



# DMS Newsflash

March 2021

## DMS Reading Week and Promoting Reading with your Child

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We start off every March with **DMS Reading Week**. This year's theme for the week is "**Take a Trip With a Book.**" Throughout the week, students will engage in opportunities to celebrate reading and literacy by participating in Stop, Drop & Read time, listening to Virtual Read Alouds, viewing staff share-out books that like make them feel like they are visiting another place, and participating in a **live** Google Meet Question & Answer Session with Guest Author and DMS Dad, Scott Rothman. Scott conducted pre-recordings of his book *Attack of the Underwear Dragon* for grade levels to view, and will follow up with classes with a personalized question and answer session. While this week is a great and fun opportunity to promote reading, reading is always a key priority of ours to promote literacy throughout the year.

**As a parent, you can support your child's literacy and language development by making reading a daily part of your home lives.**

**Here are some helpful tips to promote reading at home:**

🍏 **Make reading a daily habit.**

If reading becomes a part of your daily routine, it will become a habit for your child.

🍏 **Read in front of your child and with your child.**

Read books, magazines, and novels that you enjoy in front of your child. Kids learn from what they observe.

🍏 **Create a reading space.**

Picking a well lit, quiet, and comfortable spot in your home will help make reading a pleasurable experience for your child.

🍏 **Take trips to the library.**

The library is full of great resources and new books for all. The library is a great community for reading.

🍏 **Let your child pick what to read.**

Kids and adults are more likely to read if they read something that interests them. If you are concerned about finding the right reading level for your child, talk to their teacher or consult with a librarian.

🍏 **Find reading moments in everyday life.**

Help your child keep an eye out for reading moments. Look for things like road signs, grocery lists, directions, and recipes.

🍏 **Re-read favorite books.**

Children love to read their favorite books over and over again. Re-reading gives them the opportunity to connect the words they see and hear and increase comprehension skills.

**Happy Reading!**

TIPS REFERENCED FROM: [HTTPS://UNDERSTOOD.ORG](https://understood.org)



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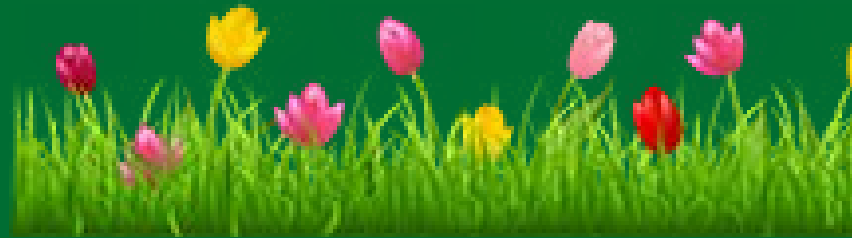
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PTO News

# Important Dates

## March

- 1-5 DMS Reading Week •  
Take a Trip With a Book
- 2 Spirit Day • **Wear Tropical Clothing**
- 5 Spirit Day • **Wear Arctic Gear**
- 9 PTO Meeting • 6:30 PM
- 11 Board of Education Meeting •  
District Office • 7 PM
- 12 Professional Development •  
No School for students
- 19 Report Cards Issued • Cohort B
- 22 Report Cards Issued • Cohort A
- 22 Down Syndrome Awareness Day •  
Wear **Yellow**



## April

- 1 Autism Awareness Day • Wear **Blue**
- 2 No School • Good Friday Observance
- 8 Board of Education Meeting •  
District Office • 7 PM
- 12-16 Spring Recess • No School
- 20 Spirit Day • **Crazy Sock Day**



## Specials Update

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

### Music

*Mrs. McMinn*



It has been a joy to continue to make music with the students in the music room this year! The students have adapted very well and are always ready to play instruments, move, and listen to music when they are in class. They work hard and have risen to the occasion! A special thank you to all of the families and adults who help students with their work at home. I know it can be challenging at times, but the effort the students have been putting forth both in class and with distance learning work has been excellent. One thing that has brought me happiness in all of this is seeing the students singing and playing music games with their families at home through their videos in Google classroom or Seesaw. You can see how proud the students are when they teach and share their work with others. Keep up the good work! Please [reach out to me](#) if you have any questions.

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**Art***Miss Biernacki*

I want to thank all of the parents and guardians for helping facilitate distance learning this year. I know how challenging it has been and I appreciate all of your support. It is my sincere hope that art class is enjoyable for students and that the opportunity to create provides some much needed peace. I'm so proud of all of our students at DMS! Please keep up the great work through this second rotation. There will continue to be activities posted for students to complete at home on distance learning days. As always, please [contact me](#) with any questions, I'm happy to talk!

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

As March begins, our first cycle classes come to the end! It's sad to think I won't see so many friends again until next year, but I have loved seeing your responses in SeeSaw and Google Classroom! Please remember to wrap up any unfinished work, as you can always submit your work late, and please feel free to reach out if you have any questions at [kirsten.anderson@stoningtonschools.org](mailto:kirsten.anderson@stoningtonschools.org). Just because the library cycle is ending doesn't mean you can't check out more books! Students in Grade K-2 will have a chance to check out books in their classroom and students in grades 3-5 can request books through the library system, Destiny. A link and directions is available in the library Google Classroom, which will stay open the rest of the year for reference. Distance Learning students can also email Mrs. Anderson about arranging a time to pick up books from the DL bins! Happy reading, my friends!

**Physical Education***Mrs. LaPalme*

It has been so amazing to see all of the incredible work the students are putting in during distance learning and here at DMS. Thank you to all of the parents and guardians for supporting this learning while at home. Every student that has come into the gym has worked hard and put in their best effort regardless of the activity that we do. I am so happy to see all the fun and laughter that is happening while they are moving! Feel free to [contact me](#) with any questions or concerns.

**S** **p** **e** **m** **s** **i** **a** **l** **s**

# Mental Health Update

Dear Families,

The stress of balancing multiple roles has never been more prevalent, and there is not a parental pandemic guidebook to help navigate these circumstances. Many of you are managing careers, home schooling, household duties, child care, etc. in addition to trying to maintain a positive household environment.

Over the past few months, I have heard from many parents who've expressed how they feel it's almost impossible to meet everyone's expectations, whether it is those of their child's school, their work supervisor, or family members. I recently read an article entitled *Mindful Parenting During Covid-19*, by Joey Fung, Ph.D. Her words seem to capture this feeling of frustration and inadequacy:

*You may be bombarded with implicit messages of things you can do more or better. A couple times a week, I receive emails from teachers on ideas to stimulate learning and development for my kids. Each message feels like a reminder of what my kids are missing out, because I do not have the bandwidth to create and sustain these learning experiences.*

*It is easy to compare. And we always fall short. We can always do more, do better, or be more productive. But that creates a sense of exhaustion.*

*The to-do list is never-ending. As soon as one task is complete, another appears.*

Although there is not a simple solution to feeling less overwhelmed, particularly during Covid-19, you can focus on being more mindful that as parents and pseudo educators you will do your best, but most likely it will not be perfect. You can take more time to practice self-care, whether it's leaving your house a total disaster to work out or going for a walk early in the morning to catch the sunrise (dress warmly!). Most importantly, remember to reach out to your family, friends, and school resources for help when needed.

We are here for you.

Take care and be well!

Nora Selinger  
DMS and SMS School Guidance Counselor  
[Noraselinger@stoningtonschools.org](mailto:Noraselinger@stoningtonschools.org)

DMS  
MENTAL  
HEALTH



**SPS Mental Health Team Contacts** include:

Alexis Moniz, **School Psychologist**  
[alexis.moniz@stoningtonschools.org](mailto:alexis.moniz@stoningtonschools.org)

Nora Selinger, **School Counselor**  
[nora.selinger@stoningtonschools.org](mailto:nora.selinger@stoningtonschools.org)

Kara Robenhymer, **School Psychologist**  
[kara.robeymer@stoningtonschools.org](mailto:kara.robeymer@stoningtonschools.org)

## Vision and hearing screenings for distance learners

Recently a SignUpGenius was emailed for you to sign up to have your distance learner's vision and hearing screened. If you have any questions or were not able to attend these sessions, please contact the school nurse.

## COVID-19 Information

### Healthy DMS Community

Our goal is to keep DMS healthy and in school! We ask that you continue to follow the [Parent/Family Responsibility Form - Health Safety Requirements](#).

### Connecticut Travel Advisory

Notify the school nurse of your travel plans, including the date of return to Connecticut. Please indicate if your family plans on testing or is planning to quarantine.

[Connecticut Travel Advisory](#).

### Important CARDIAC update regarding children who have tested positive for COVID-19

Has your child been diagnosed with COVID-19 or had a positive test for COVID-19?

If your child has or had COVID-19, please contact your child's pediatrician to set up an appointment for clearance to return to activity (e.g., sports, dance, exercise, or competition).

It has been shown that COVID-19 can affect the heart and lungs. A serious, but uncommon concern is a heart condition called myocarditis. Before returning to activity, it's important for all children and adolescents who had COVID-19 to be seen by their doctor and screened for symptoms related to myocarditis. (PROHEALTH PHYSICIANS, 2/2021)

### COVID-19 VACCINE

Please help us share the word with those who are eligible to receive the COVID-19 Vaccine. Visit [Ledge Light Health District COVID-19 Vaccination Page](#) for information on eligibility and resources for scheduling vaccination appointments. There are some kinks in the system, but please do not give up! Please reach out to me with any questions or concerns that you may have about the COVID-19 vaccine.

Please share your vaccination photos to help spread the word!

**We are all in this together!**

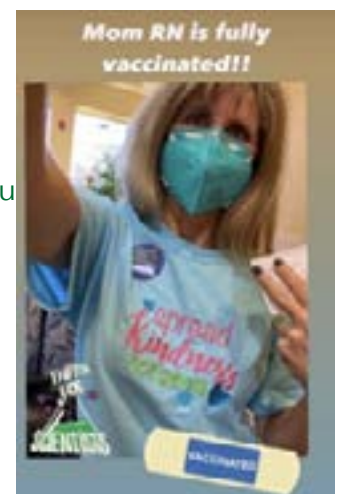
**Trust Science!**

**Be a part of the process to end the pandemic.**

I recently had my second dose of and I am now my part to protect myself, my loved ones, and you- my DMS community!

Please join me and do your part!

**Vaccination # 2 =Fully Vaccinated!!!**



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# Facts About the COVID-19 Vaccine

[ct.gov/covidvaccine](https://www.ct.gov/covidvaccine)



## Who makes the vaccine?

Currently, two vaccines are authorized and recommended to prevent COVID-19: **Pfizer-BioNTech** and **Moderna**

Both vaccines went through a rigorous, transparent clinical trial and approval process and were found to be >94% effective.

**>94%  
EFFECTIVE**

Medical experts agree that both vaccines are safe and effective at protecting you against COVID-19.



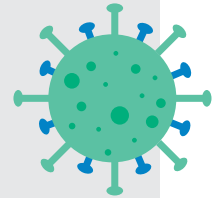
## Does the COVID-19 vaccine change my DNA?

**No.** The COVID-19 mRNA vaccines cannot alter your DNA in any way.

## What if I've already had COVID-19, do I still need to get vaccinated?

**Yes.** It is important to get vaccinated for longer and better protection.

According to the CDC, "because there are severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, the vaccine should be offered to you regardless of whether you already had COVID-19 infection."



## Will the vaccine give me COVID-19?

**No.** The vaccines do not contain anything that can make you sick.

The COVID-19 vaccine is an mRNA. mRNA vaccines give our cells instructions for making a harmless protein found on the outside surface of the virus that causes COVID-19. This "spike protein" trains our immune system to target the virus when it shows up.



## Will the vaccine protect me from getting sick with COVID-19?

**Yes.** The vaccine can keep you safe by preparing your immune system to immediately recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19 before it can spread and cause damage.



## Do I still need to wear a mask?

**Yes.** We will still need to protect our families, friends and communities from COVID-19 while people are getting vaccinated: Mask, Social Distance, Avoid Large Groups, Practice Good Hand Hygiene.



## Where can I find more information about the COVID-19 vaccine?

There are several reputable sources to learn more:

- Center for Disease Control (**CDC.gov**)
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (**HHS.gov**)
- World Health Organization (**WHO.int**)



## When will I be protected?

You must receive **2 doses** of the vaccine 3-4 weeks apart for maximum protection against COVID-19. Full protection occurs about 2 weeks after your second dose.



### SOURCES

- [www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/index.html)
- [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/evalwebs.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/evalwebs.htm)
- [info.primecaretech.com/hubfs/Infographics/Answers-to-Your-Covid-19-Vaccine-Questions.pdf](https://info.primecaretech.com/hubfs/Infographics/Answers-to-Your-Covid-19-Vaccine-Questions.pdf)
- [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/mrna.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/mrna.html)



Families, students and staff are doing a fantastic job adhering to the guidelines and it is working! The incidence of spread within the DMS school community continues to be minimal. Keep up the good work!

Keep doing your part and continue to keep the DMS community **healthy!**  
We are in this together!



Nurse Lori  
[DMSnurse@stoningtonschools.org](mailto:DMSnurse@stoningtonschools.org)



## SPS Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Recently, seven Stonington High School Alumni and one current senior graciously agreed to join in a discussion about their experiences in Stonington Schools specific to race, racism, equity, and inclusion. Panelists included members from both the BIPOC and white communities. Questions ranged in scope from areas of improvement in curriculum, instructional pedagogy, and overall social-emotional interactions with peers. The recordings will be edited to provide approximately 45-60 minutes of video to be used districtwide on the March 12<sup>th</sup> professional development day. The members of the district DEI team will assist in facilitating the post-viewing activities with teachers and administrators engaging in small group discussions and identifying specific actionable items for their practices.

This month a new districtwide podcast series will be launched to share information of interest to families and communities members about a wide variety of topics. The first episode will feature Timothy Flanagan, Social Studies teacher and Fulbright Alumnus, from Stonington Middle School. Tim will share exciting updates about his newly formed Stonington Middle School Anti-racist Reading Circle. More information will follow on accessing the podcast series.

Guest children's author, Tangular Irby, will be visiting 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders in West Vine Street and Deans Mill Schools in March to read her newly published book, *Pearl and the Her Gee's Bend Quilt*. In addition to being a children's author, Tangular is a former elementary school teacher and principal who is currently an adjunct professor at Sacred Heart University in the Teacher Preparation Program.



At the high school, students in grades 9-12 recently participated in a school-wide microaggression activity during their VOICE TASC block. Summarized feedback from both students and faculty from this activity was shared during our staff meeting and student advisory group.

If you have any questions about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work at DMS school, please contact [Tom Bousquet](#).



**Dear DMS Community,**

Spring is approaching and with spring brings new excitement. Although this year is very different than previous years, the PTO is looking forward to a few special events: Read Across America Week, Science and Tech Day, Field Day, and the 5<sup>th</sup> grade party. We are also in the process of getting sidewalks and plants for the outdoor classroom! This year we have done very limited fundraising. We were in a fortunate position in that we were able to support what we needed to fund without the burden of doing virtual fundraisers because of the success of our fundraisers in the past. We have canceled any fundraisers that we had planned for the spring as we realize it is still a difficult time and we don't want to add any unnecessary stress. Here is an update on what we have been doing and what the future plans are for the remainder of this school year.

**Read Across America Week**

The DMS PTO is proud to host Author, Screenwriter and DMS Dad, Scott Rothman, as our 2020/21 Author/Illustrator. Recently published, *Attack of the Underwear Dragon*, illustrated by Pete Oswald, is a delightful read about a small brave knight who faces his fears to save his town. Scott will be visiting virtually with students on Tuesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> to discuss his creative writing process.

**Outdoor Classroom**

We are very excited to announce that Black Dog Concrete will be donating the labor and machines to install stamped concrete for the outdoor classroom. This is a huge savings! We want to thank them for the donation and support for this project. We can't move forward with this project without getting the space graded and sidewalks installed. The stamped concrete will create a path throughout the space that will be handicap accessible and give the space a more usable function and be inclusive for all. Our only fundraiser that we are doing this year will be to raise funds for the plants for the space. It will be sponsorship based. Please be on the watch for a flyer to come home in March. (UPDATE: FLYER IS ON THE LAST PAGE OF THIS NEWSFLASH ISSUE!)

**Yearbook**

Pictures needed!!! The yearbook this year will not be possible without your help with photos! Since photographers are unable to go into the school at this time, we need your help with getting photos for each student. Please send in photos of distance learning and spirit days to [dmsptopictures@gmail.com](mailto:dmsptopictures@gmail.com) We will also be voting at the next PTO meeting (Tuesday, March 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:30PM) about gifting free yearbooks for all students. This year is a part of history, and something each student should have a piece of. The PTO is also trying to limit its ask for funds from parents at this time and in turn support our parents who have supported us over the years. Would love to hear other options and thoughts.

**Recess Equipment**

One of our biggest expenses of this school year is recess equipment. We started off the year with getting each classroom a full set of recess equipment. Typically this is shared equipment for the school but since the students are unable to share the equipment we bought a full kit for each classroom, 24 of everything! We just checked in with all the classrooms to see what they were missing or what was broken. We filled the missing equipment, and they hopefully will be all set for the remainder of the year. This in total was a \$3,000 expense.



### Science and Tech Day

Jen Rothman and her committee are planning on bringing another fun-filled day for Science and Tech Day. This day is always a fun-filled day for the students and, even though it will be different again this year, we want to continue on with this event. Thank you, Jenn, for putting this together.

### Field Day

DMS is hoping to offer an in-person and revised field day at the school while maintaining our Covid restrictions. The PTO will be supporting this event by helping provide the needed supplies for the games and relays. A committee will be put together to start brainstorming possibilities and ideas for our June field day (s).

### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Party

A committee has formed and has started planning for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade party. If you missed the first meeting and would like to join the next meeting, it will be March 11<sup>th</sup> at 7PM.  
<http://meet.google.com/dpo-zecj-tjo> An email was already sent out to all 5<sup>th</sup> grade parents asking for 6 photos for the slide show. Please send these photos to [dmsptopictures@gmail.com](mailto:dmsptopictures@gmail.com).

#### *a note from Jamie Cornell:*

Hello Deans Mill 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Parents!

We are in the process of planning the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Celebration.

One way that we would like to honor our 5<sup>th</sup> Graders is to create a slide show highlighting their elementary years K-5.

Please send me the following by **March 31<sup>st</sup>**:

- **6 pictures of your child in JPEG format, one picture for each year (K-5).** The pictures do not have to be taken at Deans Mill. Please only send 6 pictures per child because this is all that will be included in the presentation.

- Your child's first and last name
  - Your child's 5<sup>th</sup> grade homeroom teacher's name.
  - Send all photos to [dmsptopictures@gmail.com](mailto:dmsptopictures@gmail.com)
- Thank you.

### PTO Treasurer needed

The PTO is looking for a treasurer for the 2021/2022 school year. Our current treasurer's last year at DMS is next year. She would like to be able to make the transition smooth and be there to help the new treasurer, if and when needed. Attending bimonthly PTO meetings helps in understanding all that goes on behind the scenes.

If you are interested, please contact Tracy Brunelle at [tracyibrunelle@gmail.com](mailto:tracyibrunelle@gmail.com) or 860.334.5379.

We look forward to spring and all that it has to hold.

Thank you,

Katie Quinlan  
DMS PTO President  
[quinlanpto@gmail.com](mailto:quinlanpto@gmail.com)



# DMS PTO Agenda

March 9, 2021 at 6:30 PM

Google Meet link: <https://meet.google.com/fxx-dboy-pdj?hs=122&authuser=0>

1. **Call meeting to order**
2. **Officers:**
  - President - Katie Quinlan
  - Vice-President - Jenni Adkins
  - Treasurer - Tracy Brunelle
  - Secretary - Jennifer Flynn
3. **Secretary's Report**
  - Approval?
4. **Treasurer's Report**
  - Approval?
5. **New Business**
  - a. **Principal's Report**
    - Jenn McCurdy and Tom Bousquet
  - b. **Budget**
    - update on removed spring fundraisers
  - c. **Outdoor Classroom** - update
    - approval needed for funds.
      - i. Material costs estimated around \$2,500
      - ii. Black Dog Concrete Donating Labor and Machines - thank you!
      - iii. Sponsorship fundraiser going out for plantings, benches, and archway
  - d. **Yearbook** - vote on free yearbook
  - e. **Recess equipment** - update
  - f. **Field Day** - creating a committee
  - g. **Treasurer** - need a treasurer for 2021-2022 school year
6. **Upcoming Chair Committee Updates**
  - a. **Liaisons**
    - Ashley Tewell
  - b. **Book Fair**
    - Stephanie Ragsdale and Heidi Redfern
  - c. **Annual Appeal**
    - Tracy Brunelle
  - d. **Teacher Appreciation**
    - Jenni Adkins
  - e. **Science And Tech Day**
    - Jen Rothman
  - f. **Cultural Enrichment**
    - Merin Troutman

# DMS Outdoor Classroom Sponsorship

- \$5 Seed of Hope
- \$10 Sprout Potential
- \$20 Little Bud

## Bulbs, Bulbs & More Bulbs!

(Examples: Tulips, Daffodils, Irises, Dahlias,  
Lilies, Snowdrops, Crocuses)

- \$25 Germinator
- \$40 Sunshine Server
- \$50 Photosynthesizer

## Shrubs & Bushes

(Examples: Boxwoods, Hydrangeas, Butterfly Bushes,  
Dogwoods, Bleeding Heart Bushes, Silky Dogwood)

- \$100 Green Thumb
- \$150 Pollinator
- \$200 Gardening Angel
- \$500 Master Gardener

## Foundation to Succeed

(Examples: Benches, Archway, Trees, Soil, Tools)

We are pleased to recognize our sponsors! What is your family and/or  
Business name, so that we may properly credit you? Deadline is March 26th.

-----  
Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email address of  
sponsor \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Make checks payable to "DMS PTO"**

**\*\*\*If an excess of funds is raised, the remaining will be held in the PTO account in the  
Outdoor Classroom budget line and will be used only for future outdoor classroom  
needs and for yearly maintenance of this space.**

Stonington believes in education