

# FEBRUARY 2024

## Retriever Newsletter

### Cultivating Lifelong Learners

#### *A message from the principal...*

Dear West Annapolis Families,

Welcome to the second half of the school year! We are officially in the third marking period for the 2023-2024 school year. This past month, our teachers have focused on student growth as demonstrated by each child's performance on the second quarter assessments, DIBELS for K-2 and WIDA/ACCESS testing for our english language learners. The faculty continues to observe the progress students have made and will use that information to plan rigorous and interesting instruction that will engage our students in learning. Students have been involved in setting their own academic goals as well.

On February 1st, the second marking period report card links will begin to be emailed home. Be sure to contact your child's teacher with any follow-up questions or concerns that you may have. Report cards links are emailed out to contact 1 so please be sure that your email is up to date with our office. These links expire so be sure to access them in a timely manner.

As we continue to monitor student attendance and late arrivals/early dismissals, we have begun to see an increasing number of students who have concerning attendance patterns. Please keep in mind that we open the doors of the school at 7:40 AM. This gives students ample time to unpack, complete morning work, and socialize with their peers. All students should be at their desks and ready to begin their day at 8:00 AM. If a student is ill or has COVID, Flu, etc., by all means keep them at home. However, it is imperative that they be in school if they are well. Please know AACPS does not excuse absences due to vacations or trips during the school year. Your child's attendance is important to their success and learning. During the next few months, instruction will be kicked into high gear and many fun and exciting activities are planned at all grade levels.

Because the weather is often cold and unpredictable at this time of year, we implore you to not drop off your children before 7:40 AM. The reason for this is twofold. First, it's too cold for them to stand outside for very long and second, there is no adult supervision outside prior to 7:40 AM. Please help us keep all our students warm and safe by not dropping them off too early.

Our school will host Kindness/Friendship Day parties in each classroom on Friday, February 16th. We are so grateful for the many room parents who are planning wonderful events for our students and our PTA for their help with the coordination! Like Halloween, volunteers will be on a sign-up basis and all volunteers need to have background checks and have viewed the AACPS volunteer video and submitted a verification form to the office.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite everyone to attend Coffee with the Principal on Monday, February 12<sup>th</sup> at school and hosted by our PTA at 9:00 AM. We would love to see some new faces at the meeting this month as we discuss how the PTA can help support the school for the remainder of the year and information about upcoming events will be discussed. Mrs. If you haven't done so already, please consider joining the West Annapolis PTA. It's not too late. The PTA supports our school in so many ways and each child benefits from the hard work of the volunteers and the money that is raised through the many PTA sponsored functions and activities. Many thanks to our PTA for supporting our reading initiative through their Read-a-Thon as well.

On behalf of the West Annapolis Staff, we are so very grateful for the many ways you show how you care about our students and staff every day! Keep up all of your great home support, especially with reading nightly with your child for our Reading Madness reading incentive and iReady practice. "West Annapolis Retrievers Rock!"

With Pride,

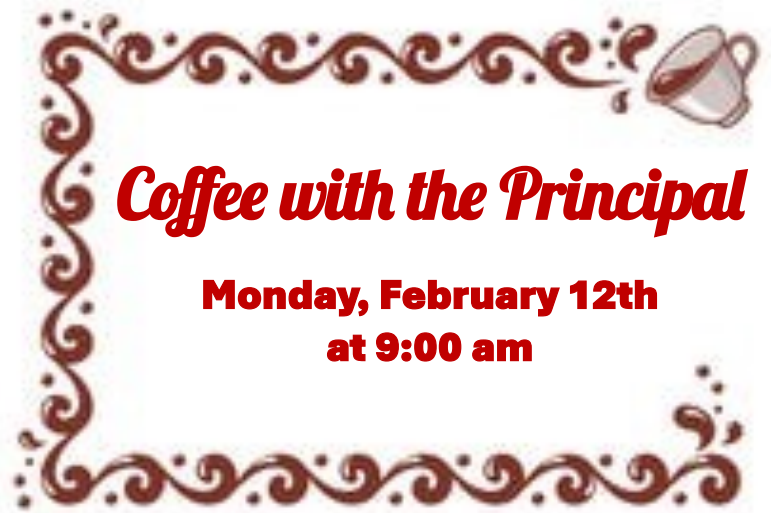
Jennifer Bennett, Principal



# dates to Remember

## **February**

- 1st Report Cards are emailed home
- 5th Yearbook Group & Candid picture dad
- 6th Hip-Hop Assembly from 9-10 am
- 6th Unity Day!! Wear Orange & 2 HR Early Dismissal
- 12th Coffee with the Principal
- 19th Presidents Day, School Closed
- 26th 5th Grade Music Field Trip



## ***Coffee with the Principal***

**Monday, February 12th  
at 9:00 am**

## Physical Education Highlights

### Grades K-2

Revisiting Locomotor Movement skills and patterns  
Jumping and Landing Skills  
Eye Hand Coordination using Juggling Scarves and Speed Stacks  
Cardio Drumming/Rhythm and Dance

### Grades 3-5

Eye Hand Coordination Skills – Juggling and Speed Stacks  
Fitness Activities/Health Related Fitness Components  
Team Building Challenges  
Cardio Drumming/Rhythm and Dance

## Kindergarten Chronicles



### Language Arts

We will be reading fiction and non-fiction texts to learn how living things survive in our world. We will continue to blend and read 3 and 4 letter words. Students will be introduced to more sight words. Please continue to practice them at home on a regular basis. At this point students should be able to write a sentence or two independently on a given topic.

### Math

We will continue learning the basic concepts of addition and subtraction. We will explore the many ways to compose and decompose numbers through 20. We will continue to count to 100 by ones and tens.

### Science

We will learn about living and nonliving things, animal habitats and what plants need to grow.



## Fabulous First Grade

### Friendship/Valentine Party

Students will have their party on Friday,  
February 16th from 1:15 - 2:15 pm.

Look for the class list for cards in the Tuesday  
folder and communications from our room parents.

We are working on a Theme titled "I Am Curious How Things Are Connected". We are discussing how we are connected by traits and how culture connects people through shared beliefs, traditions, and experiences.

**Literacy-** Continue to practice high frequency words each night with the homework and beyond. Please rotate daily reading into your child's routine. Send in book pouches for a refresh as needed. Most importantly...JUST READ! Log minutes on the read-a-thon site too.

**Math -** First graders should practice counting and writing numbers to 120. Solve addition and subtraction word problems within 20. Recognize number patterns on a number line. Represent numbers, up to 120, with tens and ones. Compare 2-digit numbers using the symbols  $>$ ,  $<$ , and  $=$ .

**Resources -** Students can use their chromebooks at home to access Scholastic, First In Math, Typing Club and iReady. Will you be a winner in the weekly iReady Reading challenge?!

### Inclement Weather

Should we have a need to work virtually for inclement weather, please refer to our class Brightspace page for information.

### School supplies

Please ask your student if they need to refresh their crayons, dry erase markers or glue sticks. Donations are always appreciated.

## Second Grade Scoop

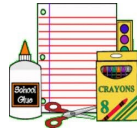
In **Language Arts**, students are working on a new writing unit on opinion writing. Students are writing friendly letters about their opinions of books they have read.

In **Math**, students are working with telling time and counting money.

In **Social Studies**, students are learning about economics and making smart choices with their money.

We are halfway through second grade! Please use this opportunity to review your child's progress and reinforce their hard work. Our second graders have come a long way since September! Also, please check to see if any of your child's school supplies need replacing.

Thank you!



## Third Grade Highlights



In **Language Arts**, students will begin persuasive writing. We will be working on supporting our opinions and continuing to focus on conventions. In reading we will be comparing and contrasting characters, themes, and plots of different stories. We will also be reading poetry. Please continue to read at home.

In **Social Studies**, students will think as economists. They will be able to understand and use disciplinary language that facilitates critical thinking and understanding of economic concepts.

In **Math**, students will come to understand unit fractions and use them to build other fractions. They will use number lines to explore how fractions are numbers that live on the number line with the whole numbers they already know. Fraction denominators are limited to 2,3,4,6 and 8. Please continue to have your students practice their multiplication facts.

In **Science**, students are continuing to study life cycles and will focus on inherited traits and adaptations.

# Fourth Grade Features



## Math:

This marking period is all about fractions. In February, students will be determining fraction equivalence and Comparing fractions.

## Science:

Students will explore different sources of energy, determine their origin, how they address human energy needs, and discuss their positive and negative impact on the environment. This unit culminates with students synthesizing their learning to make decisions on how to power a town given budget and environmental concerns

## Reading:

We are off to the third marking period with a new unit!! We will use literary and informational texts to engage students in an exploration of how to think critically to see other perspectives. The literary texts help students appreciate diversity and respect others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Each text addresses how perspectives influence the way individuals treat one another. They introduce characters who are motivated to empathize with others once they consider alternative perspectives. They include events that enable characters to understand another perspective. The informational texts present real life examples of animals in captivity and offer students the opportunity to think critically about the impact of this practice. During the course of this unit, students will see how characters grow and change as they consider another's perspective and will have an opportunity to think critically about varying perspectives on wild animals living in captivity. By the end of this unit, fourth grade students will understand how considering alternative perspectives increase social awareness and impact our beliefs, thoughts and actions.

## Writing:

In Units of Study Unit 2 Boxes and Bullets, students learn how to use effective organization and form to gather evidence to express and support an opinion. The Quarterly Reading

## **Fifth Grade Flash**

**Social Studies:** We are continuing learning about the results and impacts of the War of 1812. We will begin learning about the state of Maryland and how it impacted the economy and people during the Mid Century.

**Science:** We will begin learning about the interactions of the Earth's spheres before moving to our next unit on matter. We will continue to make connections with our new knowledge and understandings as well as real world experiences.

**Math:** We will continue exploring a variety of strategies as we solve problems focusing on dividing with decimals and then moving to adding and subtracting unit fractions. Students will continue to be encouraged to work/make models, being sure to label the parts of the model, identifying equations, again labeling each part to help solve a variety of problems.

**Reading:** This month we will continue to focus on various reading strategies such as finding the theme of a story, asking questions to gain a deeper understanding of texts, and point of view.





## Music Musings

Please refer to Brightspace for regular updates on music class!



### February Library Media News from Mrs. Robbins & Mrs. Stockett

Primary students are learning about using text features to help them read nonfiction texts. They will be exploring a variety of nonfiction texts as well as e-books and articles on databases such as PebbleGo.

Intermediate students will be learning about various fiction genre's, focusing on folktales and pourquoi's. All the classes are continuing to read the 2022-2023 Maryland Black Eyed Susan picture books. Once they have read at least 10 the students get to vote for their favorite.

## Art Adventures

As always please remember to dress for the mess!

### Special Announcements:

For 3rd grade families

The 3rd graders completed a collaborative cultural arts study of Japan.

The showcase is a collaboration between language arts, STEM,

media, art, music, and dance.

Please come and see the show!

Date: Thursday, February 29

Time: 1:00

Place: WAES Auditorium

The Annual Youth Art Month exhibit will occur February 16- March 11. Select works from West Annapolis Students will be on display at Discoveries: The Library at the Mall.

#### Lessons for February:

5th: Animal scratchboard

4th: Paper Mache' Masks

3rd: Kokeshi Dolls/ Tokoname Dragon

2nd: Talavera Sun

1st: Monochromatic Abstract

k: Pattern prints

# **STEM for February 2024**

In the STEM Lab we are hard at work planning and designing some awesome things. Take a look at what your child is doing to utilize their imagination, creativity, and engineering skills as they engage in many challenging activities:

**Kindergarten: Tinkering with Tools** *How might I use tools to solve a problem?* The purpose of this project is to provide students with experiences in the form of ill-structured tasks, where there is no apparent solution to develop their critical thinking as well as expose students to tools we will use in Triple E. These concepts are broad and multi-faceted. The skills to develop a kindergartener critical thinker are the ability to form and express judgements as opinions, seeing more than one way to solve a problem, and evaluate information by being open-minded, flexible, and persistent.

**First Grade: Pigeon Perch** *How can we design and construct a perch that will hold the weight of a bird?* In this project, students will construct a perch that can hold the weight of a chosen bird species. Students will research either a Woodpecker, Snowy Owl, Cardinal for their project according to their size, weight and special features, and study various perches, to determine proportions and distribution of weight. The perches will be tested using paperclips (1 paperclip = 1 gram), with opportunities for further testing and redesign.

**Second Grade: Pinball Wizard** *How can we create a pinball system using what we know about the structure and function of its parts?* Students will explore and learn of structures and functions within systems. They will explore a variety of table top pinball games and identify the structures and functions of each game. They then will look at everyday materials they can use to create their own pinball game. Students will plan their pinball machine, create the parts, and test their game while using the Engineering Design Process. Students will give and receive feedback in order to make improvements on their game.

**Third Grade: \*Grade 3: STEAM Project: Japan and the Forces of Nature** *How can we simulate the effects of an earthquake?* In this mini project, students will learn about the geography of Japan and how the country is affected by nature disasters, in particular tsunamis. Students will research about the causes and effects of nature disasters and the impact on the land and people of Japan. Students will demonstrate their knowledge by designing and constructing a diorama to display during their STEAM showcase in February.

**Fourth Grade: Take a Seat** *How might we design a chair to meet the needs of a client?* During this project students will be challenged to design a chair with a specific client in mind. They will begin by looking at chairs, recording observations and sketching what they observe. Students will have the opportunity to select a client and consider the needs of that client. Individual ideas/sketches for chair designs will be combined to create a collaborative chair design. The class will participate in a feedback loop and have the opportunity to refine ideas. The design sketch will be supported with a written/spoken product pitch that explains how the design meets the needs of the client.

**Fifth Grade: Operation Game** *How can we use a circuit to create a game for a client?* In this project, students will collaboratively build their own operation game. To do this, students will learn about simple and complex circuits. They will gather information about their client through a survey to find out what theme to use for the game. The groups will then draft sketches of their game and create templates for rules and theme. Finally, they will construct the game using their knowledge of circuits. The final product will be an operation like game designed for First Grade students.

The Science Fair,  
also known as Innovators of Science and Engineering Challenge,  
is coming SOON!!

Details regarding our school's Science Fair came home in January. Please review the Science Fair packet and determine if your child would like to participate. Students can choose between either a classic project or a STEM Engineering project. This is a wonderful opportunity for our students to share their experiments, discoveries, and inventions with peers, judges, and members of the community. Please return all forms by February 16, 2024!



# Health Room Highlights

**The month of February is all about the heart and teeth! February 1st marks the beginning of American Heart Month, where we raise awareness about heart disease and how we can prevent it. What a happy coincidence that we call attention to the heart in the same month that we celebrate Valentine's Day! February is also child's dental health month. We encourage families to teach children to adopt good oral health habits early. This improves the chance of children having healthy teeth and gums throughout their life. Oral health is a window to our overall health.**

**Heart disease is the leading cause of death among adults in the United States. Did you know, though, that heart disease doesn't just affect adults? It is increasingly being found in young adults and teens, partly because the conditions leading to heart disease are happening at younger ages. As February is Heart Month, it is the perfect time to learn about your risk for heart disease and the steps that you can take to help prevent heart disease.**

**Valentine's Day is this month too, and love is in the air! Show love for your own heart by renewing your commitment to healthy habits. To protect our children's cardiovascular health, they need to eat a well-balanced diet and to get plenty of exercise. Be sure to offer your children a wide variety of foods such as whole grains, vegetables, fruits, low-fat dairy products or non-dairy replacements, and lean proteins. Review any eating habit or weight concerns with your child's doctor. Cook with low to moderate amounts of healthy fats; bake, roast, or poach foods instead of frying. Limit the amount of dietary sugar by offering water, low-fat milk, or dairy substitutes instead of sugary drinks. Involve your children in planning and preparing meals. Be role models for your children. If they see you eating healthy foods, they will be more likely to follow suit. Lastly, encourage your children to be physically active every day.**

**Kaitlyn Skiscim, RN**

**Ruth Monroe, HA**

*Mrs. Kaitlyn Skiscim, RN  
BSN*

School Nurse AACO Department  
of Health





*Annapolis Pediatrics presents the 2nd Annual*



# KIDS' HEALTH & WELLNESS FAIR



**FREE FOR KIDS & FAMILIES, AGES 5-13**

- ~ Meet and Get Active with Navy Football Players
- ~ Free Food Provided!
- ~ Food Distribution, STEM Activities, Family-Fun Games & More from many community organizations!

**SATURDAY  
FEBRUARY 10TH, 2024  
11 AM - 1 PM**

Pip Moyer Recreation Center  
273 Hilltop Ln, Annapolis, MD 21403