

# Wolf Times

Volume 13, Issue 3

November, 2015



## From the Desk of Jacqueline Norcel, Principal

Dear Frenchtown Families,

Our November theme at Frenchtown will be "We Are a Thankful People." This theme will highlight many American holidays and past history. The Pilgrims entertained 92 Native American guests at the 1621 event. The first meal was breakfast at which boiled eel, lobster, roast pigeon, and stuffed cod were served. The guests brought turkeys, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, and cranberries to the celebration. Quadequina, son of Massasoit prepared the first taste of popcorn for the Pilgrims. Our Student Council will sponsor a food collection for the needy in Trumbull in November. Please watch for the flyer.

The children will discover that in a democratic society, freedom is a privilege which he/she earns through participating in constructive and purposeful activity.

Grade 4 will present their Thanksgiving musical program on Wednesday, November 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m for the families. First grade's Pow Wow is on Wednesday, November 25<sup>th</sup> at 12:00. We hope you will be able to join us.



During the month of November, our staff will also be highlighting these other United States holidays: Election Day, Veteran's Day, and American Education Week. The theme for

American Education Week this year is *Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility.*

Our teachers will be planning lessons and activities about books in honor of National Children's Book Week beginning November 17<sup>th</sup>. I am planning on reading a story to every kindergarten and first grade class during the month of November. Depending on the weather, I will read either outdoors on the picnic tables or in their classrooms.

At home, parents can help support our theme by reading a bedtime story, participating in our FREE reading calendar program, having a daily newspaper and magazine available, visiting the public library, and by talking with your child about what he/she has been reading at school. Share what you have been reading.

The country of the month is Russia. If you have any souvenirs or artifacts, we would love to display them in the front lobby display case.

Parent Teacher Conferences are to be held the afternoons of November 5<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. Evening conferences are scheduled for November 12<sup>th</sup>. Each conference period is fifteen minutes long. Your child's progress over the first twelve weeks will be discussed at these conferences.

At the conference the teacher and parents should exchange information about the child which will help each better understand the child's needs and personality. At the parent conference, parents can learn about their child's progress on academic, social, and physical skills during the report period. Teachers will let parents know at what level the student is working, how well he/she is doing and what is expected. The conferences should provide a realistic appraisal of the individual student's strengths and weaknesses within the total school program. Finally, parents and teachers must work together as a team to effectively meet the child's needs if the child is to benefit as much as possible from the school experience. Together, goals should be set for the next trimester.



A word of caution about conferences: because parents are often more concerned with weaknesses than with students strengths, sometimes all a parent reports to a child about the conference is what needs to be improved, rather than stressing both strengths and weaknesses. Share good things that were discussed at the conferences as well as things that need improving.

Every one of our children knows that he/she is in school to learn. For most, learning itself is a natural stimulus, providing its own intrinsic reward. It is our (home and school) job to help students understand that they need to continue to learn throughout their lives. Right now, our teachers are making that point obvious with our emphasis on the monthly T.R.A.C.K.S., Dream, Reach, Succeed, and Citizens of the Month programs. On Thursday, November 19<sup>th</sup> we will wear red for accountability. On Tuesdays we wear blue and white to show our school pride.

Join me for Muffins with Moms on November 17 at 8:40 a.m., an informal time to enjoy coffee and a chat with your principal.

Wishing you and your families a Thanksgiving blessed with good health and happiness.

Mrs. Norcel

Character  
Corner—  
Mr. Weitzman,  
  
Social Worker  
  
*Accountability*



A natural part of children’s development is to push against limits, explore what boundaries are, and see how to function within boundaries. They are not bad or wrong for following these natural and normal behaviors. It is our job as parents to coach them through these experiences and empower them with life skills so that as the child ages, they've learned how to make good decisions. They will also learn there are consequences for unwise decisions. Help your children learn accountability by removing excuse-based behavior from their life-skills tool belt.

**Frenchtown School  
Dismissal Schedule**

**Regular Day:**  
Regular 8:35 am to 3:20 pm

**Legal Day: \***  
Regular 8:35 am to 1:00 pm

**Early Dismissal: \***  
Regular 8:35 am to 1:00 pm

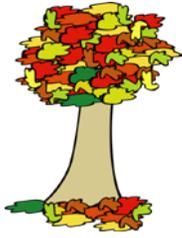
**Delayed Opening:\***  
2 Hour Delay 10:35 to 3:20



*Happy  
Thanksgiving*

## Kindergarten News...

**Mrs. Bershefsky, Mrs. Buswell,  
Mrs. Capone, Mrs. Crawford**



Fall has arrived bringing cool breezes, beautiful colors, and squeals of delight and wonder filling every kindergarten classroom at Frenchtown! Our science curriculum brought forth many exciting lessons and hands on experiences. We began learning one of the most important tools all great scientists use to learn about and discover the world – our five senses! We gathered our lab coats and science notebooks as we ventured out on a nature walk, using our senses to observe fall. We practiced recording our observations in our notebook like real scientists and used this information to write about fall. We had a wonderful time using our senses on our grade level trip to Pumpkinseed Hill Farm where Farmer Amber and Farmer Emily helped us learn the life cycle of a pumpkin. We enjoyed a hayride, a special story and even got to harvest our own pumpkins to take home, along with a large pumpkin that will stay in our class! Back at Frenchtown, we enjoyed using our senses to observe our pumpkins and write about them. We will do something special with our class pumpkin next month as we prepare for another holiday.

In reading, we continued to establish the routines and expectations of Reader's Workshop. We are well into the swing of things now and the children have learned their responsibilities for when we gather to read together, how to turn and talk about ideas with a partner as well as how we rotate and navigate our literacy centers. We have read many books and practiced discussing what happened in the story with a partner. We also learned something that good readers do to help them better enjoy and understand a story called, "making connections." We read many books where we practiced thinking about how something in the book reminded us of something in our own lives. We are just beginning to develop our independent reading skills. This takes a tremendous amount of practice in order to build stamina and read for longer periods of time. Children should be reading at home to you on a nightly basis. They know that good readers read independently by reading the pictures, reading the words or retelling familiar books they have read! Have your child practice this with the Trophy Readers that come home. Remember to keep these

in a safe spot along with the flashcards of our kindergarten sight words as they are introduced. It is so important that you continue to review previously taught sight words regularly for automaticity and maintenance. We will be introducing new ones at a quicker pace!

In Foundations, the children continued to develop their phonics skills through instruction in letter and sound relationships. This month, we focused on learning the letters c, o, a, g, d, s, e and r. We practiced identifying the upper and lowercase letters, writing the lowercase letter with proper formation and played many games that helped us remember the sound associated with each letter. We are half way through our unit on letters and letter sounds! Please continue to review all letters introduced so far.

In writing we have been working on conveying our ideas using both pictures and words. We learned that words are separated by spaces and worked on writing the beginning sound we hear in a word. We also began stretching out the whole word to try and write other sounds we hear.

In math, kindergartners worked on recognizing numbers 0-10 and counting objects to show each quantity. We represented these numbers by drawing pictures in counting activities such as Grab and Count, Inventory bags, the Counting Jar, and our counting books. We also talked about measuring and comparing items that are "shorter" and "longer."

It is hard to believe how far the children have come in two short months! We look forward to meeting with each family during November conferences where you will find out so much more about your child's kindergarten experience and their individual progress.



## Grade One News...

**Mrs. Gambardella, Mrs. Mordecai,  
Mrs. Rodrigues, Mrs. Shinnick**

The leaves are falling, the winds are blowing and the temperatures are dropping. First graders are welcoming fall with their scientific observations. In addition to our fall explorations, we are watching our ladybugs as they are passing through the stages of larva, pupa and adult. We will notice how all

living things have a life cycle. We've planted brassica seeds and they have already sprouted to reveal their first leaves. We'll watch them as they produce flowers and then seeds, thus completing the life cycle. It's an exciting time of year!



We are becoming such skillful readers as we learn new reading strategies. During Reader's Workshop, we have been learning to be careful listeners and thinkers and to be good partners as we share our ideas. We have been making text-to-self connections as we think how the stories we are reading remind us of our own lives.

Our Foundations program has everyone "tapping out" sounds to help us read and spell words. Echo the owl shows us what to do and we echo back to him. We are focusing on the digraphs "th", "sh", "ch", "wh", and "ck." Ask your child which digraph only comes at the end of words! We are also learning when to use the bonus letters f, l, and s. We are learning "trick" words, too. They are the words we can't tap out. We must learn to read and spell them by heart.

First graders are becoming great mathematicians. We've finished our first unit of study called "How Many of Each?" and we have begun our geometry unit called "Making Shapes and Designing Quilts." Ask your first grader to identify the following shapes: hexagon, trapezoid, triangle, rhombus, and square. They can also show you how we "count on" to add! Make sure you are practicing your math facts at home and filling out the Bear Math Facts Calendar.

Writing is happening all up and down our hallway! We are learning to generate many topic ideas and then to choose one to write about. We have been adding details that tell more about our topic. Our illustrations help us think of ideas.

Busy workers, smart thinkers, responsible friends, and smiling faces. That's what you will see in first grade this fall!



## Grade Two News ...

**Mrs. Angon, Mrs. Boyle,  
Mrs. Pereira, Ms. Sansone  
Mrs. Tuohy**

The second graders are building wonderful reading and writing communities within their classrooms. In reading, they are learning how to respond to each other and texts. They are building their stamina and persistence for reading. Please continue to monitor your child's reading at home so they can practice using the skills they are learning at school. This will not only help create confident readers, but will foster a love for reading as well! In writing, the students are learning the components of a personal narrative. They are also continuing to work on important skills for writing complete detailed sentences such as editing and revising.

In math, the students have been practicing both addition and subtraction math facts. It is important that your child practice their math facts each night. Repetition is the best way for children to memorize their facts! In class, they have also learned various strategies for solving math word problems. As the year goes on, the students will be moving away from drawing pictures and relying on more efficient strategies such as using an open number line or breaking apart the tens and ones. We would be happy to share these strategies with



you at conferences so that you can understand how the children are solving the problems. Currently, the students are learning the features of 2 dimensional and 3 dimensional shapes, along with polygon attributes and how to categorize them.

Now that our social studies unit on our ancestors has been completed, the students are moving into the world of science! Our first unit is called Air and Weather. Our little scientists will become meteorologists as they learn about the different types of weather. They will be studying different cloud types as well as learning about how temperature and wind speeds are measured. They will be keeping track of the weather over time and will be looking for patterns.

We would like to thank all of you who were able to join us for Visitation Day and we are looking forward to meeting with you for conferences in November.

## **Grade Three News...**

**Mrs. Atwood, Mrs. Cretella,  
Mrs. Makoski, Mrs. Martins**

Autumn unfolds with colors of crimson and gold as our third graders moved into the busy month of October. We enjoyed seeing many of you during our Visitation Day.

In reading and language arts, students have been reading their “just right” books and enjoying a variety of different genres of literature. We focused

### **On Safari**



on main idea as well as sequencing in our lessons. The students have been busily writing narratives about going on a safari in East Africa. They read several articles giving information about animal migration and safaris

and were able to include those facts in their fictional narrative. If your child asks you to plan a vacation in Africa, you will know why!

Math classes completed a review of addition and subtraction and now are in the midst of an exciting unit on multiplication. It is critical that the children practice their multiplication facts every night for mastery.

Science students created eco-columns and have been observing the changes when plants and marine animals are added. This is part of an ecosystem unit focusing on animal adaptations. Students also learned about different biomes in our world.

In social studies, we are completing a unit on oceans and rivers. Your child should be able to tell you how they are alike and how they are different. We also enjoyed participating in Democracy Day, where the students met the candidates who are running for the position of First Selectman. We discussed the importance of voting, as well as the different responsibilities of a mayor or first selectman.

We welcomed a guest reader for the town-wide Read Aloud day this month, and of course the month concluded with a Halloween celebration in our classrooms.

As the weather turns cooler, please make sure your child comes to school appropriately dressed for the outside weather. Classrooms can also use facial

tissues as well as wipes to help us keep your children healthy.

We are looking forward to seeing all of you at our November Parent-Teacher conferences!

## **Grade Four News...**

**Mrs. Carley, Mr. Fiore,  
Mrs. Grunow, Mrs. Weinstein,  
Mrs. Wolfe**

As the weather continues to change bringing falling leaves and cooling temperatures, the fourth grade year is well underway and students are in full swing and busy building their skills.

In reading, students continue to build stamina in reading with their independent reading time. Now that our initial reading records have been completed, teachers will be meeting with small groups to analyze leveled texts and target specific comprehension skills. A close reading approach continues to be utilized during reading instruction. More specifically, our current focus is on story themes and character analysis. Children are demonstrating progress in their ability to defend their thinking with evidence from the text and explain how characters change. They are learning to examine text and question the author’s message. We encourage children to stick to one “just right” book in the classroom and at home, rather than trying to keep track of two texts at once. Our twenty minutes of nightly reading is helping to develop proficient readers. Don't forget to fill out your reading log each evening. You can help your child further improve their reading by talking about the book with them and asking questions about what is happening in their text, what they think about their text and the characters, or why they like their book. Reading aloud to your child will also help demonstrate fluency and appropriate phrasing and expression.

In writing, students have been developing their narrative writing skills. Students are learning to add sensory details and elaborate feelings. Each class completed a performance task activity in preparation for our first writing prompt. Students looked at a map, read articles and took notes prior to writing a narrative story about traveling on the Oregon Trail. Students enjoyed learning what it was like to travel the 2,000 mile journey across much of the United States. Students will continue to work on building writing skills by learning about transitions

and word choice. Students need to remember spelling and grammar count in their writing.



In math, students have finished their initial unit on multiplication facts and strategies. Students have improved their ability to write and solve multiplication story

problems and equations. Later in the year, fourth grade will revisit multiplication using larger two-digit numbers and equations. Students have now moved on in math and are building their number sense by improving their knowledge of place value and working with numbers in the ten thousands range. They learned to add and subtract multiples of ten and learned the US algorithm for addition. Please continue to practice basic facts daily. This will help students further develop their math skills. Please make sure you record your math practice on your monthly Bear Facts calendar.

In science, students have wrapped up their erosion S.T.E.M. unit, with a trip to the Connecticut Science Center. While there, students were able to explore and learn scientific concepts related to sound, force and motion, and erosion. A highlight of our trip was a culminating activity to our S.T.E.M unit, where students worked in groups to design and test riverbank reinforcement systems. Students learned and explored the many technologies which help stop or slow erosion. Ask them to explain what riprap, retaining walls, gabion baskets, and jetties do to help stop erosion.

In social studies, students learned about voting and democracy. They learned there are two candidates who are running for first selectman, Timothy Herbst and Vickie Tesoro. As is tradition, students were treated to a visit from government officials and candidates during our ninth annual Democracy Day program coordinated by Mr. Fiore. Children have also been studying maps and globes in preparation for our study of Connecticut and exploration of the regions of the United States.

A final area of focus, spanning all aspects of the curriculum, is learning to follow directions. It is evident in student work that not all students are taking the time to read directions thoroughly prior to completing a task. Please encourage your child to read all directions before starting homework assignments or class work. In addition, encourage children to use a highlighter to find proof of their

answers for reading comprehension assignments. As the passages become more complex, use of this strategy will be most helpful. Students need to remember to answer questions using complete sentences and proper English writing conventions when completing assignments. We are looking forward to seeing improvement in this area as the year continues.

## **Grade Five News...**

**Mrs. Alfano, Mrs. Demshak,  
Mrs. Ferraro, Mrs. Gaspar**

**Parent Partnership:** A positive parent-teacher relationship contributes to your child's school success. This positive relationship makes a child feel like the important people in his life are working together. It was great to have so many of you attend our parent visitation. Even a short visit will help you identify some of your child's strengths and challenges. It's also a great way to get a feel for our Frenchtown climate and intangible but important factors like the enthusiasm of the teaching, engagement of the students, quality of communication and respect between students and teachers, and the overall sense that our school offers a safe and inspiring learning environment. Remember fifteen minute parent conferences for 5th grade will be held on Thursday, November 5th and Tuesday, November 10th in the afternoon and on Thursday, November 12<sup>th</sup> in the evening. You may want information about how your child is learning and his/her social development. Your child's teacher may want to know more about what your child loves to learn, as well as any struggles he/she may have. Conferences provide us an opportunity to look at the whole picture of your child together. Please contact your child's teacher by email if you have any questions or concerns prior to your conference.



**Spotlight on Writing:** All fifth grade students participated in writing a narrative piece in October. In Trumbull Public Schools, we believe that students benefit from:

- writing regularly in multiple genres across all subject areas
- participating in all phases of the writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing
- developing their own voices by making choices when they write

- conferring with their teacher and their peers about their writing
- celebrating writing as a joyful expressive process

**Spotlight on Science:** Your child was asked to identify things that “bug” them and to interview people they know in hopes that this process would generate some ideas for a possible invention or innovation to solve a real problem. Engineers follow a process to make new products. The Engineering Design Process (E.D.P.) involves a series of steps that lead to the development of a new product or system: step 1: Identify the Problem, step 2: Do Research, step 3: Brainstorm and Develop Possible Solutions, step 4: Choose One Solution, step 5: Design and Construct a Prototype, step 6: Test the Prototype, step 7: Communicate Results, and step 8: Evaluate and Redesign. In September, your child used this process to try to create the most effective design to harness solar energy to conduct heat using common materials including cardboard, black paper, aluminum foil, plastic and tape. Throughout the year, we will provide our 5th graders with opportunities to develop critical-thinking and problem solving skills through invention and innovation using this Engineering Design Process.

**Mark Your Calendars:** On November 3rd (Election Day) and on 27th and 28th (Thanksgiving) there is no school. November 5<sup>th</sup> (Parent Conferences), 10th (Parent Conferences), and 25th will be early dismissal. Our first field trip to Winding Trails is on Monday, November 2nd. We hope you enjoy your Thanksgiving Holiday surrounded by family and friends. We are truly thankful for your continued support.

## Math News...

**Mrs. Gidwani, Mrs. Zielinski**

Have you been practicing your math facts? Are you looking for some fun math websites? Here are a few we recommend:

[www.pbskids.org](http://www.pbskids.org) (Kindergarten)

[www.matific.com](http://www.matific.com)

[www.arcademics.com](http://www.arcademics.com)

[www.aplusmath.com](http://www.aplusmath.com)

[www.multiplication.com](http://www.multiplication.com)

Please be sure to turn in your pink Bear Math Fact Calendar at the end of each month for a prize. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email us anytime at [zielinsl@trumbullps.org](mailto:zielinsl@trumbullps.org) or [gidwanis@trumbullps.org](mailto:gidwanis@trumbullps.org)

## Gifts to School

2 Puzzlemania Books  
 2 Scooters – September Homework Award  
 2 Inflatable Chairs – October Homework Award  
 CT Magazine  
 Subscription to American History  
 Subscription to Audobon  
 Tough Tuft Pack of 6 Books  
 6 copies Lemonade War  
 Literary Elements Toolkit  
 6 copies 10 True Katrina Heroes  
 6 copies I Survived Joplin

Mrs. Norcel's Technology Club would like to send a HUGE thank-you to the Frenchtown Father's club for their generous donation of a new High Def Commercial video camera to use at our concerts and events. It came at the perfect time as we have been borrowing a teacher's camera for the last year. Now if someone would like to donate a tripod .....

We are looking for a lunch aide. The hours are 11:30 – 1:30, Monday through Friday. If interested, contact Frenchtown main office.



## From the Desk of Diane Strever, Assistant Principal

Welcome to November, after a busy month of October with so many activities! This month will also be filled with Thanksgiving celebrations and parent teacher conferences.

This year I am focusing on some of the character traits reflected in our Dream, Reach, Succeed program. The first of these is “belonging.” The following is taken from the magazine *Psychology Today*.

**Belonging** means acceptance as a member or part. A sense of belonging is a human need, just like the need for food and shelter. A child feeling that he/she belongs is important in seeing value in life and in coping with painful emotions. Some children find belonging in a classroom, friends, family, or organizations. Some see themselves as connected only to one or two people. Others believe and feel a connection to all people the world over, to humanity. Some children struggle to find a sense of belonging, and loneliness can be physically painful for them.

A sense of belonging to a greater community improves motivation, health, and happiness. When children see their connection to others, they know that all people struggle and have difficult times. They are not alone, and there is comfort in that knowledge.



### **Building a Sense of Belonging**

To build a sense of belonging requires active effort and practice. One way to work on increasing a sense of belonging is to have your child look for ways they are similar with others instead of focusing on ways they are different. Sharing differences and still accepting others creates peace. Acceptance does not always mean agreement.

Another way to build a sense of belonging is to work on acceptance of others. Your child can be helpful and kind to students who may be new to the school, or that your child may not have known in class before. To accept others and views that are not the same may require that a child open their thoughts to the idea that there is value in everyone's thinking. We can find truth in even the most difficult-to-understand, even though we may not agree. One of the best ways to communicate acceptance is through validation. Validation builds a sense of belonging and strengthens relationships. Validation is recognizing that someone's internal experience is understandable and helps you stay on the same side, with a sense of belonging, even when you disagree.

Weigh your words and your way of thinking with your child, and discuss with them how they can foster a sense of belonging for other children by using kind words. Some words create separateness and others promote togetherness. Every single person has strengths and their own unique contributions. Think **belonging**, community and acceptance.

I hope you have the opportunity to enjoy a blessed Thanksgiving with your family and friends this month. Perhaps this is an opportunity to invite someone to your table to foster a sense of belonging with another.

Sincerely,  
*Diane Strever*



# Frenchtown Reading Dept

November 2015

## TIPS FROM THE READING TEACHERS!

Each month we would like to feature a strategy that teachers use in the classroom so that you can reinforce it at home. This month's strategy is **MONITORING FOR MEANING**.

Reading is meaning! Reading is more than just reading the words on the page. We want to be sure that our students are understanding what they are reading and what to do if their understanding breaks down.

Strategies that readers use:

- Summarize what you have read thus far.
- Reread a couple of pages
- Read on to see if the information becomes clearer
- Skim and scan the text to understand better
- Ask for help

## FREE CALENDAR

- Distributed mid-month to grades K-2
- Due the next month by the 15<sup>th</sup>
- If calendar is misplaced, use a generic calendar which can be found on the website or any online calendar
- BE SURE TO PUT STUDENT'S NAME AND CLASSROOM so that they can receive credit!

## Reading and Math Night!

We had a wonderful turnout to our Reading and Math Night. It was a pleasure to see so many parents. If you are interested, the Power Points from both the grades 3-5 as well as K-2 can be found on our website. We hope you found the information informative and we are looking forward to a successful school year. You can always contact any of the Reading Department via email or leave a message in the office. 😊

## NOVEMBER 2015

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> Election Day	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> Veteran's Day	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> 	<b>27</b>

**FRENCHTOWN ELEMENTARY**  
**Citizens of the Month**  
**October**

**Grade One**

Mrs. Gambardella	Taylor Tianni
Mrs. Mordecai	Maura Brunt
Mrs. Rodrigues	Abigail Rivera
Mrs. Shinnick	Evan Moreira

**Grade Two**

Mrs. Angon	Kate DiGiovanni
Mrs. Boyle	Brooke Fowler
Mrs. Pereira	Rachel O'Brien
Ms. Sansone	Quinn Jordan
Mrs. Tuohy	Brooke Dressler

**Grade Three**

Mrs. Atwood	Jacob Jordan
Mrs. Cretella	Siera Mastri
Mrs. Makoski	Hannah Wong
Mrs. Martins	Sophia Pucci

**Grade Four**

Mrs. Carley	Madie Moffat
Mr. Fiore	Gianna Piccolo
Mrs. Grunow	Mia Vega Garcia
Mrs. Weinstein	Jackson Gilman
Mrs. Wolfe	Amber Burany

**Grade Five**

Mrs. Alfano	Matthew Wich
Ms. Demshak	Austin Ashby
Mrs. Ferraro	Jada Valentin
Mrs. Gaspar	Maddie Lojko