variety of rhythm, steady beat, and singing activities. They will improve their skills reading rhythms using quarter notes, eighth notes, and quarter rests. Students can already identify these notes by sight. This month, they will be able to dictate what they hear with the "Popsicle Stick Game." For example, students will hear a four-beat pattern and then will notate it using popsicle sticks for quarter notes, eighth notes and quarter rests. This is tricky, but I know they can do it! First graders will continue to practice playing a steady beat on the Orff instruments (xylophones, metallophones, glockenspiels) to accompany themselves while singing. They will also get a lot of practice using the pitches so and mi, in songs such as "Engine, Engine," and "Teddy Bear." In addition, they will also sing some favorite songs for our Holiday Sing Along, such as "Up on the Housetop" and "I Have a Little Dreidel." At home you can practice rhythm patterns with your child. Clap your hands, pat your lap, or play an instrument and have your child echo the pattern back. Start with short patterns first and then increase their length and complexity. Have your child be the leader. You can also have your child figure out the rhythm or "the way the words go" to familiar nursery rhymes. S/he can say the nursery rhyme and clap the rhythm of the words. Happy music making!



5th Grade Band

Fifth Grade Band students have been working very hard this month! Many enthusiastic musicians have earned stars on our Band Wall of Fame by practicing and performing songs on their own for the class. While earlier in the school year we played many songs by ear, we are now working on learning to read songs with musical notation. Those who would like music note flashcards for extra practice with note reading may ask for some during band. Continue to encourage your children to practice their instruments at home (they can play on their own or use the backup accompaniments emailed out earlier this fall). The holidays are a great time to play for relatives and show off new skills.

Thanks for your continued support at home!

PTO Update

December is a busy month for everyone. We appreciate our community for all they do to help us support the students and staff. During this month we are trying to limit our activity. We have our annual appeal still going on, the Giving Tree for the PNC, and we are hosting a luncheon for the DMS Staff on Wednesday, December 18th. A SignUpGenius will go out shortly for the luncheon.

We hope you all have a wonderful holiday season.

Katie Quinlan,
DMS PTO President

Vision and Hearing Referrals

All referrals have been sent out to those students who needed follow-up screening by a medical provider. Please return the completed referral to the nurse as soon as possible.

Nurse Notification

Please notify the school nurse if any students have been diagnosed with the flu or with any other communicable disease.

Notify the school nurse with the nature of your child's absence. There are some students and staff at DMS who require special monitoring due to their immune systems and susceptibility to viral illnesses, so please inform the nurse as soon as possible when your child is ill so she can take the steps necessary to keep everyone as healthy as possible at school.

Your cooperation is greatly instrumental in helping to keep the DMS community healthy. Thank you!

Illness Policy

It is imperative during the cold and flu season that you are reminded of the illness policy. If a child has a temperature over 100 degrees, or if the child is judged to be ill by the nurse, the child will be sent home. **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 to vomiting and diarrhea.

Flu Season

As we head into flu season, remember to keep preventive health care at the top of your to-do list. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends annual influenza vaccine for everyone six months of age and older.

Clothing Reminders

- Change of clothing in each student's lockers (update as the seasons change)
- Remember to have your child wear athletic shoes for PE class
- Appropriate clothing for outdoor recess, hats, gloves, and coats

Children feel most comfortable in their own clothing.

The nurse is currently looking for lightly used donations of the following clothing:

Athletic pants and leggings	Boys sizes 8-16	
Athletic shorts	Boys sizes 8-16	Girls sizes 8-16
Long-sleeved shirts	Boys sizes 8-16	Girls sizes 8-16
Short-sleeved shirts		Girls sizes 8-16
Underwear	Boys sizes 5-16	
Socks	All sizes	

Eat healthy, exercise, get plenty of sleep, and stay hydrated!

Happy Holidays!

Nurse Lori

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