

MSAD #54 ENRICHMENT RESOURCES

ER Parent Group Meeting

Dates:

Thursday, November 3, 2011

Thursday, February 2, 2012

Thursday, May 3, 2012

6:30 -7:45 in Rm.267 at the

Skowhegan Area Middle School

With the support of ER parents, the MSAD 54 Administration, School Board, and MSAD 54 Staff, we have survived, so far, in very difficult times; we continue to need your help as we begin another school year and encourage you to participate in ER Parent Meetings.(See above schedule)

As most of you know, Larry Ross retired and is no longer inspiring MSAD 54 ER students with his dedication, creative energy and unique perspective. However, while we'll certainly miss Larry, we are very fortunate to have found Jessica Crowell, who also brings dedication, creative energy and a unique perspective to her interaction with ER students. Jessica will be responsible for providing direct services to the Margaret Chase Smith School and Canaan Elementary, while being a consultant-support person for North Elementary staff. Welcome aboard, Jessica!

While scheduling difficulties compromise her effort to meet with identified students, Maura Smith has been busy laying the foundation for more comprehensive ER curriculum options at SAHS; Maura has a very full plate, teaching English and speech classes, as well as being in charge of the SAHS Theater-Speech Program.

Julie Searls returns to work with ER students at Mill Stream Elementary School and Bloomfield Elementary, while Carla Burnham will again be responsible for Algebra I, ER Math, and ER Language Arts classes at SAMS. And, Jim Ramsey will be the ER Program Coordinator during 2011-12.

Reminder: All elementary and middle school conferences are on

Thursday, October 27th.

News from Bloomfield and Mill Stream

This year Julie Searls is again teaching in both Bloomfield and Mill Stream Schools. Every fall begins with an in depth study of one topic that continues until December. Each unit culminates with a creative performance written by the class members.

Presently grade three students are learning about Ancient Egypt. The topics include: mummies, myths, gods, hieroglyphs, pharaohs, pyramids and King Tut. A major goal in teaching this unit is to have students recognize the validity of different customs and beliefs. Children learn that knowledge of history changes with new research and different historians.

Grade four students are examining myths from ancient Greece, India and Norway. They compare myths to discover common themes among the stories and similarities with the heroes and heroines from dissimilar countries. Kids look at different versions of the same myth and theorize why they are different. Children see that myths relate to life by teaching individuals “how to live”.

Grade five students are learning about China, past and present. China is the only civilization that has existed from ancient time into the present. We learn about the transformation of a peasant society into a dominant economic player in today’s world.

The current focus of grade six students deals with discrimination in general, and the Holocaust in particular. The goal of this unit is to increase student awareness of prejudice and to give students tools to know their own convictions.

Mrs. Searls also teaches ER Math. The year begins with the study of various number patterns and the Fibonacci number series. The curriculum includes word problems, logic problems, and the study of famous mathematicians. In Grade 5 and 6 we also play the stock market game and learn about elementary economic theory.

In addition, Mrs. Searls is available to consult with teachers in grade one and grade two as needed.

News from Canaan and Margaret Chase Smith School

Our new teacher, Jessica Crowell, feels very fortunate and elated to part of the Enrichment Resources family here in the MSAD # 54 district. This year at Canaan Elementary School and Margaret Chase Smith School, each ER class will begin with brain gym and lateral thinking questions, and the general ER students will also have a vocabulary question. After which, they will move onto our topics.

General ER students began with an inquiry on weather related disasters. The unit kicked off with each class creating a web of disasters, distinguishing between weather and non-weather related topics. Students were to pick a weather related topic, write 3 – 4 questions, and the date in their journal. This journal is a place that they could keep all of their information relating to their inquiry – including great websites, questions, fun facts, new information, books utilized, and anything else they want to remember. They worked on writing a letter to someone involved in situations related to their disaster, for example, a homebuilder/construction contractor, an architect, a survivor of the disaster, a member of FEMA, or a meteorologist. Time was given during class, so that they could begin researching, as well as photocopying, taking notes, and printing off information relating to our topics and ideas. Once they have researched a bit (at least two weeks), they were to construct a home that can withstand their disaster topic. Please keep in mind that they were instructed to use household items and that there was no need to spend lots of money on this project. The house was not to be larger than two feet long by two feet wide by two feet high. This was also a family project and adults or siblings could help. Mrs. Crowell mentioned that they could use, but were not limited to, saran wrap, aluminum foil, tape, duct tape, sticks, stones or rocks, glue, caulking compound, toothpicks, popsicle sticks, etcetera.

Math ER students began the year off with problem solving and logic, and then they began learning about numbers and the cultural differences with numbers and counting systems. This unit will culminate with each student completing an inquiry on numbers and creating their own number system. Their project is to create a visual that will explain their system, and then they are to create either a game or a worksheet for the class to complete using their new numerical system.

Mrs. Crowell looks forward to working with your child and fostering his or her lateral and divergent thinking, as well as encouraging him or her to think deeper, and more critically and creatively.

For those of you who would like to meet on conference day, October 27th, Mrs. Crowell will be at the Margaret Chase Smith School from 8 – 11 and then at Canaan Elementary from 12 – 3. If you would like to schedule a meeting during these times, please let her know. Her email is jcrowell@msad54.org. Thank you very much for all of your support.

News from Skowhegan Area Middle School

The ER program at the middle school is enjoying a new schedule this year; hence the language arts students are all scheduled to take the class with students in their own grade level. The seventh grade classes began the year reviewing literary elements, connecting their knowledge to the summer reading book, *The Pigman*, as well as exploring these elements in a variety of short stories. The unit will wrap up with essay writing, responding to questions about the character's conflict. In 8th grade the students have started to expand the study of the 1950s, the theme of the summer reading, *Wait Till Next Year*. The focus for these students has been on writing essays that include the use of quotes from the text, and writing concise summaries. In addition, both grades have been working on grammar skills, and Greek and Latin vocabulary. Conferences are being scheduled through the school office for Thursday, October 27th. Mrs. Burnham encourages students to attend conferences and take an active part in discussing the goals of their education.