



# Chester Elementary School

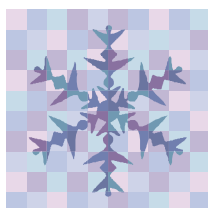
Mr. Michael K. Barile, Principal

23 Ridge Road, Chester, Connecticut 06412

Phone: 860-526-5797 Fax: 860-526-3570

www.chester.k12.ct.us

## December/ January



*“This joint review of the report card between parent and child emphasizes that you have high expectations and support them in their learning.”*

### Inside this issue:

Important Dates	2
Important Reminders	2
Curriculum Corner	3
Nurse News	4
Online Keyboarding	4
Social Development	5
Grade 6 SD Book	5
Book-of-the-Month	6
Service Learning	6
PTO News	7-8
Tri Town Youth	9
Parks & Recreation	10

### *A Letter From the Principal*

Dear Parents,

It is hard to believe that December is already upon us!

Please note that report cards are scheduled to be sent home with your child on Friday, December 16th. After reviewing your child’s report card, talk with them and stress the positive things you observe and discuss areas in which they can improve. Finally, plan with your child the ways in which they can carry out these suggestions. This joint review of the report card between parent and child emphasizes that you have high expectations and support them in their learning. Students are proud of their accomplishments and through parental support they will continue to reach new goals.

I am pleased to inform everyone that our Schoolwide Enrichment Academies are going well. Students, staff and parents are extremely enthusiastic about this new initiative. The academies incorporate knowledge utilization, thinking skills, and interpersonal relations that take place in the real world. Teachers have been providing direction to the students by incorporating the following three key questions into the academies: (1) What do people with an interest in this area (e.g., film making) do?; (2) What knowledge, materials and other resources do they need to do it in an excellent and authentic way?; and (3) In what ways can the product or service be used to have an impact on an intended audience?

We will be ending the first session of academies in January, culminating with a town meeting on Thursday, January 12th.

I would like to take the opportunity to inform you about an article on page 3 that is written by our assistant superintendent, Mr. Neviasser. Over the past few years, we have been focusing on improving students’ ability to compute math facts both accurately and efficiently. In his article, Mr. Neviasser outlines the importance of this initiative while explaining why we must place additional emphasis on math due to the recent adoption of new National and State standards. In response, your child’s teacher will be assigning homework in the area of math fluency and computation on a nightly basis. Therefore, your child is expected to practice math each evening as they do reading. Both of these activities should be promoted by the parent and be an enjoyable experience. Please read the article on page 3, and thank you for your support with this new initiative.

I hope you had a terrific Thanksgiving and I wish you well this Holiday Season.

*Your Partner in  
Education,*

Michael K. Barile  
Principal

## *Important Dates to Remember*

### December

- Dec. 1 (Th) Supervision & Joint BOE Meetings 6:30 pm & 7 pm  
JWMS Library
- Dec. 2 (F) Town Meeting  
2:10 pm—Gym
- Dec. 6 (T) Winter Band & Chorus  
Daytime Rehearsal—1:45 pm  
Evening Concert—6:30 pm
- Dec. 7 (W) End of Trimester for  
Grades 1—6
- Dec. 9 (F) Early Dismissal at 1:00 pm  
Professional Development
- Dec. 13 (T) PTO Meeting—7:00 pm  
Library
- Dec. 16 (F) Report Cards Distributed  
PTO Holiday Craft Night  
6:00 pm—CES Gym
- Dec. 23 (F) Snow Day Play 9:00 am  
Early Dismissal at 1:00 pm
- Dec. 26—Jan. 2nd Holiday Break

### January

- Jan. 3 (T) Back to School After Break
- Jan. 10 (T) PTO Meeting—7:00 pm  
Library
- Jan. 13 (F) Town Meeting  
2:10 pm—Gym
- Jan. 16 (M) Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
No School
- Jan. 17 (T) Full Professional Day  
No School for Students
- Jan. 26 (Th) Chester BOE Meeting  
7:00 pm—Library
- Jan. TBD PTO BINGO Night with  
Basket Raffle



## *Important Reminders*

- Calendar events are subject to change. Every effort to notify families in advance will be made through separate flyers and/or future newsletters.
- Please visit our new district website at: <http://www.region4schools.com/>. All calendar events, resources, etc. will be updated here.
- Teachers now have websites called Wikis. You may visit any teacher's Wiki through the "Our Schools" tab on [www.region4schools.com/](http://www.region4schools.com/) website.

# Math, it all adds up!

---

In contemporary society it is not considered acceptable to be illiterate. Sadly, this same standard is not applied to mathematics. Never would someone admit, “I don’t know how to read” yet far too often people have little reluctance admitting to “not being good at math.” This dichotomy has been a part of the American culture for far too long. The impending implementation of new Connecticut and national standards that require higher levels of mathematical fluency at earlier grades will further exacerbate this problem. The Region #4 Schools are taking a proactive approach to these new expectations. With the intent of making math an equal partner to literacy in the education of our students, we are realigning our curriculum to meet the new standards, reviewing time on task for mathematics, adjusting instructional practices, and establishing new expectations for nightly mathematical skill development.

It has long been considered best practice for elementary school children to be given a nightly reading assignment ranging in time and difficulty based on their age and grade level. In our schools, this has been in place for many years supported by the notion that regular practice will result in better readers and ultimately in higher academic achievement. While a majority of our teachers mimic this model in mathematics, we are moving to ensure a guaranteed level of consistency in math such as that in reading.

Research has shown that math fact fluency, and computational fluency at the upper elementary grades, are paramount to success in higher level mathematics courses. Therefore, beginning this week, your student will be expected to complete math fact fluency assignments, or math computational fluency assignments, dependent on their grade and proficiency levels, on a nightly basis. This may be in addition to any regularly assigned mathematics homework. We expect that the few minutes of time required to complete this assignment will have a significant impact on our students’ mathematical abilities.

Individual teachers may utilize different resources to achieve the same goal of regular practice of foundational math skills. You can add your support by ensuring the completion of this assignment on a nightly basis in the method that the teacher has indicated. If you have any questions regarding this initiative, please contact your student’s teacher or the school principal.

-Ian Neviasser, Assistant Superintendent, Region #4 Schools

## *News from Nurse LeAnn*

### **Here are 6 Ways to Avoid the Flu this Season**

- The CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses. This year's vaccine includes the H1N1 vaccination.
- Wash hands often with soap and water. If not available, use an alcohol based hand rub.
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow or into a tissue. Then wash your hands!!!
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.
- Live a healthy lifestyle by eating healthy, drinking plenty of water, keeping active, and getting a good night's rest!

I wish you a healthy holiday season!

Nurse LeAnn

## *Online Keyboarding Available to Students at Home*

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that an online keyboarding program : "Typing Pal" is now up and running. This program is appropriate for K-6. All CES students, K-6, are entered into the system. Students can access the program from home if they would like to "practice".

There is a link entitled "Typing", on the CES web page under Student Resources. Students login using the right hand column.

**Student access is:**    user name: first initial last name (no spaces, all lowercase)  
    password: first initial last name (no spaces, all lowercase)

"Typing Pal Online" is a web-based keyboarding program accessible from any computer connected to the Internet. It allows students to learn typing quickly and efficiently. We all know that learning how to type today is a must and quickly becoming an invaluable asset. This user-friendly keyboarding course develops accuracy and speed, giving children the opportunity to improve their typing method in the most engaging way. It will help students communicate more rapidly and use computers more efficiently.

To access the school account, please go to [http://school.typingpal.com/index\\_ecole.asp?TYPSCHEs](http://school.typingpal.com/index_ecole.asp?TYPSCHEs) or visit our school website.

All students should already have an account, user name and password. If anyone needs help or has questions, please contact Kim Johns, our school technician.

*"Cough and sneeze into your elbow or into a tissue. Then wash your hands!!!"*

*"It will help students communicate more rapidly and use computers more efficiently."*

## Social Development Information

### New Positive Behavior Support Initiative at Chester Elementary



During the month of November, the Social Development committee, along with the Helping Hands academy hung posters around the school that go along with our school code of being Respectful, Responsible, Safe and Prepared.

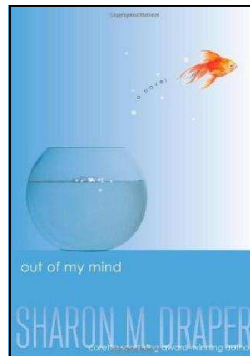
These posters define our school code in child friendly terms and help to show the students how to better carry out our code in different areas of our school. The students and the entire school community will see these posters in the cafeteria, hallways, bathrooms, playground, and in the gym for school assemblies. The students will also see smaller versions of these posters will be on each bus.

Our Social Development committee has been busy teaching the students about what these posters mean. We are very excited to be involved in an initiative that helps our students better understand how to be Respectful, Responsible, Safe and Prepared. During the month of December talk with your children about what it means to be Respectful, Responsible, Safe and Prepared.

*“These posters define our school code in child friendly terms and help to show the students how to better carry out our code in different areas of our school.”*

## Sixth Grade Book-of-the-Month

Our Social Development Books-of-the-Month program has recently had a positive addition. The sixth grade class will be collectively reading a book titled, Out of my Mind by Sharon Draper.



Here is an excerpt for Out of My Mind from Amazon.com: Eleven-year-old Melody has a photographic memory. Her head is like a video camera that is always recording. Always. And there's no delete button. She's the smartest kid in her whole school—but no one knows it. Most people—her teachers and doctors included—don't think she's capable of learning, and up until recently her school days consisted of listening to the same preschool-level alphabet lessons again and again and again. If only she could speak up, if only she could tell people what she thinks and knows . . . but she can't, because Melody can't talk. She can't walk. She can't write.

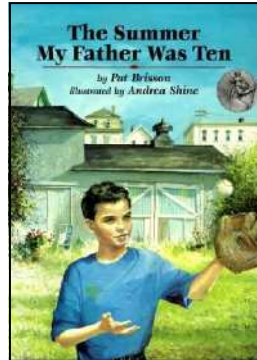
Being stuck inside her head is making Melody go out of her mind—that is, until she discovers something that will allow her to speak for the first time ever. At last Melody has a voice . . . but not everyone around her is ready to hear it.

This book will be read by each subsequent class when they are in sixth grade, therefore, please do not read it with your child if they are in a lower grade. Reading this book as an entire grade level is a wonderful way to give the students an even greater sense of community.

## *Social Development Book of the Month*

### **December's Book-of-the-Month is:**

The Summer My Father was Ten, Pat Brisson



A young girl helps her father plant a garden. There is much more to the occasion than tilling the soil. There is a tradition here at work as well, one that involves the telling of a story.

A father tells his daughter the story of how he damaged a neighbor's garden and what he did to make amends. (excerpt from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com))

*“December's Social Development Book of the Month is: The Summer My Father was Ten by Pat Brisson”*

## **Service Learning—Sharing and Caring as a School**

During the month of October, CES participated in a service learning project. We collected food and supplies to help replenish the local food pantry. Our Helping Hands academy was involved with counting the items and bringing them to the pantry. Our response was amazing!

During the last few weeks of November and the first three weeks of December, our school will be involved in collecting personal items for the residents of the Gateway Community Treatment Center. They use these items as gifts for the residents during their holiday party. A spokesperson from Gateway will be coming to one of our Helping Hands Academy meetings to talk to the students about how much our school wide donations help the residents of Gateway. More information on this service learning project has been sent home under separate cover.

### **We will be collecting the following personal items until Friday, December 9<sup>th</sup> :**

- Kindergarten: socks and slippers
- First Grade: toothpaste and toothbrushes
- Second Grade: combs and brushes
- Third Grade: art supplies
- Fourth Grade: gloves and hats
- Fifth Grade: shampoo and conditioner
- Sixth Grade: deodorant
- And teachers: liquid and bar soap

Please help us fill those baskets. And thank you for caring and sharing!!

*“Our Helping Hands academy was involved with counting the items and bringing them to the pantry.”*

## *PTO Update and News*

The PTO has had a terrific fall this year with some great events like Cultural Arts' wonderful new mural, the Book Fair, 2 sessions of Creative Extensions, the Haunted Hayride, the Fall Catalog Sale, Movie Night and the Fall Clothing Drive. Now we are gearing up for the holiday season!

### **Giving Tree**

With the holiday season fast approaching, the PTO, along with the Social Development Committee, is hosting a "Giving Tree" for families in need. The "Giving Tree" will be the mural across from the gym. Starting in December, there will be apples with the information on specific requests. Just choose an red apple and sign the white one so we can keep track as the present come in. Wrapped present should be dropped off in the office by December 16th. Please include the apple tag with the present. More info will be sent home when the program starts. If you are interested in helping with this, please call or email chair Heather Hart at [hart\\_robert@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hart_robert@sbcglobal.net).

### **Holiday Craft Night**

Kids love this fun holiday event which will be held on Friday, December 16, 6 to 8 pm at the CES gym. We still need crafter volunteers to run a craft table, helper volunteers to assist crafters, good craft ideas, donations of supplies (for example, extra Halloween candy for donating gingerbread houses and donations of snacks. Please contact chair Amy Safran if you can help: [amysafran@hotmail.com](mailto:amysafran@hotmail.com).

### **Don't forget these ongoing endeavors:**

You can still help your child be a Super Saver through Save for America and Liberty Bank. Open a student saver account at Liberty Bank (with as little as a penny), then students can make deposits on Tuesday mornings prior to the start of school in the computer room with a CES volunteer. Each time a student makes a deposit at school, he/she receives 10 Super Saver Points. The points accumulate and the student earns a prize! If you can assist with the deposits, about an hour once a week, or for more information please contact Sheila Robida - at 860 227-4853 or [srobida@comcast.net](mailto:srobida@comcast.net).

Keep collecting Bxotops for Education, Campbells soup labels, used cell phones and printer cartridges for future collection drives (including another clothing drive in the spring). We could really use a volunteer to coordinate the collection of these items with the CES room parents. If you would like to help with that, please contact Kristie or Gail.

## *Upcoming Dates to Remember*

**December 13th**—PTO meeting, Tuesday, 7 pm in CES Library

**December 16th**—Holiday Craft Night, Friday, 6 to 8 pm in CES Gym

**January TBD**—Basket Raffle And Bingo Night, Friday ???



## *Events and Fundraising News and Update*

We have set a fundraising goal of \$17,000 and we have raised more than \$9,000 so far. We need YOUR help getting the rest of the way! Below are the upcoming fundraising events we are currently working on--we'd love your help!

### **January Basket Raffle And Bingo Night**

Room parents and teachers are brainstorming with the kids to choose a theme and come up with ideas for filling the baskets. Themes will be chosen before the holidays so shoppers can be looking--and an unappreciated or duplicate gift might be just right for one of the baskets :) Winners will be announced at Bingo Night in January, which will make for a really fun night! We are still looking for someone to volunteer to chair the Basket Raffle--and someone else to volunteer to chair Bingo Night!

### **Spring Event With Silent Auction**

We are organizing an event (with a theme like Mardi Gras or Saint Patty's) with a silent auction, to be held offsite (this means a cocktail hour!). Silent auctions have been very successful in the past, but they require people who are willing to solicit great auctionable items. Can you all start trying to come up with some great ideas? February (or March) will be here before you know it!

### **Spring Fun Run**

This is still in the very early planning stages, but we think it could be a great healthy and fun outdoor fundraiser. Kids could get sponsored for how many laps they run around the athletic fields. Plus there can be other fun outdoor activities. Someone--please volunteer to chair!

Finally, if you would like to support the PTO but cannot participate in fundraisers, you can always directly donate to the PTO by sending a check made out to the CES PTO (send to school--your child's backpack is fine). Each year, the PTO raises enough money to spend about \$65 per student. Any amount is greatly appreciated!

## *Thank you to all the support we have received ...*

Vickie Corbett for doing a great job with the fall catalog sale;

Shawn Ruffer and her army of wonderful volunteers for the very successful fall Book Fair;

Amy Pullin, Karen D'Agostino and Kathleen Gephardt and all those who volunteered their time, donations and loans to create a super fun Haunted Hayride.

Trish Reed, Ann Dipierdomenico, and their terrific volunteers--Terry Turner, Sue Jones, Patricia and Carmelo Saglimbeni, Janet Gessner, Dori Curran and some wonderful bakers--for a fabulous Movie Night in the CES gym, with thanks as well to Deep River Hardware, Marquee Cinemas, Cumberland Farms, Adams Supermarket, Chester Hose Co, McDonald's and James Grzybowski for all their donations and loans;

Sheila Robida and all those who donated to and assisted with the Clothing Drive (we collected 2,234 pounds of clothing and raised \$350.00)--including the 6th grade, Adrianna Cerrato, Karen Cole, Amy Gordon, and Dave Norling for helping to load the truck., and Amy Lippincott, who brought in over 30 bags of clothing!

*"We need YOUR help  
getting the rest  
of the way!"*



### **Asset-Building Ideas for Grandparents**

Being a grandparent means different things to different people. Many children in the United States are being raised by their grandparents or spend a great deal of time with them. Other grandparents live in different states or countries than their grandchildren and rarely, if ever, see them. Whether you see your grandchildren daily or just once in a while, you can do many things to help nurture their assets.

Here are some ideas for building assets for and with your grandchildren:

- Support your children in their parenting. There are different ways to do this, including telling them what you think they do well, giving them a break by babysitting once in a while, and being respectful of the way they do things (even if you'd do them differently).
- Have clear boundaries and high expectations for how you expect your grandchildren to behave. Also talk with your children about the boundaries and expectations they have for your grandchildren. Finally, talk with your grandchildren about how you hope they will behave and why those things are important to you.
- Introduce your grandchildren to other caring elders, such as your friends or other relatives. The more exposure older people and youth have to one another, the better able they will be to relate and get along.
- Help make history come alive for your grandchildren. Tell them stories about their parents and about your own life. Help them think about their future by talking about goals and dreams you had as a young person.
- Model lifelong learning by reading, taking classes or lessons, or trying new things. Talk with your grandchildren about what you are learning and why it is important to you.
- Model involvement in community service (for example, planting a plot in a community garden or volunteering at an animal shelter). Talk about your experience and why you have decided to contribute to your community.
- Attend school and community events that your grandchildren are involved in.
- If your grandchildren live far away, try to see them on a regular basis. Also think of creative ways to stay connected with them at other times. Call them often, mail them notes, send email messages, or tape-record yourself reading them stories.
- Spend some individual time with each grandchild. Frequently tell each one how special he or she is and how much you love her or him.
- Play games with your grandchildren, such as card games, board games, computer games, or made-up games.

## Chester Parks and Recreation December Programs

**Please call 526-0013, extension 223 for information or to register for a program!**

**Forms are available outside the Parks and Recreation office, at Chester Elementary School, and at <http://www.chesterct.org/parks.php>**

## **FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADE GIRLS NEEDED FOR CHESTER YOUTH BASKETBALL!**



### **Hotshots Basketball Competition**

Congratulations to EVERYONE who participated in the Chester HOTSHOT program. The high scorers were KAMILLA DOMPIER, JOSH ROSS, JACOB ROBERTSON, and TYLER SAUNDERS.



### **Karate for Children**

Karate classes will be held in the multi-purpose room at Chester Elementary School by Valley Shore Martial Arts. Children who are in grades 1 through 6 will meet on Wednesdays, January 11, 18, 25, and February 1, with snow make-ups of February 8 and 15, to learn the Kempo style of Karate. The cost of the program is \$20 per session.



### **Roller Rink!**

The Chester Elementary School multi-purpose room will become a roller rink after school on Tuesdays, January 24, February 28, April 3, and May 8. Skate to your favorite music! Bring your roller skates or rollerblades and a helmet. The activity is staffed by the Parks and Recreation Camp Counselors and open to students in grades 1 through 6. The price is \$5 per day. Select as many or as few days as you wish! Please register two weeks in advance so that we may provide the appropriate supervision.