

The Lions' Roar



From the Principal's Pen

I hope that this newsletter finds you healthy and safe, and that you had a nice Thanksgiving break. I appreciate the partnership we have in our students' achievement, and I have been grateful for the high level of participation in parent conferences and volunteering!

Part of our School Improvement plan for this school year focuses on attendance. Attendance is crucial for learning, and the data from the first marking period show that our Tier 1 attendance rate is about 65%. This means that while many of our students are attending classes every day, about 35% of our students have less than 90% attendance or have been absent for more than 10% of the school year. I know that this can be so challenging during flu/RSV/COVID season, and I am asking that you send your child to school on time on days when they are well. Students who are not present during class are missing out on solid instruction, assistance, and feedback from their teachers.

Our academic goals for the school year have both math and literacy components. In math, we are focusing on student dialogue, supported by resources in the classroom such as manipulatives and math talk boards. We are providing support for our English Learners with sentence frames and visuals, which are best practices for all learners. Students who need extra reinforcement of skills are provided the opportunity to meet with their teacher in small groups, and one strategy is the use iReady Tools for Instruction to address specific needs. In literacy, we are using the Guided Reading process, specifically focusing on the conferring with students as they read. The information that teachers glean from conferring helps to design next steps and strategies to improve reading accuracy, fluency, and/or comprehension. Our teachers also differentiate instruction to provide vocabulary development for English Learners and interventions for students who qualify for additional instruction.

I am grateful for all that you do to partner with us to support your children and our school. I appreciate the parents who reach out with questions or concerns, and the teachers who are ready to answer or solve a problem. Please reach out if we can assist you in any way. Whether you celebrate Christmas, Chanukah, Kwanzaa, or the Winter Solstice, I wish all of you a happy and healthy winter holiday season.

Warmest wishes,
Mary Beth Gormley,
Principal



Lothian Elementary School's Mission and Vision

Mission Statement

At Lothian Elementary School, we are committed to creating a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment through strong relationships and open communication. All students will be engaged in learning to become responsible citizens, creative thinkers, and life-long learners.

Vision Statement

At Lothian Elementary School we envision a learning community in which stakeholders work collaboratively to nurture and develop the whole child and prepare them for their future in a global society.



Lothian Elementary
School Newsletter
December 2022

Volume 15 Issue 3

Attention!!!

- December 6—Winter Concert at SHS 6:30 pm
- December 7-2 Hour Early Dismissal- No PM ECI
- December 23-Jan 1: School Closed-Winter Break

Spirit Days

December 2-Fun Sock Day
KGN Color Week:

Dec 8 Red

Dec 9 Orange

Dec 12 Yellow

Dec 13 Blue

Dec 14 Green

Dec 15 Purple

Dec 16 Rainbow OR Holiday

Dec 22 Pajama Day *must wear shoes to/from school, may bring slippers, PJs must be school-appropriate.

In This Issue

Guidance News

2-3

School News

3



December News from the School Counselor

Kimberly Pletcher

Unity Day: December 7, 2022

We will be celebrating our second Unity Day on Wednesday, December 7th. Students will be asked to wear orange on that day to show their commitment to eliminating hate and bullying and promoting acceptance, inclusion, and kindness. Students will participate in activities that encourage unity so please ask your students about the day's events.

Substance Abuse Lessons for 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders

School Counselors are required to teach Substance Abuse lessons in the intermediate grades. I will be doing the lessons in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades during their guidance time. Parents should have already received a letter that I sent home with students in November regarding the lessons. They are mandated by the "Start Talking Maryland Act". Parents can preview the lessons online on the Anne Arundel County Public Schools website. Go to www.aacps.org and click on Students>Academic Counseling/Resources>Elementary Core Curriculum>Start Talking MD Lesson (3, 4, or 5) or you can call to set up a time to preview the lessons with me. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to call me at 410-867-3900 or kpletcher@aacps.org.

What is the "Start Talking Maryland Act"?

The act, passed by state lawmakers and signed by Gov. Larry Hogan, requires public schools to offer drug education that includes the dangers of heroin and other opioids starting as early as third grade.

Students in grades 3 - 5 will receive lessons from the School Counselor. These lessons will focus on:

- o **Third grade:** Recognizing prescription vs. non-prescription drugs; how to use them safely, choices and problem-solving, and an introduction to what opioid drugs are. They will be using a book: *Charlie and the Curious Club: Candy or Medicine*.

- o **Fourth grade:** Learning about the physical effects of drugs, understanding why substance abuse is a problem, understanding what addiction is, and understanding how they can contribute to solving the problem of substance abuse on a community level. They will be working with materials from *Kids Health* and recent news clips to be a detective, understand the problem and design a PSA, video clip, poster, or other activity to address the problem.

- o **Fifth grade:** Learning and practicing strategies to deal with peer pressure, using refusal skills to build confidence to deal with uncomfortable situations when they might be asked to do drugs, recognize the effects opioids have on their brains. Students develop a list of strategies and will receive a pocket card with strategies and resources on it.

Why is it important that children receive this instruction in school?

School provides a safe place where children can learn what to do in unfamiliar or uncomfortable situations. Trusted adults will provide students with an opportunity to practice handling these situations so that the first time a young person is faced with an unsafe situation, he or she knows what to do and has practiced doing it. Students will identify trusted adults, both inside and outside of the school, where they can go for help.

Lothian School Counseling Website

Just a reminder.....Parent Resources including food/mental health resources can be found on my google site: <https://sites.google.com/aacps.org/lothiancounseling/home> (Please sign in-to Google to access it).



Unity Day: December 7, 2022

We will be celebrating our second Unity Day on Wednesday, December 7th. Students will be asked to wear orange on that day to show their commitment to eliminating hate and bullying and promoting acceptance, inclusion, and kindness. Students will participate in activities that encourage unity so please ask your students about the day's events.



Help Wanted

We need one more lunch/recess monitor from 10:00 to 1:30. It could be one person every day or the days could be split between multiple people. The pay is \$14/hour. Please contact Mr. Tvedt if interested (ktvedt@aacps.org).



Parent tips for raising strong readers and writers

Growing readers!

Brought to you by Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado and LD OnLine

Fluency Matters

If you've been around classrooms and teachers, you've probably heard the term "fluency." Fluency is something worth knowing more about! Read on to find out what it is and how to develop it in your young learner.

Fluency: What is it? Why is it important?

If someone is fluent in speaking another language or in playing an instrument, there's a smooth, graceful and easy quality to it. The same is true with reading skills. Reading fluency is a child's ability to read a book or other text correctly, quickly, and with expression. A fluent reader doesn't have to stop and "decode" each word. Rather, most of the words can be read automatically. This means the reader can focus his attention on what the story or text means. For that reason, fluency is critically important — it's the bridge between decoding words and understanding what has been read.

How can we foster reading fluency?

Parents can help their child develop reading fluency through a few simple and fun activities.

Paired or "buddy" reading

The easiest and best way to help your child develop fluency is to sit with your child and read! Read together every day, which is often called paired or buddy reading. To use paired reading, simply take turns reading aloud. You go first, as your reading provides a model of what good fluent reading sounds like. Then, ask your child to re-read the same page you just read. You'll notice that your child's reading will start to sound more and more like yours. Do this for several pages. Once your child is comfortable enough, and familiar enough with the book, take turns reading page for page.

Reread favorite books

Another way parents can help develop fluency is to build a tall stack of books that your child can read quickly and easily. Encourage your child to reread favorite books over and over again. With each reading, you may notice your child reading a bit easier, a bit faster, and with a bit more confidence and expression.

Record It

Another fun way to practice reading and build fluency is to have your child create her own audio books. This can be done simply with a tape recorder or audio recording feature or app (like Audioboo) on your phone. Or, use something more sophisticated like StoryKit, where a user can create an electronic storybook and record audio to accompany it. Regardless of the method you choose, your child will be practicing what they want to record and that reading practice is critical. Sharing your audio recordings with family and friends is a great motivator too!

Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado, and LD OnLine are national education services of WETA, the flagship public broadcasting station in Washington, D.C.

