



DMS Newsflash

A p r i l 2 0 2 2

Supporting Your Child's Learning at Home

Dear Parents & Guardians,

It is always a parent or caregiver's desire to fully support their child's education. Our students spend approximately 6 ½ hours on any given school day engaging in things like reading, writing, math, science, special area classes, recess, and lunch. Our teachers work diligently to utilize resources and implement the curriculum with fidelity to promote mastery and ensure their students' learning needs are met. When the school day ends, many of our students have a busy schedule of extracurriculars, and parents are often balancing a variety of at home and work demands. Finding time to support your child's learning is not always an easy feat, but it is an important one.

Here are some tips to supplement your child's education at home:

- 🍏 **Keep a routine.** Schedule a set time every school night for your child to do his or her homework. Make sure your child is practicing skills on a daily basis (i.e. nightly reading, math facts).
- 🍏 **Be a good example.** Read with your child, have your child read to you, read together.
- 🍏 **Praise your child's efforts.** Whether your child immediately mastered or struggled with an assignment, praise him or her for the effort he or she put into it.
- 🍏 **Promote a growth mindset.** Remind your child that if he or she keeps working hard, then success will follow.
- 🍏 **Encourage outside of school learning.** Take your child to a local library to research a particular interest, stop by a science museum, or go to the aquarium.
- 🍏 **Communicate with your child's teacher(s) about what should work on at home.**

Besides reading with your child and working on math facts, here are a couple of resources to assist you as your help with academics at home:

Language Arts

- **Heggarty Parent Newsletters/Phonemic Awareness:** Sign up for a free newsletter to support ideas for reinforcing the phonological and phonemic awareness skills taught in the classroom at home.
- **Storyline Online®** streams videos featuring celebrated actors reading children's books alongside creatively produced illustrations.
- **Free Rice Vocabulary.**

Math card games

Thank you for being outstanding partners in your child's education!

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Important Dates

April

- 1-8 Spring Book Fair
- 7 Board of Education Meeting •
District Office • 6:30 PM
- 8 Willy Wonka Scrapbook Theater •
Stonington High School • 6 PM
- 9 Willy Wonka Scrapbook Theater •
Stonington High School • 2 PM
- 15 No School • Good Friday
Observance
- 18-22 No School • Spring Vacation

May

- 6 Basket Raffle sponsored by the PTO
- 9-27 Smarter Balanced/NGSS Testing •
Grades 3-5
- 12 Board of Education Meeting •
District Office • 6:30 PM
- 17 PTO Meeting • DMS • 5:30 PM
- 21 Color Run sponsored by the PTO
- 30 Memorial Day Observance •
No School



Deans Mill School 5th Grade Celebration of the Arts

Thursday, June 2, 2022

5:15-6:30 P.M. Grade 5 Art Show

5:30 P.M. Grade 5 Concert • DMS Gym

Save
the
Date!

DEI Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Student Voice at SMS

Stonington Middle School students pitched the idea of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Creative Contest to the school administration, and it is a go! Students have the opportunity to express their thoughts and experiences as it relates to DEI, in the modality of their choice to emphasize inclusionary practices. The entries will be judged upon student-generated criteria after spring break.

From the District Office

The district administration is actively communicating with the Capitol Region Education Council to assist principals with the facilitation of the Welcoming Schools protocol. Each school will invite a team of family members, community members, and students to conduct a structured review of the welcoming nature of the physical school building, written and non-linguistic communication, school policies and practices, and the welcoming nature of the school staff. This process does not involve classroom or instructional observations. The exercise is to improve family engagement by making our schools even more welcoming to all families and students. There is a strong correlation between family engagement and successful student outcomes. The Welcoming Schools protocol will serve as an entry point for additional opportunities for family engagement next fall. Watch for more information in the next few weeks on the Welcoming Schools work at your child's school.

The Colors of Us Lesson

Sometime between late April and early May, our students will participate in an art lesson based on the book *The Colors of Us* by Karen Katz. The

purpose of the lesson is to promote diversity and appreciation for the variety of people who live in our community. Students will view *The Colors of Us* story and will discuss skin tone diversity and its relationship to mixing colors together to make secondary colors. As a culminating activity, younger students will focus on color mixing and painting within a heart shape. Our older students will do more complex weaving patterns in the AB pattern for paper weaving. This lesson will be taking place in art classes at Deans Mill and West Vine Street Schools.

THE COLORS OF US STORY BY KAREN KATZ IS ACCESSIBLE THROUGH THIS [LINK](#).



Reading is Fundamental

Simple Things Families Can Do to Help Their Child Become a Reader

- **Read to and with your children for 30 minutes every day.** It is very important to read out loud to your children before they start school. Help your children to read with you. Ask them to find letters and words on the page and talk with your children about the story.
- **Talk with infants and young children before they learn to read.** Talk with your children all day long, using short, simple sentences. Talking with them even before they can speak will help them later when they learn to read and write.
- **Help your children to read on their own.** Reading at home helps children do better in school. Have lots of children's books in your home and visit the library or bookstore every week. Help your children get their own library cards and let them pick out their own books.
- **If your child has a developmental delay, your child may find reading frustrating.** Use technology to support reading such as audio books on a device, audio recording yourself reading a book so your child can read along, or apps that highlight words as they read them aloud.
- **Help your child to see that reading is important.** Suggest reading as a free-time activity. Make sure your children have time in their day to read. Set a good example for your children by reading newspapers, magazines, and books in front of your child. If you are reading on a device, make it evident that you are reading.
- **Set up a reading area in your home.** Keep books that interest your children in places where they can easily reach them. As your children become better readers, make sure that you add harder books to your collection.
- **Give your children writing materials.** Children want to learn how to write and to practice writing. Help them learn by having paper, pencils, pens, or crayons for them in your home. Encourage creativity and volume of writing rather than being overly concerned about spelling or penmanship.
- **Read and write with your children in your native language.** Practicing their first language will help your children learn to read and write English.
- **Talk with your children as you do daily activities together.** When you take your children places, talk with them about what you are doing and ask them questions.
- **Ask your children to describe events in their lives.** Talking about their experiences helps children think about them. Giving detailed descriptions and telling complete stories also helps children learn about story structure and sequencing.
- **Regulate your child's screen time.** Always know what your child is watching on any type of screen and set time limits for the amount of screen time.
- **Keep track of your children's progress in school.** Visit your children's classrooms to learn how your children are doing in school and how you can help your children become better students. Ask about the school's reading program and where your children need support.



Source: America Reads Challenge, U.S. Department of Education • Last Modified: April 2019
750 First Street, NE, Suite 920 • Washington, DC 20002 • 1-877-RIF-READ • RIF.org



Scoliosis screenings

Scoliosis screenings have been completed for 5th grade girls.

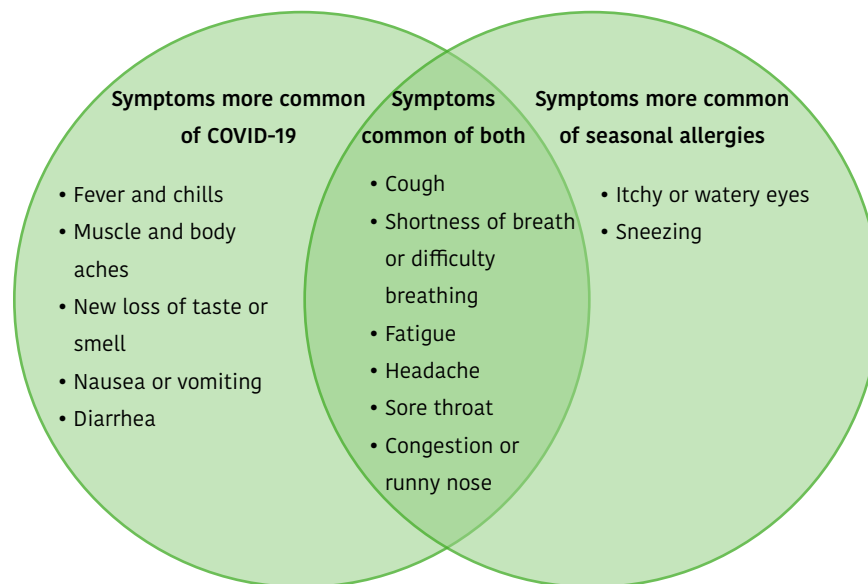
If further consultation is recommended, parents will be notified in writing of the findings and will be asked to seek further evaluation from their own physician.

If you have any questions, please contact your child's school nurse.

Allergy season

As you know, allergy season is quickly approaching here in New England. Please be advised that many symptoms are also consistent with COVID-19. Please be sure to check with your child's doctor and manage symptoms accordingly.

If your child is in need of a COVID-19 test kit, please contact the school nurse.



For COVID-related information, please visit the [red banner](#) on the top of the [Stonington Public Schools home page](#).

Kindergarten Registration

Kindergarten Registration has opened for Fall 2022!

Please visit the Stonington Public Schools home page and select Kindergarten Registration.

If you have not already done so, I encourage you to schedule your child's physical as soon as possible and inform the school nurse of the date it is scheduled.

Healthy DMS

Families, students, and staff continue to do a fantastic job keeping themselves healthy by staying hydrated and practicing good hand washing!

Keep doing your part and continue to keep the DMS community **HEALTHY!**

Nurse Lori

DMSnurse@stoningtonschools.org

2022



SUMMER YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES !

a sample of some summer camp & enrichment opportunities within our community

Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center

An outdoor adventure where campers spend their days hiking and exploring the local habitat while learning about natural history, playing games, and developing an appreciation for the environment.

<https://dpnc.org/>

Mystic Aquarium

Mystic Aquarium offers the perfect environment to enjoy and explore animals while having outdoor adventures in nature. In addition, each camp will have its own dedicated classroom within the *Milne Ocean Science and Conservation Center*, which is separated from the general public, to continue learning and exploration.

<https://www.mysticaquarium.org/learn-2020/summer-camps-2021/>

Mystic Museum of Art

Located in downtown Mystic. Camp offerings provide a wonderful introduction to a variety of visual art forms, from drawing and painting to 3D sculpture, crafting, and more. Select from the Junior Studio camps or try out a themed specialty camp in your area of interest.

<https://www.mysticmuseumofart.org/learn/summer-camps/>

Mystic & Noank Library

Contactless pickup of materials, digital library (includes ebooks, audiobooks, movies, music, newspapers, magazines, etc.), digital cooking classes, and drawing workshop.

<https://www.mysticnoanklibrary.org/>

Mystic Seaport

Mystic Seaport Museum offers a number of summer camp programs that provide a unique learning adventure where meeting new friends is fun and easy. There is a wide selection of Summer Day Camps offered for boys and girls ages 4 to 16.

<https://www.mysticseaport.org/learn/summer-camps/>

Nearby activities/attractions

Some of these ideas are great for a family activity or day trip!

<https://www.familydaysout.com/kids-things-to-do-usa/stonington/ct>

New England Science and Sailing

Located in Stonington Borough, NESS offers ocean-based experiential programs, which include marine science, sailing, powerboating, and adventure sports.

nessf.org

Stonington Como

Camp Como is offering ten weeks of fun beginning June 21st. Additionally, they offer athletic, STEAM, and many more enrichment/add-on camp options.

<https://www.thecomo.org/summer>

Stonington Free Library

Summer reading programs!

<https://www.stoningtonfreelibrary.org/my-library/youth/>

Stonington Human Services

The Recreation Division within the Human Services Department serves all the residents within the town of Stonington and provides a range of recreational opportunities for youth.

www.stonington-ct.gov

Terra Firma Farm

Frolick the field, pastures, and the barn while learning how to grow food and become a good farmer with hands-on activities and creative activities.

<http://www.terrafirmafarm.org/>

Virtual Activities for Families

Many popular Connecticut attractions continue to offer a wide array of virtual activities, including live animal web-cams, arts & crafts classes, science demonstrations, and yoga classes.

<https://www.ctvisit.com/articles/virtual-activities-families>

Virtual Summer Camps

A collection of virtual camps/activities including: STEM, Cooking, Film-making, Theater, and more!

<https://mommypoppins.com/camps/online-summer-camps-kids-STEM-arts>

Westerly Library & Wilcox Park

Offering kids & teen programming.

<https://westerlylibrary.org/>

Yellow Farmhouse Education Center

Cooking classes, Farm Activities, Nature Crafts, and more! Includes virtual cooking classes and Take & Make Arts & Crafts activities. Watch their website for updates.

<https://www.yellowfarmhouse.org/kids-cooking-classes>

YMCA

YMCA camp activities are designed to build character by instilling our values; caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. Programs for campers age 4 to entering 10th grade.

<https://oceancommunityymca.org/locations/camp-cove/>



Basket Raffle Fundraiser

The PTO is excited to host the Basket Raffle. The **May 6th** raffle will help to raise funds for student activities. This will be our first big fundraiser since Winter 2019!

We are looking forward to a great turnout for the raffle and we hope you can help by providing a donation for your child's classroom basket. See the theme for your child's class below.



Basket Theme	Classroom Teacher	Grade
Games & Puzzles	Lance	5
Retro (80's/90's)	Barth	5
Disney+ (Marvel, Star Wars, Pixar)	Salsich	5
Sports Equipment	McGowan	5
School Supplies	Pescatello	4
Pet Lover	Peay	4
Road Trip	Durham	4
Ice Cream Party!	Garceau	4
Candy, Candy, Candy!	Whipple	3
Camping Basket	Rogers	3
Chapter Books	O'Lari	3
Picture Books	Gill	3
Birds and Bloom	Wilkins	2
Movie Night	Discordia	2
Fidget Fun	Sartor	2
Arts and Crafts	Hansen	2
Beach Day	McKee	1
Fun in the Sun (Outdoor Play)	Watson	1
Backyard/Driveway Games	Rovella	1
Coffee Basket	Mellow	1
Arts and Crafts	Hetu	K
Spa Basket	Lettiero	K
Reading Fun!	Romano	K
Chocolate Lovers	Wade	K

We are asking each student to donate either an item for the basket or \$5.00 towards the purchase of items related to the theme for his/her class.

We are also very happy to accept baskets from individual families that would like to donate. In addition, if you or someone you know owns a business and would be willing to make a donation of either a basket or a gift certificate, please let us know. It would be greatly appreciated.

Please send in any cash or item donation to school **no later than Friday, April 29.**

Be sure to mark your calendar for **May 6th**. Thank you for your support! This event would not be possible without your willingness to help.

Contact Susan Isif, Basket Raffle Chair, at susanisif03@gmail.com if you have any questions.

CONTINUED



Draft: Deans Mill School PTO Meeting Minutes, March 15, 2022**1. Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order at 5:33 P.M.

2. In Attendance

Principal- Jenn McCurdy, Assistant Principal- Thomas Bousquet, PTO President- Katie Quinlan, PTO Vice President- Jenni Adkins, PTO Treasurer- Rob Winslow, PTO Secretary- Jen Flynn, Ashley Tewell, Joshua Penfield, Susan Isif, Jasmine Myers, Tracey Strelczuk, Elyse Hicks, Erin Vincent, Heather Devine, Ruth Peterle-Dzurec, Edie Morren, & Erin Janicek.

3. Secretary's Report

Minutes were reviewed from the January 2022 PTO Meeting. Motion to approve by Ashley Tewell, Second Tracey Strelczuk. All in favor unanimous.

4. Treasurer's Report

Current balance in our account is \$42,526. Motion to approve by Jasmine Myers, Second Ashley Tewell. All in favor unanimous.

5. New Business, Principal's Report

Budget season is upon us. BOE approved an education budget with 2.5% increase. Public hearing is March 29th. at Stonington High School, 7:00 P.M. Also, April 26th is the Referendum. All parents encouraged to participate.

- * 3 paraprofessional vacancies still available. Reach out to Jenn McCurdy if interested. 29 hr/ wk position.
- * Kindergarten registration opens on March 21st. Will be held open until April 14th.
- * Student Leadership Club is back this year. Meeting weekly & planning Rainbow of Kindness Week. Begins March 28th. Information to be sent home.
- * Glow Party. Scheduled for March 18th. for second bucket challenge. Supports our Glow & Grow theme. Dancing, bowling, games, black lights, & music are all planned.
- * Tom Bousquet: Art Class titled "Colors of Us". Grades K-5. Celebrating all different skin tones of the world. Information will be provided in the April Newsflash. Will take place at DMS & West Vine.
- * Jenn McCurdy & Tom Bousquet are reviewing with each grade the expectations for behavior in the cafeteria, during lunch time.

6. Upcoming Chair Committee Updates

- * **Spring Book Fair:** April 1st-8th. Stephanie Gagnon-Ragsdale. Sign Up Genius is LIVE, if you would like to volunteer to help. All information can be found on the Sign Up Genius. Preview fliers to be sent home with students.
- * **Bowling Event:** Scheduled for March 20th, 2 P.M.-4 P.M. Groton Bowling Center.
- * **Outdoor Classroom:** Help Needed. April 11th-April 14th. Sign Up Genius will be sent out. Students will need help planting bulbs outside.
- * **In Cultural Enrichment:** Ruth Peterle-Dzurec. Planning an event for end of April, early May. Possible musical group performances.
- * **Willy Wonka Performance:** April 8th & 9th. Stonington High School. 5th grade party will be selling flowers at this event. Flowers will be able to be pre-ordered. Fliers will be sent home soon.
- * **Duck Race:** Tracy Brunelle. Forms are due April 1st. Information has been sent home with students. Duck Race will be April 30th.

- * **Basket Raffle:** Susan Isif. May 6th. Each classroom will be given a theme, and baskets will be put together accordingly. Fifth grade will be selling food, drinks & sweets. More information to come.
- * **Teacher/ Staff Appreciation Week:** Morgan Adair. May 2nd-6th. Each day of this week will be a theme. Sign Up Genius will be sent out for help. *Color Run: Meredith Kyle. May 21st. Will be held at Stonington Human Services pavilions. Registration held from 10 A.M. to 11 A.M.. Racing planned for 11 A.M. to 12 P.M. Pairing with West Vine & Stonington Middle School.
- * **5th Grade Celebration of the Arts:** Date TBD, but possibly first week of June. Will be held at D.M.S. Planning is in the works. Specifically for fifth graders. Concert & Art work to be displayed. Return to Arts & Music night, next school year, for all grades.
- * **Science & Tech. Day:** Jen Rothman. June 3rd. Looking for volunteers from the Science & Technology field. Contact Jenn McCurdy or Jen Rothman if interested. Will be held in person.
- * **Field Day:** Will be held at DMS. June 15th, rain date of June 16th. Committee will be formed & volunteers will be needed. More information to come.
- * **5th Grade Party:** Tracy Brunelle. June 20th.
- * **Class Photos for yearbook:** Photographers Needed!! Contact Katie Quinlan if interested.
- * **Head Liaisons:** Ashley Tewell. Information to be sent out for public budget hearing. Also, focus is going to be placed on Staff Appreciation Week. Classroom liaisons will coordinate with classroom parents, and plan for their specific teachers. More information to come.
- * **Apparel:** Heather Devine. In process of setting apparel production up with a new company. Exploring option of items being able to be purchased through a website, designed for DMS. More information to come. Apparel to be sold at D.M.S. bowling event as well.

7. Old Business

- * **Appeal:** Rob Winslow. Launched Feb 1st. Will continue through remainder of school year. Thank you for your generous donations!!

8. Important Dates

- * April 15th -22nd: Spring Break
- * May 30th: No School
- * June 8th: Early Release
- * June 21st- Early Release / Last Day of School

- * Meeting was adjourned by PTO President, Katie Quinlan @ 6:40 P.M.
- * Minutes were transcribed by PTO Secretary, Jen Flynn
- * Next PTO Meeting: May 2022

