



CGS PTO Newsletter

May 2011

Coventry Grammar School

3453 Main Street
Coventry, CT 06238

Phone: 860-742-7313
Website: www.coventryps.org

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A Memo From Marybeth Moyer, Principal

The long-awaited spring season has arrived! This is a wonderful time of year to witness the growth of our students. As we look ahead to teacher appreciation week, I am thankful for a dedicated staff that continually collaborates to support the academic, social and emotional growth and development of our students.

When we closed out the month of April, the entire school community participated in Project ACES (All Children Exercise Simultaneously) on Friday, April 29. The students and staff at Coventry Grammar School were joined by 40 UCONN athletes for this exercise-themed event. In pep rally fashion the students were led in motivating cheers while they reviewed the importance of hard work, proper nutrition and exercise. This was then followed by a one-mile walk around the C.G.S. campus and classroom visits with our special guests.

This month we will begin the complex process of placing our students for the upcoming school year. This process continues over the next eight weeks and requires careful consideration of many factors from a wide range of sources. Our main goal is to create balanced classes that will be able to work well together. This balance includes, among other things, boy/girl ratio, instructional levels, classroom achievement and special needs. Creating balanced classes is important to help ensure success for every student.

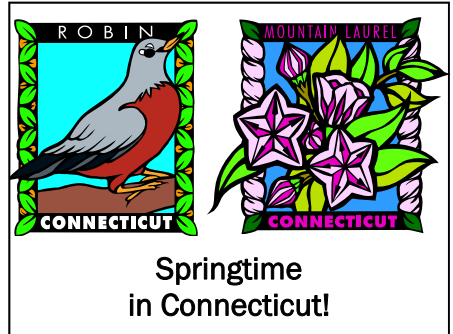
Frequently, parents ask if they can request their child's teacher for the next school year. The practice at Coventry Grammar School is not to accept parent requests for specific teachers. In light of that, we do know that parents have insight about their children which may be helpful during the placement process. Based on this belief, I will accept letters for consideration that explain these special circumstances. These insights should be put into writing and forwarded to me no later than May 16. Please note that your input will be considered, but I cannot guarantee that it will be honored.

Please be assured there is much time and thought put into all placement decisions. We are fortunate to have a dedicated staff, and it is with confidence that I am able to say that our teachers do a tremendous job with our students to ensure that their years at Coventry Grammar School are challenging, rewarding and memory-filled.

Although warm weather is here, and summer is on the horizon, the next eight weeks of learning are vital in bringing closure to all that has been learned this year. Students and teachers will be working together to showcase the skills and lessons that throughout the school year have been ongoing in their classroom communities.

The students and their teachers have begun the preparation for the Art Festival which will be held on Friday, June 3, at 1:20. This special spring event showcases our students' creativity, talent, and teamwork. Save the date now for an afternoon of song, dance and beautiful color under sunny skies, of course!

Happy spring!



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Although warm weather is here, and summer is on the horizon, the next eight weeks of learning are vital in bringing closure to all that has been learned this year. Students and teachers will be working together to showcase the skills and lessons that throughout the school year have been ongoing in their classroom communities.

Kindergarten News

Kindergarten Team

Teachers: Wendy Baver, Terry Bitwinski, Heidi Bosco, Eileen Hosey, Debbie Hurlburt, and Ann Pronovost
Para-Educators: Debbie Carroll and Sue Lewis



Writing is an emerging skill... By the end of kindergarten, our goal is for children to be able to write all letters, write with left to right progression, and use knowledge of letter-sound relationships correctly.

During the month of May, we celebrate the *Young Authors* that our kindergartners have become. Writing is an emerging skill, which is an important part of our kindergarten curriculum. By the end of kindergarten, our goal is for children to be able to write all letters, write with left to right progression, and use knowledge of letter-sound relationships correctly. Many kindergartners are now comfortably writing in journals or class books to express their ideas.

Encourage your child's efforts to write sentences at home using their high frequency words in the text. Once they illustrate their writing, have them read their sentences back to you. Remember that "phonetic spelling" of unfamiliar words is perfectly acceptable, as children should be encouraged to take risks and are not yet expected to use conventional spelling for all words.

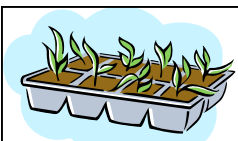
Experiment with different types of writing. Letter writing shows your child the value and enjoyment of communicating through the mail (or email). Birthday cards and thank-you notes are also fun to make. Let your child help with daily record-keeping at home. Show him/her how to use or add to the family calendar, address book, shopping or chore list. Perhaps you might choose to work together on a special writing project such as a family scrapbook. Use photographs with captions to highlight special events.

The science theme of *Living and Non-Living* will be continued into May. We will investigate things in our environment that are living and discuss the common characteristics of all living things. Nature experiences provide the hands-on activities for thematic lessons in this curricular area.

With the warm weather here at last, we are outdoors on the playscape and playground at the end of most days. Please be sure that your child has safe play attire ... sturdy shoes or sneakers are important for climbing and running games. Flip-flop sandals may look nice but are not safe on the playscape. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Save this date - the annual arts festival takes place on Friday, June 3, with the rain date on Monday, June 6. Student artwork will be displayed throughout our school building and the musical performance will take place in the open field beyond the playscape. Bring a blanket or chair and plan on attending. Morning class students are asked to return to school in the afternoon so they may participate in this program. Specific information will be forthcoming as it becomes available. This event is a wonderful opportunity for families to come together and enjoy themselves. Support your child's school experience!

We also welcome Ann Pronovost to the Kindergarten Team. Ann will be with us as the long term substitute for Wendy Baver for the remainder of the school year. Welcome, Ann!



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First-Grade News

First-Grade Team

Teachers: Megan Babcock, Bruce Gale, Colleen Hamblett, Patricia Klaneski, Matthew Kyer, Jennifer Osowiecki, Cristy Rau, and Ginny Taber
Para-Educators: Laurie Darling and Jennifer Ray

The first-grade teachers would like to thank families for their help and cooperation. Your recent attendance at conferences and help with homework enables us to work together to improve your child's education.

First graders will be eagerly preparing for the Arts Festival, which will take place on June 3. P.E. and music will be jointly held as Mr. Careau and Mrs. Caldwell practice routines with the children. In art, the children will be creating costumes under Mrs. DuBois' direction. All parents are invited to attend and experience this exciting event.

Classes will start preparing for our trip to the Essex Valley Railroad on Wednesday, June 15. This culminates our unit on transportation and includes a ride on a coach bus, a steam train and a riverboat. Thanks to the generosity of the P.T.O., the fee for these trips will be reduced. More information about the trip will follow.



First graders will be eagerly preparing for the Arts Festival, which will take place on June 3rd. All parents are invited to attend and experience this exciting event.

(1st Grade continued)

In our Growing With Mathematics program, classes will once again be working on measurement and geometry. Students will be working with 2-D shapes to compare, sort and classify them into groups. Students will also create shapes that have symmetry. The students will be learning about a standard unit of measurement, the inch. We will also be reviewing addition and subtraction skills by creating and solving problems that involve the use of money. Students will also be introduced to the quarter and how to make an equivalent amount using pennies, nickels and dimes. Our next unit will focus on equal parts, fair shares, and fractions as an introduction to division and multiplication at the first grade level.

In May, students will continue to work on the reading theme "Big and Little". We will be working on skills such as the long vowel sounds with silent /e/. Guided Reading will continue, and students will be working on comprehension skills and retelling stories in the order in which they happened. We would like to thank you for your continued support of practicing star words and sight words at home. Extra practice will better prepare your child for second grade.

Second-Grade News

Second-Grade Team

Teachers: Carolyn Bennett, Jerry Craig, Nancy Gwozdz, Erin Hazzard, Heather McPeck, Nancy Plaster, and Angela Puccia

Para-Educators: Gloria Barry and Heidi Holever

The snow has melted, and spring has finally arrived. We would like to thank parents for meeting with us for parent/teacher conferences in April. We will now continue to prepare students for the last part of second grade. We will be very busy in social studies, reading, math and writing as we get students ready for third grade.

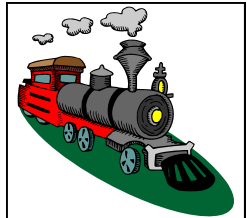
Last month we finished our unit on Mexico. This will lead right into our study of maps and globes. Students will learn about the directions on a compass and how it is used to help us to read a map. They will also learn about where they live on a variety of maps. We will follow directions using a map and will create our own maps of familiar places. Students will also learn about the seven continents and where they are located both on a map and a globe. Different types of maps, including topographical maps will also be studied. This will help students to recognize that maps are used to show many different types of information.

As the weather gets warmer and signs of spring are all around us, we will study plants. We will study the plant life cycle as well as the variety of needs a plant has to grow and be healthy. We will conduct experiments highlighting the importance of light, soil, and water on the sustainability of a healthy plant.

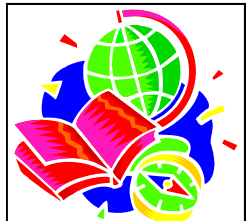
In reading, we will continue to help students to summarize both fiction and non-fiction texts. We will also continue to help students answer inferential questions such as identifying the author's message. Emphasis will continue to be placed on answering questions about text with specific examples from the text. It is important that students substantiate their responses with supporting details. We also hope that as we begin the last quarter of the year, you will continue to read with your child at home. We encourage you to have your child re-read stories in order to help build fluency. As they are reading, help them to read with feeling and expression.

During the first part of the month, students will continue to practice adding and subtracting 2-digit numbers during math. We are focused on teaching them how to regroup and the concept behind regrouping. We will then move on to fractions and probability. Last week we also switched from addition facts to subtraction facts on our timed, weekly quizzes. Please practice these facts with your child as part of your homework routine. It will also be beneficial to go back and continue to practice the addition facts. It will be very helpful for students to have automaticity of their facts as they move on to more complicated math concepts.

As the weather gets warmer, we hope you will be able to get outside and enjoy the sunshine. It will be a busy month of learning, and we will try to get out for recess as much as possible. Weather can be inconsistent at this time of year, so please make sure your child is dressed appropriately. As the month of May comes to a close, keep your eyes and ears open for many exciting end-of-the-year activities that will take place at the beginning of June. Happy spring!



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Students will learn about the directions on a compass and how it is used to help us to read a map. Students will also learn about the seven continents and where they are located both on a map and a globe.



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From Our Reading Room ~

Reading Room Team

Jennifer Jones, Carol Bittner, Nan Kandolin, Hannah Pietrantonio, Mary Talaga

How Can Parents Strengthen Comprehension of Non-Fiction Texts at Home?

Before Reading Non-Fiction:

- Look at the pictures on the cover and read the title.
- Read the chapter titles.
- Scan the book for headings, bold words, charts, diagrams, photos, index, glossary.
- Discuss what he/she already knows and hopes to learn.

During/After Reading Non-Fiction:

- Name three things (facts) have you learned from what you have read so far.
- Make sure your child gives you specific information.
- Allow your child to refer back to the book if needed.
- Make a fact book of all the new things he/she has learned.
- Go to the library and take out more books about the same topic.



How can parents strengthen comprehension of non-fiction texts at home?



National studies consistently confirm that breakfast provides fuel for school and boosts brain power!

Make breakfast part of your household's morning routine. Eat together! Family meals are a great time to model healthy eating.



From Our School Nurse ~ Mrs. Paula Curtiss

I am sure growing up you heard that “breakfast is the most important meal of the day.” National studies consistently confirm that breakfast provides fuel for school and boosts brain power!

Eating breakfast:

- Improves classroom performance, including better test scores and grades
- Increases children's ability to focus and concentrate on school work
- Decreases behavior problems, tardiness and visits to the school nurse
- Increases attendance rate

Follow these four steps to make breakfast a part of your families morning routine:

- Be a role model – If you want your child to eat breakfast, eat breakfast yourself!
- Keep breakfast foods on hand – Have at least two easy to serve items from each food group
- Make it easy – Keep breakfast foods visible and in convenient spots for kids to grab
- Try school breakfast – If kids don't have time to eat at home or aren't hungry when they leave for school, encourage them to eat school breakfast.

Make breakfast part of your household's morning routine. Eat together! Family meals are a great time to model healthy eating.

When students routinely start their day with breakfast, chances are good that it will become a habit they continue into their teenage and adult years.

Paula Curtiss, School Nurse

860-742-4558

pcurtiss@coventryct.org



From Our Friends at the Coventry Early Childhood Center ~



Children who have not learned to control anger or frustration often resort to aggressive behavior. Aggression is a normal expression of emotion in young children. They have not learned acceptable ways to channel their anger.

Aggressive behavior includes hitting, throwing things, name-calling, spitting, biting, pushing, pushing or pulling, forcing someone to do or not do something, destroying property, and taking someone else's possessions.

Our program recognizes the importance of dealing with aggressive behavior. Teachers help children find acceptable ways to express their anger, negotiate to get what they want or need, and handle aggression directed toward them by peers.

We encourage children to express their feelings in words and to negotiate resolutions to conflict. We facilitate conversations between children when problems arise. Sometimes we even suggest words that help communicate the children's feelings. In time, with adult support, they are able to use these social skills to solve their own problems.

At home, when your child behaves aggressively, try redirecting his or her attention by offering a choice of other activities. Emphasize words rather than actions. With time and practice, a child will learn to say, "I'm mad because I want to play with the truck," instead of lashing out.

As adults, we can help children learn to express negative emotions in more appropriate ways, and a positive attitude on our part is the best teacher.

CECC Staff

CECC's 5th Annual Golf Tournament Saturday, June 11, 2011 Blackledge Country Club, Hebron, CT



Dear Friends,

PLAYERS AND SPONSORS NEEDED

CECC is a non-profit, tuition-based preschool program serving three and four-year-old children from Coventry and surrounding communities. We are a NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) accredited program which ensures that the children receive a high quality preschool education.

We depend strongly on our fundraising events in order to ensure our continued success; the annual Golf Tournament is our biggest fundraiser of the year!

We are asking for your help. Please consider sponsoring or playing in our tournament this June. We appreciate any contribution you can make and/or coming out for the day to enjoy a round of golf! CECC is a 501©3 and contributions are tax deductible. To sponsor or register to play, please visit our website at www.scrambleforourschool.com

We thank you in advance for your support for this cause that is so important for the youth of our community.

A Special Announcement from the Superintendent

Effective School Surveys – Your Opinion Counts



As a part of our continuing refinement efforts, please assist us further in our data collection by completing an *Effective School Survey* for each school in which you have a child enrolled in Coventry. These surveys will be used to analyze what we can do, as educators, to enhance our curriculum and studies at Coventry Public Schools.

The best part of my job as superintendent is spending time with parents and their children. My primary goal is to better know our students and the ways in which our programs and practices improve their learning and achievement. The many meetings and conversations regarding how our instruction impacts your child's development are so beneficial in reaching that goal. As a part of our continuing refinement efforts, please assist us further in our data collection by completing an *Effective School Survey* for each school in which you have a child enrolled in Coventry. These surveys will be used to analyze what we can do, as educators, to enhance our curriculum and studies at Coventry Public Schools.

We are excited to announce there will be an online version of the parent survey this year. Please visit our district website (www.coventrypublicschools.org) and click on your child's school. The *Effective School Survey* will be located under Quick Links. Each school has its own specific survey. Mark your calendars - the surveys will be available the beginning of June. Please complete the survey by June 30, 2011. If you prefer to fill out a hard copy of the survey, please contact Alison Rufrano, Data Management Specialist, at (860) 742-7317 x104 or arufrano@coventryct.org. Please provide your name, address and the name of the school(s) for which you'd like a survey. Thank you for all that you do for your children and our students.

Donna



April 26 &
May 17

Donuts With Donna

DONUTS WITH DONNA: The superintendent of schools is available for casual conversations with community members during the school year. "Donuts with Donna" is a way for you to greet your school superintendent, ask questions, and keep informed about education in our town. Please feel free to stop by, where there will be an informal atmosphere with an open dialogue and no set agenda. The next session of "Donuts with Donna" is being held on Tuesday, May 17, 2010 from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., at the Coventry Public Schools Administration Building, 1700 Main Street.



Weather-Related/Emergency Closings, Delays and Early Release Notifications

Announcements regarding these closings, delayed openings and early releases will be made via our ALERTNOW calling system. In addition to broadcasting this information on selected TV and radio stations, all student homes are now phoned by ALERTNOW. If families would like a list of the selected media outlets, please see the website at www.coventrypublicschools.org.



PTO News

Our Talent Show was a huge success this year. We had 21 wonderful acts perform, and thanks to donations from the community, our PTO raised \$160.25!

We sold nearly 40 tickets to the March 26 CT Whale game, which will return a profit of about \$76. Thank you to everyone who purchased tickets. We hope you enjoyed the game!

Congratulations to all of the Box Tops for Education contest winners! All of the classes really outdid themselves this time with an incredible total of 10,849 box tops collected!! Again, thank you to our coordinator, Jeanne Krawetzky, for making this contest possible.

A huge thanks to Kim Power for chairing our Yankee Candle and Pampered Chef fundraisers, along with the Maynard Farms plant sale. We greatly appreciate her efforts, along with her team of volunteers who helped out during the candle pickup. The proceeds from these fundraisers will help support the end-of-year field trips for all students.

Our "Grab & Go" items for CGS staff during conferences seemed to be a great success. Thanks to all of the parents that donated items, and a special thanks to Lauren Jordan and Janet Sirois for coordinating this important event. We will also have an official Teacher Appreciation Week during the first week of May.

We hope everyone had a chance to stop by the Scholastic Book Fair during conference days. Our co-chairs, Martha McKerley and Claudia Schenck and their fabulous volunteers did a wonderful job for us again. Every teacher received a \$20 voucher to spend at the fair, and the library received about \$360 in free books. Thank you everyone!

Our next meeting is in the gym on Monday, May 9, at 6:30 p.m. Free babysitting is provided. We hope to see you there!

Upcoming Events:

- Friday, May 13 - Dolphin Dance in the CGS gym (volunteers needed)
- Friday, June 3 - CGS Arts Festival and Family Fun Festival (We still need lots of volunteers to make the Fun Festival a success!)
- Sunday, June 12 - Rock Cats game

Look for the CGS PTO on Facebook and become a member today!

Beth Hassett, Co-President

Phone: 860-742-5605;

Email: bhassett5605@charter.net

Carrie Houk, Co-President

Phone: 860-498-0189;

Email: chouko189@charter.net

Anita Hilinski, Secretary

Phone: 860-742-1907;

Email: doggroom21@cs.com

Camilla Byam, Treasurer

Phone: 860-742-8682;

Email: camillabyam@hotmail.com

PTO Treasurer's Report ~ as of April 11, 2011

March 14 - April 11, 2011

Treasurer: Camilla Byam



Beginning Balance March 14, 2011:	\$5676.24
Income:	\$5604.47
~ Yankee Candle Fundraiser \$4,394.22	
~ Talent Show \$ 160.25	
~ Scrapbooking Fundraiser \$ 750.00	
~ Pampered Chef \$ 183.35	
~ Pampered Chef Consultant Commission donation \$ 116.65	
Expenses:	(\$360.00)
~ Dance DJ \$250.00	
~ Babysitting (March Meeting) \$ 50.00	
~ Fine Arts Babysitting \$ 60.00	
Ending Balance April 11, 2011:	\$ 10,920.71