

McCarthy Community News



September 13, 2013

Happy New Year!!!

Welcome back- We're looking forward to a great 2013-14 school year. Everybody seems to be well rested and ready to work hard. Thank you to all of our staff, parents and most importantly our students for approaching this year with great enthusiasm. Mrs. Martin and I are looking forward to having a great year!

The first two weeks went great. We ended the first week performing a walk through of our evacuation procedures and other emergency procedures. Practice makes perfect! That was the case here as CFD was here on Wednesday and we scored high marks on our first actual fire drill. Students did a good job exiting the building in a timely and quiet manner. On Friday afternoon, we practiced our bomb scare procedures as well.

We will continue to focus on our schoolwide social contract (see below) asking our students and adults to live up to that contract every day.

***McCarthy Middle School is a PAWS-itive
Community!***

We agree to:

- ***Be compassionate, supportive and safe***
- ***Be responsible, inclusive and respectful***
 - ***Put forth our best effort***

Student Advisory- We are excited to announce we are in the midst of kicking off a new endeavor at McCarthy Middle School, our Student Advisory Program. One of our School Improvement Plan goals is to create and maintain an environment in which students feel safe and comfortable. One strategy to achieve this goal utilizes a student advisory program which can promote student-teacher relationships, address general self-esteem and competence beliefs, provide social exchange and peer recognition in a safe environment and address academic and social concerns. We have been researching, discussing and creating our advisory for over two years. As a school we have chosen to focus on certain areas in advisory. We hope advisory will help children:

- Learn to understand and appreciate people who are different from themselves.
- Participate in activities to build group spirit and cohesiveness.
- Discuss various themes throughout the year (goal setting, making good choices, being inclusive, integrity, etc.)
- Support and be supported by other advisory group members in discussing and facing common problems and concerns of growing up.
- Experience a one-to-one relationship with the advisor that is characterized by warmth, concern, openness, and understanding.

We have been studying the principles of Developmental Designs which outline the four basic needs middle schoolers need to have met: Competence, Autonomy, Relationships and Fun. Advisory will be a time for sharing, discussing, and having some fun. Our ultimate goal is to have every student feel safe and connected with an adult staff member or to school in general. If students feel connected, the chances for success in school increases dramatically. In closing we want our children to feel connected and be successful.

Some of the themes to be covered early on are: What is Advisory, beginning the school year, doing your best and service to others. Morning announcements will coincide with the themes as well. We piloted this program last June with positive results and feedback which we incorporated into the program this year. We are committed to creating a safe, comfortable environment for all to thrive. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us.

Recess Items Needed- With our playground under construction, we could really use fun items for recess. We are looking for balls, jump ropes, hula hoops, Frisbees (preferably soft or nerf), etc. Any donations can be left in the Main Office. We will be purchasing some type of container to keep the items in as well. In the meantime, we will work to have some four square & hopscotch painted in safe areas until we have access to the back parking lot. Our hope is to have the new equipment installed ASAP. We have been told by the company it may not be until mid-October, but we will try to expedite things as much as possible.

First Key to Success in Middle School: Being Present!-

Attendance is critical for success for all students. Students gain much information and make sense of the material presented through the activities and discussions that take place in the classroom. When a student is absent, sure the work can be given and made up, but the richness of the discussions and activities cannot be replicated. Often that is when students make the connections that helps them truly understand what they are learning as well as give them the ability to apply what they are learning. Being at school on time daily is critical as well. In all grade levels academic instruction begins immediately after homeroom in the morning. However, being in HR on time (8:19) allows student the time they need to organize themselves and their materials for the morning's lessons. If we can assist in any way helping to have your child present and ready for learning, we are happy to help.

If your child will be home from school, please call us at 251-5122 x 4000 or email us at mccarthy_attendance@chelmsford.k12.ma.us to report your child absent. If you do not call in, our office will issue a ConnectEd automatic message to the families of all absent students whose parent has not called in. It will be a generic message indicating that your child is absent and to please call back or send in a note the next day to insure that the absence is recorded as an excused absence instead of an unexcused absence. The last part of the message urges you to contact immediately if you believe our call to be an error. That way if believe your child is at school and he/she is not, both home and school will know that immediately.

Please contact your child's guidance counselor if you have any overarching concerns whether it is attendance related or not. Specific class/assignment

related questions or concerns should be directed to the particular teacher involved. Our counselor assignments are as follows:

- Mrs. Seero: Grade 5 & Team 6-5
- Mrs. Vining: Grade 7 & Teams 6-3 and 6-4
- Mrs. Yates-Scott: Grade 8 & Teams 6-1 & 6-2

Please Return Documents from Your Child's Opening Day

Informational Packet! - The opening day packet contains important information as well as critical forms that must be filled out and returned to school promptly. The following documents need to be returned signed: Student/ Parent Handbook sign-off (blue) and the Emergency Health Form (yellow). Thanks for your cooperation on this!

Fall Fundraiser is Underway!- We sent home our fall fundraiser packets this week. Please ask your child about it if you have not seen it. The proceeds from this fundraiser come right back to our students in the form of PTO sponsored enrichment programs. Thanks in advance for your attention to this.

Box-Tops for Education- Please send us your Box Tops! Have your child bring them in and drop them off in the office! Every little bit helps!

LIBRARY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED- Our library is looking for parent volunteers to shelve library books and use the circulation computer to check books in and out. Prior experience in elementary school libraries is helpful, but I am willing to train those who do not have experience. If you are interested and would like to help, please email Mrs. Giglio at giglios@chelmsford.k12.ma.us.

Thank you,
Sharon Giglio
School Librarian

Open Houses- Please join us at Open House to meet your child's teachers and hear their expectations as well as learn about the curriculum.

- Grades 5 & 6- Thursday, September 19th at 6pm
- Grades 7 & 8- Thursday, September 26th at 6pm

Welcome New Staff- One of the most exciting things that take place in the summer is that we get to hire new staff members. We would like to welcome the following new and returning staff members to the McCarthy team:

- Team 7-2 ELA- **Dana Courtney**
- 5th & 6th Grade Literacy Support- **Mrs. Belanger** (Welcome Back!)
- 7th & 8th Grade Literacy Support- **Ms. Sorrentino**
- Team 15 Math- **mrs. Leedberg**
- Grade 6 Resource - **Ms. Silva**
- Grade 5-8 Band Director/Grade 5 General Music - **Ms. Lacasse**
- Technology Engineering- **mr. Tunnessen**
- 0.7 FTE LPN- **Ms. Bellenghieri** (Welcome back!)
- Team 6-5 ELA & SS- **Ms. Baker** (Welcome Back!)
- IPSP's- **Mrs. Marshall, Mrs. Schille, Mrs. Daly & Mrs. Taylor**
- Secretary to the Assistant Principal - **Mrs. Mannion**
- Team 7-2 SS- **Ms. O'Connor**
- Mathematics IPSP- **Mrs. Guerra**
- 0.5 FTE Life Skills Teacher- **Mrs. Porten**
- Lunchroom/Recess PSP- **Ms. Morin**

Wellness Policy Update- I would like to remind families that as a district we have updated our Wellness Policy. Please help us adhere to it by NOT sending in birthday cupcakes, cookies, etc. The policy prohibits the practice of sharing homemade food between students. Thanks in advance for helping keep our students safe.

Arrival/Dismissal - As you are well aware, **students need to possess and show their bus pass to ride their assigned school bus.** That is true for students who are required to pay and those who are not. Students will not be allowed to ride the bus without their specific bus pass. If you have not received a bus pass (or have lost it), call Central Office immediately, 978-251-5100 x6917 or 6915. Pick-up and drop off is on the tennis court/police department side of the building. Despite the increased volume of cars last year, the drop-off ran smoothly.

Key information to remember-

➤ *Arrival Time-* for students at the McCarthy School is 8:00AM. *There is no supervision for students before that time. Daycare is available before*

school at the Parker School. Please contact Community Education at 251-5151. If your child has a before school appointment with a staff member earlier than 8:00 AM, he/she must come through the front door and sign in at the office.

➤ *Dropping off and picking up-* Your children should be dropped off on the Police station side of the building. Please try to have your child packed up and ready to exit your vehicle on the passenger/sidewalk side. Please do not wait until your car pulls up to the door facing the police station. This tends to really back up the traffic flow. Your child can get out of your car at any point between the small gym and the door across from the police station. The door next to the library (not visible from the drop-off road) is also open in the mornings. There should be no drop offs on the administration (left) side of the building, as no one should be entering through the side door of the administration wing at any time. Pick-ups at the end of the school day (2:40) are in the parking lot near the tennis courts/football field. Please note that busses block the driveway next to the school next to the police station during dismissal. If you are arriving close to or after 2:30, you will probably have to enter the pick-up area using the entrance on Old Westford Road. For children's safety, please back into a parking spot before the dismissal time as it is much safer pulling forward out of a parking spot once school is dismissed. Thanks for keeping our children safe.

Communication- is a priority for us at the McCarthy School. Collectively as a staff we believe that strong two-way communication between school and home is vital for your children's growth here at school. There are many ways in which this communication can take place. A newsletter for example will come to you in an email once or twice a month. The Daily Bulletin will be able to be viewed on our website.

Our website is updated regularly and is a great way to keep up with what is happening at McCarthy. Our web calendar is another way to see school and district happenings at a glance. All staff members have email and may be reached in that manner. Each of our staff members also has access to voicemail.

Part of our phone system includes ConnectEd capabilities. ConnectEd allows us to send out one phone message or email to all members of our school

community instantly. If you have changed phone numbers or email addresses over the summer, please contact the office to update them.

Contact Us with any Concerns and Feedback- We value your feedback here at McCarthy Middle School. If you have any concerns at all, feel free to contact us. Without hearing your concerns we cannot, work towards a solution. We pride ourselves on being reflective. My expectation is that everyone- students, staff & administration- must be reflective examining our decisions and actions so that we can learn and grow. Any classroom concerns may be shared with your child's teachers or guidance counselors. Other overarching concerns may be shared with Mrs. Martin (martind@chelmsford.k12.ma.us) or myself (mcpheek@chelmsford.k12.ma.us). Thanks in advance for sharing.

How Can I Help Out? We are often asked by parents and families how they can help out the McCarthy Community. We have a couple of suggestions. One is your time. If you can help PTO by volunteering to help out on some of their school-related activities, that would be great. If you are interested, you can contact PTO at the email address below. Another way to help out would be through donations. In these tough times, families often have difficulty paying for field trips and even school supplies. We try to support families as best we can. We use this money as "financial aid" to help out families in need. If you can give any financial donation to help out, it would be greatly appreciated. Donations can be sent to the Main Office. Checks can be made out to McCarthy Middle School. In the memo line, please indicate "Donation".

District Handbook- Please see the handout from the first day of school referring to the district K-12 student parent handbook. It can be found by clicking here: [Student/Parent Handbook](#).

Visiting Us- We ask that when you come to the office at McCarthy please stop at the second door. There is a sign that reads visitors/sign-in and MAIN OFFICE. All visitors must come directly to the main office upon arrival.

Parent Teacher Organization- our PTO is a wonderful bunch of people that coordinate fundraising and provide support for all school members through the facilitation of parent volunteers. Please join us at our next PTO meeting: **October 2 @ 7:00PM** in our library. All PTO Executive Board members can be reached at: pto.mccarthy@gmail.com

UPCOMING DATES TO NOTE:

September 13	First Advisory Friday
September 19	Open House- Grades 5 & 6 @ 6PM
September 26	Open House- Grades 7 & 8 @ 6PM
September 26	School Pictures
October 2	PTO Meeting @ 7pm in Library
October 9	First Term Mid-Term Grades due in X2
October 14	Columbus Day
October 15	Full-Day Staff Development (No school)
Oct. 28-Nov. 1	Book Fair
November 7	End of Term 1