

Witty Wildcat

NEWSLETTER

September 2021



A joint PreK-5 elementary newsletter from A. Ward Spaulding School and McAlister Intermediate School.

<u>A. Ward Spaulding School</u>	<u>McAlister Intermediate School</u>
Main Office: 860-668-3826	Main Office: 860-668-3830
Secretaries: Ms. Beth Moores & Ms. Patricia Reilly	Secretaries: Mrs. Kim Mitchell & Mrs. Laura Smith
Principal: Mrs. Gina Olearczyk Assistant Principal: Mr. Jack Ferraro	Principal: Mrs. Kris Pryce Assistant Principal: Mrs. Melissa Todd
<u>Spaulding School Website</u>	<u>McAlister School Website</u>

Off to a great start!

What a wonderful start to the school year. Our schools are filled with children learning and excitement to be back in full together to start a school year. Our buildings are buzzing with excitement! Everyone has been excited to be back in full together to start the year. Some photos of our students enjoying the start to the year are included below.



Lunch Menus

Spaulding: Lunch: [AWS Lunch](#) Breakfast: [AWS Breakfast](#)

McAlister: Lunch: [MIS Lunch](#) Breakfast: [MIS Breakfast](#)

Technology Updates

Google Permission - any student that is under the age of 13 needs parent permission to utilize a Google account. Google requires a hand signature, not an electronic signature. If you have not signed off on this approval, a copy will be mailed home next week. Please return to the school's main office.

Digital Citizenship-We strive to help our students learn to be digital citizens and navigate the electronic world safely. Please reinforce these expectations with your children at home.

350th Parade

Suffield's 350th anniversary is rapidly approaching on **Saturday, October 9th**. There will be a parade throughout town and our amazing schools will be showcased. We will be sponsoring four unique floats and each float needs our very own Suffield students to march along with the floats! Each float will be accompanied by Suffield Public Schools Faculty & Staff. Students at Spaulding & McAlister will be taught how to march and participate in creating props that will be used during the parade.

Students who wish to participate will be needed anytime between 9am-12pm on Main Street. (Exact time will be communicated once float order is determined) Please contact Melissa Oberlander at molberlander@suffield.org with any questions or for more information.

Please use the link below to sign-up your child. Please submit separate responses if you are signing up multiple children. We look forward to seeing many of our students participate and observe this event.

[Sign Up Form](#)

[Parade Route Information](#)



Transportation Update

Per the bus company – students are not allowed to take a different bus after school (like going home with a friend on their bus) – they are only allowed to ride their assigned bus. They can get dropped off at a different bus stop as long as it's on their assigned bus and with a note from home. Please be sure to call the main office as soon as possible if you need to change your child's dismissal procedure.

PTO

Our PTO continues to be a vital partner with both of our schools. As they prepare for the upcoming school year they are in search of volunteers for various committees and events. Please see the linked Help Wanted information. [Help Wanted 2021 2022.pdf](#)

Be on the lookout for new Merchandise of school apparel. Our PTO is finalizing our orders and will be shared with families in the near future.

2021-2022 Opening Update

Please see the September 10th Superintendent's update regarding our School Model Status Click [here](#).

As always please visit our district website and click on the School Model Status section to view all communications pertaining to our status. www.suffield.org

Health Update

Please be sure to call the nurse or main office if your child will be absent. It is important to share as much information as possible as to the absence so that we can determine if there are additional steps needed before the student returns to school. Please don't hesitate to reach out to our school nurse at any time.

Spaulding School Nurse, Ashleigh Surprenant at asurperant@suffield.org .

McAlister School Nurse, Manda Dingley at mdingley@suffield.org

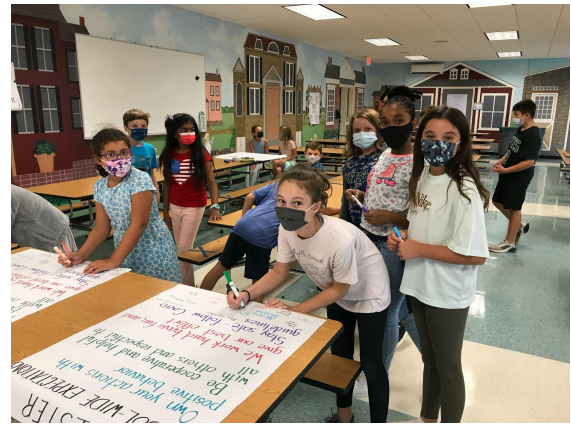
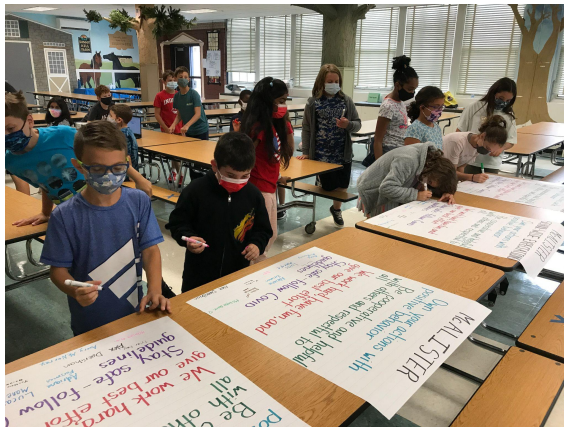
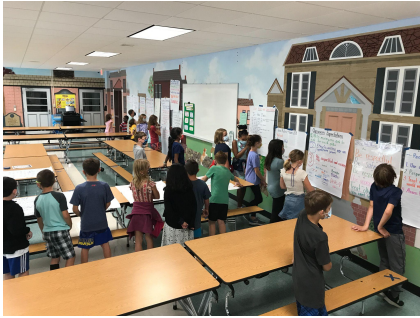
Upcoming Events:

- September 29th: Listen & Learn with Superintendent VanTasel, 6:30 - 7:30 pm, MIS Library
- October 1st: Parent and Caregiver Reading Identities Due-AWS
- October 6th: Listen & Learn with Superintendent VanTasel, 6:30 - 7:30 pm, AWS Library
- October 8th: Teacher Professional Development Day, **No School for Students**
- October 11th: Columbus Day, **NO SCHOOL**
- October 19th: School Pictures, Spaulding School
- October 18th: Picture Day, McAlister School
- October 18th - 22nd: One Book, One School Celebration Week, McAlister School
- October 22nd: Virtual Author Visit from Sarah Weeks, McAlister School

McAlister News:

School-Wide Expectations

One representative from each homeroom and unified arts special area worked alongside administration to develop school rules. Students participated in a gallery walk to review each individual class and special areas rules and expectations. We then developed our own school expectations and students helped the administration identify the top expectations below. Each room has been provided with their own copy of these expectations and they will be distributed throughout our school as well. A few photos of our students enjoying this process are included below. The expectations are included below as well for you to ask your children about at home. We are thrilled that our students were able to be a part of this process alongside us.



MCALISTER SCHOOL WIDE EXPECTATIONS

Own your actions with positive behavior

*Be cooperative and helpful with others and
respectful to all*

*We work hard, have fun, and give our best
effort*

Stay safe- follow COVID guidelines

Library Media Center

Mrs. Tierney has a lot of news and updates to share from the Library Media Center.

She is happy to report that parent volunteers are once again welcome to assist in the library media center. Volunteers are needed to help with book check-out, re-shelving, and Maker Space activities. If you are interested, please see the information below and sign up today.

Additionally, we will be celebrating our One Book, One School read titled *Save Me a Seat* the week of October 18th with many exciting activities and events school wide. If your child has not received a copy of this book, it is not too late! Please have your child let Mrs. Tierney know when they visit the Library and she will provide them with a copy of the book.

The Maker Space area is a place for students to use their imagination to build, create, and explore. We are always looking for donations of materials that will allow students to do so. If you have materials you believe would be useful, please drop them in the main office. Thank you.

[Library Media Center Volunteer Information](#)

[Library Media Center Volunteer Sign Up](#)

Band

Band is in full swing for our 5th grade students. They are enjoying their weekly lessons with Mrs. Wilson. Below is a photo of our students learning how to put together and care for their instruments. We look forward to sharing more updates, photos and videos from Band throughout the school year.



SHOUT OUTS:

A huge thank you to local author and parent, Jamie Deenihan for generously donating a copy of her book, “A New Bird in Town” that she wrote for Responsive Classroom’s Avenue A Books.




One Book One School Events:

McAlister will be celebrating our One School, One Book reading of *Save Me a Seat*, by Sarah Weeks and Gita Varadarajan, during the week of October 18th - 22nd. The highlights of the week include a virtual author's visit by Sarah Weeks and a celebration of culture within each individual classroom.

Save Me a Seat tells the story of two boys, Joe and Ravi, who believe they have nothing in common. Each boy is struggling to fit in. Joe has lived in town his entire life, but is lost since his best friend recently moved away. Ravi is brand new, having just moved to America from India. In the cafeteria, their differences are marked by the foods they eat. But also, the cafeteria (and the classroom) reveal one thing they boys have in common - a common enemy - the biggest bully in their class. Together, they have a mission: to take control of their lives. In joining together, they come to realize that the differences that initially separate them don't matter at all.

It is not too late to read *Save Me a Seat*, copies of which were provided to each family due to the generosity of the PTO. Extra copies are also available in the library media center. Our celebration will begin with students learning about their own cultures by completing a slide for a classroom celebration titled *Our Seats at the Table*. Beginning on or about October 4th, students should work with his/her family to create a single slide that visually reflects important elements of culture. Students should complete these in advance of the class share on Friday, October 22nd in the afternoon. Please look for detailed information from your student's classroom teacher.



The celebration will begin with our food services department providing the school lunches served in the fictional school cafeteria in *Save Me A Seat*. This menu includes chicken fingers, hamburgers, Bosco sticks, macaroni and cheese and pizza.

We hope to continue this tradition of mimicking the book by providing the opportunity to “eat like Ravi” through family dinners provided by McAlister friend and supporter, Pintu’s Restaurant in West Springfield. Details are being finalized and will be shared as soon as they are available. We hope you will support us in this endeavor.

Finally, Friday, October 22nd will be full of celebration. In the morning, each grade level will have a 45 minute virtual visit from the author Sarah Weeks, with the opportunity to ask questions during a Q&A session. In the afternoon, classes will share their cultures by presenting slides in the *Our Seat at the Table* Slideshow. We hope this will provide the opportunity to celebrate the diversity we have here at McAlister.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

Heather Goldstein

Joy Tierney, Library Media Specialist, jtierney@suffield.org

Dismissal Process:

If you participate in our car line pick-up process please note that our loading station numbers have been transferred to being displayed on the chain link fence around the tennis courts. Cars are asked to pull the front bumper of your car to line up with this number. Please be mindful to stay far enough away from the curb to stay off the painted walkway. Thank you!

We strive to be our very best, each and every day. We are kind, respectful, responsible, safe, that’s the McAlister way!

A. Ward Spaulding News:

Preschool

Preschool is bustling! The students are adjusting to school routines and enjoying the activities and singing songs together. So far, students have learned how to walk in a line, use some preschool materials, and safely navigate the playgrounds. They love singing, "The Wheels on the Bus", "If You're Happy & You Know It", and "Open, Shut Them". Preschool's first unit is "All About Me". Students will learn body parts, practice drawing self-portraits, compare themselves to others, and talk about the 5 senses. Preschool's Math curriculum will be using apples in September to teach counting, sorting, graphing, and patterning. It has been a great start to preschool!


A Message from the Second Grade Team

Second Grade Families,

We have been working on writing personal narrative, small moment stories. As you are headed out to fall family fun activities or any activities outside of school, take some time to discuss the story of the event. For example, a big-moment would be "going to the Big E" and the small moment would be "visiting the petting zoo at the Big E". Discuss or write about the moment using first, then, next, last to help structure the story. Reminisce on what it looked like, how it felt, the little details leading up to the main event, and more. Having discussions about your shared moments will help students come up with ideas and details during writing at school. Have fun, we can't wait to hear your stories!

Reading Identities

How to Help Students Build Positive Reading Identities



Before students can walk into school with their nose in a book they need to be able to see themselves as readers, which is why cultivating a reading identity is so critical for educators.

What is a reading identity?

Reading identities are associated with how capable a student believes they are at comprehending texts and the value they place on reading. In other words, it requires an inquiry into a student's understanding of both who they are as a reader and why they read.

How teachers help build a students reading identity:

Tip #1: Start With Their Own Reading Identity.

Teachers are the most important role model students have at school. Their students are watching their every move, which means teachers have to make their own “reading moves” as visible as possible. They can do this by:

- Hanging up a list of what they are currently reading. This can include books besides their current classroom read-aloud such as novels, professional books, or a magazine. This gives students a glimpse of the bigger picture of reading: it's a skill for life!
- Talking about books they are reading at home or in book clubs.


Tip #2: Reinforce That a Teacher's Reasons for Reading Matter.

No matter what grade, teaching reading is complex and requires a wealth of skills and strategies for teachers. It is so important for teachers to not only teach students how to read, but to also connect with their students about why it is important to read. Teachers can:

- Share some of the reasons they read and give them a forum to think about and discuss the reasons they like to read.
- Invite colleagues such as custodians, school nurses, administrators, etc. to come in to share the books they are reading and why they like to read.

Tip #3: Use Sentence Starters to Continue Talking About Reading Identities

As students start to see themselves as readers, teachers will encourage them to talk and write about their identity. This will not only strengthen that identity, but it will hold them



accountable for living like a reader. Using sentence starters such as the ones below will help to build a student's identity.

- I'm the kind of reader who ...
- I want to be the kind of reader who ...
- My reading goals are ...

How caregivers can help build a students reading identity:

One way that caregivers can help is to create their own Reading Identity. During the next week, we will be sending home “[Caregiver Homework](#).” We are asking that you fill in each box by answering the following stem questions. You can do this through words or pictures.

- What: What you like to read. This can be books, magazines, cookbooks, comics, etc.
- Who: Who do you read with (kids, pets, alone, etc.)?
- When: When do you like to read (before bed, at work, on weekends, at the beach, etc.)?
- Where: Where do you like to read (in bed, on the couch, by the pool, etc.)?

Please send this homework in by **Friday, October 1st**. We will be hanging your work around the school along with our Spaulding School staffs reading identities. Our students will also be completing the same activity in their classrooms. We are hoping that as students walk down the hallways of our school and see how important reading is to the important people around them, they will be motivated to find their reading identities as well.

Thank you so much for your partnership in this activity. If you have any questions please reach out to Christy Baril (cbaril@suffield.org)

National Pirates Day

Mrs. Colangelo's second grade class showed their support for National Pirates Day which was September 19, 2021.



SEL Parent Resources

We are so grateful for Suffield Youth Services and their commitment to providing proactive parenting support through their partnership with Peace at Home. [Here](#) you will find the 2021 Peace at Home flyer which includes information on class offerings as well as your (complementary) login information that will grant you access to an abundance of evidence based parenting classes and informative sessions. While you are here, please do visit our Suffield Youth Services website founded at: <https://www.suffieldct.gov/departments/youth>. What a wonderful community to be a part of in Suffield!

STEM in Action

Students have been creating and building in STEM class already! Please see the pictures below.



Spaulding Stars care through respect, responsibility, and kindness.