



DMS Newsflash

A p r i l 2 0 2 1

Moving Closer Toward Normal

We are very excited to move closer toward “normal” as four day in-person learning is now available to all DMS students. The COVID 19 pandemic has impacted all of us in many different ways and we ask for your continued patience and support as we make this transition.

Adjustments

Over the next few weeks, teachers and students will be adjusting to being in larger classes, and time will be needed to re-establish classroom routines, expectations, and peer relationships. Students will be adjusting to changes to their instructional spaces, reconnecting with peers they have not seen face-to-face in over a year, navigating new areas of the building for Specials, and adjusting to more students in the classrooms. Therefore, teachers will need to allocate time to review safety protocols, classroom procedures and expectations. Our teachers and staff will help students make connections and develop a sense of classroom community as the dynamic of the classroom changes.

Safety

To accommodate increased class sizes, we will now be operating with students being a minimum distance of 3 feet apart when they are in class or eating. Students and staff will continue to follow the safety protocols that were established at the start of the year. Mask wearing, social distancing, and frequent hand washing will continue to take place. Our maintenance department will continue to regularly sanitize various locations throughout the building, and a deep cleaning of the building will occur every Wednesday. Please continue to report any COVID-related symptoms that your child may have to our school nurse.

Learning at Home/Full Distance Learning

As a result of teachers having to focus their attention on the students in front of them, while also supporting our full distance learning students, we will not be able to accommodate requests to learn from home on any given day. Students who are registered for in-person learning will be expected to be in person on those four days. If your child is not feeling well, you should notify the office that he or she will be absent for that day and talk to the nurse about the requirements to return to school. Please note that we will only approve students to be temporary distance learning students **IF** you are being instructed to keep your child home due to school/state quarantining rules and/or due to COVID. We can not accommodate requests for temporary shifts to distance learning due to home schedules, appointments, or travel. Please recognize

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that in many classrooms, teachers do not have any distance learning students and therefore are not set up to be live streaming every day unless given advanced notice.

Full distance learning students will continue to join their classroom’s instruction for ELA and Math. Our full distance learners will continue to have the same classroom teachers and will receive both whole group and small group instruction. In addition, grade level staff may work collaboratively to support distance learning students for small group instruction to make sure they continue to receive the attention and instruction they need and deserve.

Dismissal

Lastly, teachers will assume that your child’s dismissal plan will remain the same as it was when they were in school in the hybrid model. If you need to change your child’s dismissal plan due to the returning to school for four days, it is important to complete the [Daily Dismissal Plan](#) and send it in with your child.

We appreciate all of the continuous support you have provided us as we try to create the best educational experience possible to our students.

Sincerely,
Jenn & Tom



Gifted Identification

Attention 4th Grade Parents/Guardians

We are accepting parent nominations for gifted identification. In addition to parental nominations, teachers also participate in the nomination process. The Stonington Public Schools identifies students for gifted identification, but does not provide a specific program for these students. If you are interested in nominating your child, please contact Mr. Bousquet by 4/21 at tombousquet@stoningtonschools.org or 860-535-2235.

Important Dates



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

May

- 3-28 Smarter Balanced & NGSS Testing Window, Grades 3-5
**More specific dates and information to come.*
- 12 Board of Education Meeting • District Office • 7 PM
- 28 Spirit Day • Patriotic Day • Wear **Red, White, & Blue**
- 31 Memorial Day Observance • No school

The SpeakUp Safety Tipline from Gaggle provides an easy way for students to share concerns about school safety and the well-being of fellow students.

Stonington Public Schools encourages students to report any concerns directly to an administrator, counselor, support staff, or trusted adult. Face-to-face interaction is always the best form of reporting to ensure we have all the necessary information to be able to act accordingly. If this is not feasible, then we encourage you to use the anonymous reporting feature described below.

Items you should report:

- **Bullying (you experience or if you observe others being bullied either in person or online)**
- **If you or another student is in crisis, depressed, self-harming or thinking about suicide**
- **Any knowledge of a planned fight or disturbance of any kind**
- **Someone threatening or bringing a weapon to school**
- **Any issue that is of concern to you**

You can use this email address, speakup@stoningtonschools.org, or call and text (860)-650-1167 to report any concerns you have about the well-being of fellow students or school safety. In order to ensure safety for everyone, please let adults know about potential safety risks, See Something Say Something.



Trained Gaggle Safety Representatives evaluate SpeakUp tips 24/7/365 and send an email regarding non-life-threatening items to designated school or district staff.

They will also call school officials in emergency situations and can even contact local law enforcement.

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



This spring there are a few exciting art contests happening in our area for children in grades K-12 that I want to bring to your attention. I strongly encourage your children to participate! I'm happy to help out however I can if you have any questions.

SUPERINTENDENT AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN ART -

Students (grades K-12) are encouraged to submit a small painting for consideration, no larger than 11"X 14" in size. Two pieces per grade level will be selected by a small committee that will include a local artist and the Superintendent (one piece per grade level at each elementary school.) The winning pieces will be framed and hung in the Superintendent's Office or elsewhere at the District Office.

The theme for the contest is "springtime."

Artwork must be completed by the end of April.

CAPITOL COLORING CONTEST WITH STATE REP. GREG HOWARD -

This is for students in grades Pre-K-5. Greg Howard is looking to decorate his legislative office with student artwork. The theme for this contest is the community. What landmarks represent our district? What are we famous for? Do we have any historical sites or statues? What comes to mind when thinking of Stonington, North Stonington, Pawcatuck, and Mystic?

Entries are due by April 9th when they will be picked up at Deans Mill School. Entries can be from individuals or groups.

Not all students will have art before the entry dates, so I would again like to offer my support. If your student would like to enter and needs help getting started, please contact me! hillary.biernacki@stoningtonschools.org

Music

Mrs. McMinn



With the warmer weather, your child can do some music activities outside, such as listening to nature's "orchestra!" Sit quietly for 1 minute and observe all of the sounds you hear. What sounds did you hear? (birds chirping, the wind, man-made sounds, water, leaves rustling, etc.) Encourage your child to recreate these sounds with body percussion, found or natural sounds (sticks, leaves, rocks, etc.) They could even make a "sound map" and draw out the area on a piece of paper and draw a symbol of what they heard in the approximate location. Share the drawing with someone and see if they can find and identify the sounds on the map

Library

Mrs. Anderson-Halbert



There are lots of great opportunities in our community libraries! The Stonington Free Library is open for browsing if you'd like to check out some new books, and is also offering curbside pick up for materials. To place a hold on materials or renew your library card, please email stonlib@stoningtonfreelibrary.org or call 860-535-0658. They also have a YouTube page with read alouds and more! Check it out [here](#).

The Mystic & Noank Library is available for browsing by appointment only. Call 860-536-7721 to make an appointment or for information about curbside pick up of books. Follow them on social media to see when contact-free grab-and-go craft bags are available and be sure to check out their [YouTube page](#) for programs like magic tricks and storytimes!

The Westerly Library is also an option for all Stonington, Pawcatuck, and Stonington-side Mystic residents! More information about getting materials from the library can be found at <https://westerlylibrary.org/librarytakeout> They are also offering storytimes, crafts, and more on their YouTube page. Keep an eye out on their social media about grab-and-go crafts!

Physical Education

Mrs. LaPalme



Now that the weather is getting warmer, there are a lot of fun active activities to do outside. There are a number of beautiful places around CT to go for a family hike. You can turn this time into a scavenger hunt around nature. See how many birds you can see, or different flowers blooming in the ground. You can also use this time to create obstacle courses around the house or even just explore the neighborhood.

Getting to know

Mrs. Cormier paraprofessional

We are excited to announce that Candida Cormier is joining the DMS staff as a paraprofessional. Originally from Westerly, Candida has called Stonington her home since 2010. She's a mom to two wonderful children, Hayley and Tyler. Candida has a diverse managerial background in the restaurant industry and retail. She enjoys being active and summer is by far her favorite time of year. Most summer days you'll find her at the beach with friends and family. She's very excited to be a part of the Deans Mill family!



CANDIDA CORMIER

Scoliosis screenings for 5th Grade girls

The State of Connecticut mandates that school nurses conduct postural screenings for female students in grade 5. School nurses will be performing this screening during the months of April and May. You will be notified of the exact date in advance so that your child can dress accordingly.

The purpose of this program is to recognize the signs of spinal curvature at its earliest stages so that the need for treatment can be determined. Specifically, scoliosis is a sideways curvature of the spine. In its early years, it is painless and develops gradually, especially during the years of rapid adolescent growth. Kyphosis, sometimes called round back, is an exaggerated forward bend of the spine and is often confused with poor posture. Many cases of curvature of the spine are mild and require only ongoing observation by a doctor after the first diagnosis. Others get progressively more severe as the child grows and require active treatment. Early treatment can prevent the development of a severe deformity which can affect a person's appearance and health.

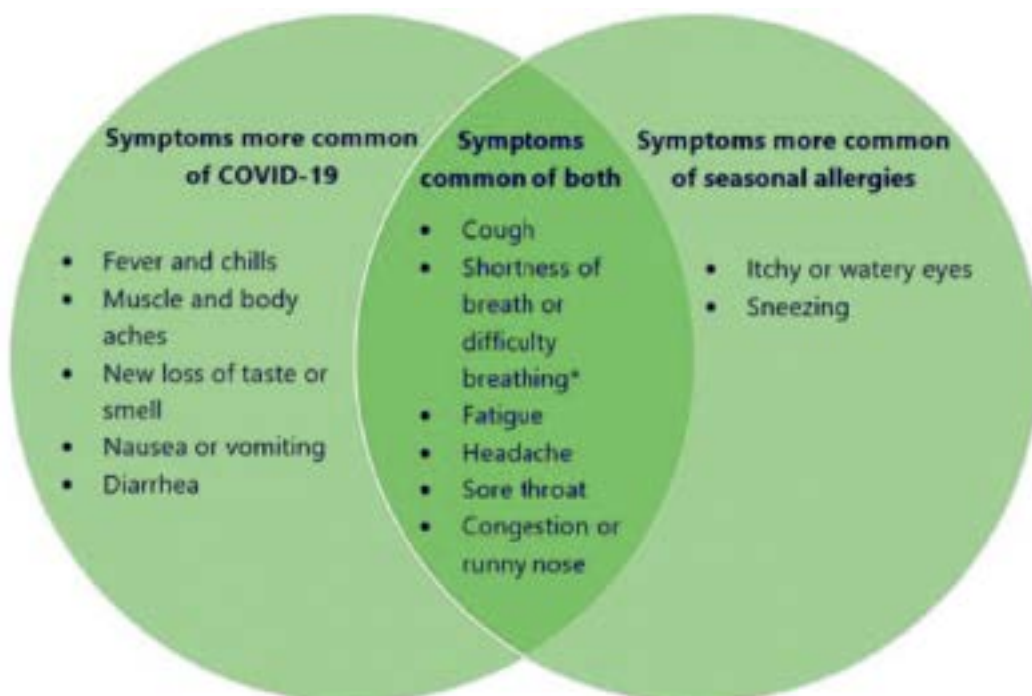
Each student will be screened individually by school nurses. The nurses will inspect the student's spine as he or she stands and then bends forward. The student's entire back from shoulders to hips need to be observed without covering. Girls should be observed wearing a two-piece bathing suit top or bra.

If further consultation is recommended, parents will be notified in writing of the findings and will be asked to seek further evaluation from their own physician.

If you have any questions, please contact your child's school nurse.

Allergy season:

As you know, allergy season is quickly approaching here in New England. Please be advised that many allergy symptoms are also consistent with COVID-19 symptoms. Please be sure to check with your child's doctor and manage symptoms accordingly.



COVID-19 Information

REMINDERS Healthy DMS Community

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

TRAVEL Regarding your upcoming travels, there are no current mandates and requirements in place for Connecticut. We encourage you to follow the recommendations and mitigation measures found on the [Connecticut Travel Advisory](#) information page whenever you plan to travel. Stonington Public Schools will not require specific mitigation measures regarding travel. Happy and safe travels!

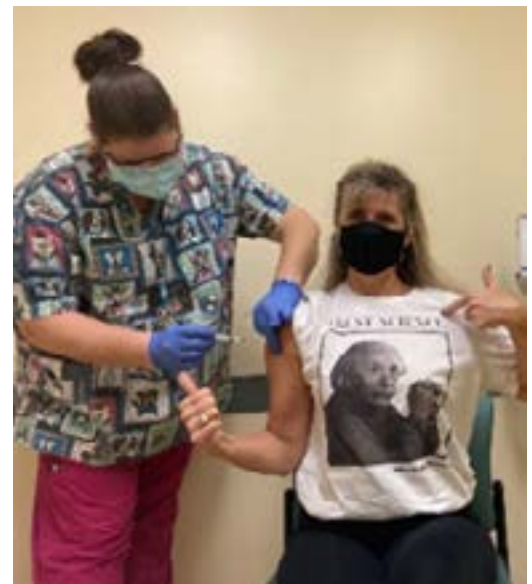
COVID-19 Vaccine

Help keep your community safe! Sign up for your vaccine! Visit [Ledge Light Health District COVID-19 Vaccination Page](#) for information on eligibility and resources for scheduling vaccination appointments. 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.

Also

Please see following pages for facts on the COVID vaccine, followed by information on Kindergarten registration.

Thank you.



Nurse Lori
DMSnurse@stoningtonschools.org

COVID-19 Vaccine Facts

Facts About the COVID-19 Vaccine

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

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.



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.



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.



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**)

SOURCES

- www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/index.html
- www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/tvalwebs.htm
- info.pfizer.com/hubs/infographics/Answers-to-Your-Covid-19-Vaccine-Questions.pdf
- www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/mrna.html



Kindergarten registration

Stonington Public Schools Kindergarten Registration 2021-2022 School Year KINDERGARTEN ONLINE REGISTRATION Opens: Monday, March 22, 2021



Stonington Public Schools uses an online enrollment program, PowerSchool Enrollment, for student registration.

- Go to stoningtonschools.org
- From the blue banner, select FAMILIES
- Select REGISTRATION
- Select: **2021-2022 New Student Registration**

<p>DEANS MILL SCHOOL Denise Gavitt, School Secretary 35 Deans Mill Rd. Stonington, CT 06378 Phone: 860-535-2235 x6103 Fax: 860-535-1417 Email: DMSRegistration@stoningtonschools.org</p>	<p>WEST VINE STREET SCHOOL Paula Shea, School Secretary 17 West Vine St. Pawcatuck, CT 06379 Phone: 860-599-5832 x8101 Fax: 860-599-1560 Email: WVSRegistration@stoningtonschools.org</p>
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ELIGIBILITY

A child must be five years old on or before January 1, 2022

***State Law requires students to register for school by age 6. If you are unsure about your child's readiness for kindergarten, feel free to contact DMS Principal, Jennifer McCurdy (jmccurdy@stoningtonschools.org) or WVSS Principal, Kathy Irvine (kirvine@stoningtonschools.org) to discuss enrollment options.*

REQUIRED REGISTRATION INFORMATION

→All documents can be faxed/scan & emailed to your school secretary or call the school to schedule a time to bring documents to be copied.

- Proof of Residency (**All 3 listed below**):
 1. SIGNED LEASE AGREEMENT OR MORTGAGE (**MANDATORY**)
 2. CURRENT UTILITY BILL (ELECTRIC, PHONE, CABLE)
 3. DRIVER'S LICENSE/CAR REGISTRATION
- Child's birth certificate or passport
- Legal guardianship papers (if applicable)
- Custody papers (if applicable)

SUBMIT HEALTH RECORDS

Please email or call the school nurse with any questions regarding health records.

<p>Lori Tavares, BSN, RN DEANS MILL SCHOOL NURSE Phone: 860-535-2235 x6116 NURSE Fax: 860-535-2392 DMShealthregistration@stoningtonschools.org</p>	<p>Karen Rollins, BSN, RN WEST VINE STREET SCHOOL NURSE Phone: 860-599-5832 x8177 NURSE Fax: 860-599-8266 WVSHealthregistration@stoningtonschools.org</p>
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- HEALTH ASSESSMENTS** must be completed prior to entry into school. For PreK and Kindergarten only, Physicals must be completed between January 1st and Dec. 31st of the calendar year the child starts school.
-If the exam was done prior to January 1st, entry to school is accepted until a new physical exam is complete one (1) year from the date of the last physical to remain compliant in school.

- IMMUNIZATION RECORDS**

Please fax or email MOST RECENT PHYSICAL & IMMUNIZATION RECORD
to your child's school nurse listed above.

**Class placement will not be available until all registration requirements are met*



Take Home Book of the Month Club

Fun and engaging activities are coming your way!

Age: Pre-K-Kindergarten; Grades 1-3

Fee: \$15/kit (scholarships available)

March:

Jamie O'Rourke and
the Big Potato

By: Tomie dePaola



April:

Cloudy With a
Chance of Meatballs

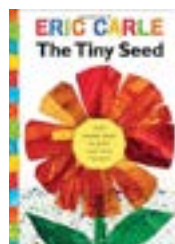
By: Judi Barrett



May:

The Tiny Seed

By: Eric Carle



June:

The Bee Tree

By: Patricia Polacco



Age-appropriate kits are available for pickup at Stonington Human Services.

Contents: Highlighted book of the month; as well as corresponding science activities, recipes, games, puzzles and crafts.

ALL designed to be creative learning extensions of the story!

Limited quantities available. Sign up today!



To register: <https://stonington.recdesk.com> • For more info, call (860) 535-5015

The PTO would like to extend a huge Thank You to an anonymous donor, who recently donated 90 Go-Local Mystic Chamber of Commerce Gift Cards. These gift cards were distributed to the DMS teachers and staff as a token of appreciation for all that they have done and continue to do during these unprecedented times. We are proud to be a part of such a supportive DMS community!!!



**THANK
YOU!**

Draft: Deans Mill School PTO Minutes

Date: March 9, 2021

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by PTO President Katie Quinlan, at 6:37 P.M. Introductions were made.

2. In Attendance

Principal Jenn McCurdy, Vice Principal Tom Bousquet, PTO President Katie Quinlan, PTO Vice President Jenni Adkins, PTO Secretary Jen Flynn, Pamela Choquette, Karen Balestracci, Ashley Tewell, Elyse Hicks, Susan Isif, Tracy Strelczuk, Erin Janicek, Whitney Myers.

3. Secretary's Report Approval

Reviewed PTO Meeting Minutes from 1/12/21. Motion to approve by Jenni Adkins. Second by Ashley Tewell. All in favor unanimous.

4. Treasurer Report Approval

Register Balance as of 3/5/21 is \$45,728.00. Motion to approve by Jenni Adkins. Second by Ashley Tewell. All in favor unanimous.

5. New Business

Principal's Report:

- K & 1 retuning to school four days per week. Other grades will return at a later date. At this point, 3 feet of distance will be enforced. Phased dismissal process will be utilized in the future, for P.M. pick up. Will be broken down alphabetically to ensure efficiency. Please re-visit using bus as an option as well, to alleviate traffic at drop off/pick up.
- Once a student is in school four days per week, you cannot choose to distance learn when you would like. If student cannot be in school physically, student will be marked absent.
- Distance learners will remain with the same teacher that they have had all year. Will continue to get small group instruction with ELA & Math.
- School will continue to follow the State of CT Travel Advisory. Any changes will be announced and put into place.
- Board of Finance to review the budget. Waiting on date to be set for town meeting/ referendum. More to come in regard to this.

P T O

- Thank you to Scott Rothman. He was the featured author for Reading Week.
- Planning for Down Syndrome Awareness Day, March 22nd. Students will be decorating and coloring socks that will be displayed throughout the school. Autism Awareness Day will be April 1st. Please wear blue.
- Tom Bousquet provided an equity update. A CT Author is scheduled to provide a virtual reading of her book, for all third grade classes. Staff training will be held to learn about microaggressions. Alumni will also be participating to give feedback in regard to improving inclusivity within our schools.

Outdoor Classroom: Thank You to Black Dog Concrete, who has donated labor and machines. Will cost approximately \$3,000.00. Motion to approve start of the Outdoor Classroom in April, Jenni Adkins. Second, Tracey Strelczuk. All in favor unanimous. Sponsorship forms went home for anyone that would like to donate to the Outdoor Classroom.

Free Yearbook: Motion to approve free yearbooks for all students and teachers. First, Pam Choquette. Second Jenni Adkins. All in favor unanimous.

Recess Equipment Update: Outdoor recess equipment has been replenished for all classrooms.

Field Day: After April vacation, a committee will be formed to assist with field day planning.

Still Need a Treasurer for 2021-2022 School Year: Tracy Brunelle will train and assist with learning Quickbooks. Please reach out to Tracy if interested.

6. Upcoming Chair Committee Updates

Liaisons: Ashley Tewell. K and 1 parent liaisons please reach out to teachers to see if anything is needed to assist with transitioning to a four day school week. Communication, supplies, etc.

5th Grade Party: Katie Quinlan. Committee has met for first time. Meeting is scheduled for next week as well. Parents of 5th students please send in 6 photos of your child to be part of a slideshow. Forms will be sent home as each child will cost \$25 for the party. Options available to sponsor a student to assist with raising funds if needed.

Book Fair: Stephanie Ragsdale & Heidi Redfern. Spring Book Fair still being decided at this point. Possibly will be held virtually.

Annual Appeal: Annual Appeal is always going on, and donations can be made at any point.

Teacher Appreciation: Thank you to the Tewell family for donating donuts and K Cups. Each teacher was given individually packaged donuts and tea/coffee K Cup. Hoping to do more for Teacher Appreciation in May.

Science & Tech. Day: Jen Rothman. Looking to schedule for a Wednesday in May. Will be held virtually. Date TBD.

Cultural Enrichment: Merin Troutman. No updates. Will be revisited next year.

Meeting was adjourned by PTO President, Katie Quinlan at 7:08 p.m.
Minutes were transcribed by PTO Secretary, Jen Flynn.

