Website: www.hamiltonschools.us

BLUE STAR NEWS

October 13, 2017

From the Principal

For so many things, I want to say thank you to Blue Star parents. Many of you have volunteered already this year to help in classrooms and during events. We greatly appreciate the time and energy you give! I also want to thank you for participating in our fundraiser. Your financial support is deeply appreciated. Whether it is a donation of time or money, you help make us great!

I also can't thank you enough for being faithful readers of the Blue Star News! We make a dedicated effort to communicate each week what you need to know. We appreciate you reading the news every week to stay informed.

The staff and I are looking forward to meeting with you next week during Parent-Teacher Conferences. If you still do not have an appointment set up, please give us a call on Monday and we will schedule a time with your son or daughter's teacher.

We want you to feel comfortable during conferences with educational terms we use. This edition provides definitions for some of our "school jargon!"
See you next week!

Education Glossary

DIBELS: Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills is a series of short tests that assess early childhood (K-4) literacy. The tests measure different skills in reading, such as phonemic awareness, accuracy and fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

SRI: Scholastic Reading Inventory is a short test on the computer to measure growth in reading ability, specifically vocabulary and comprehension. Students in grades 2-4 take the SRI three times per year.

Lexile: A Lexile measure is a valuable piece of information about either an individual's reading ability or the difficulty of a text, such as a book or magazine article. The Lexile measure is shown as a number with an "L" after it. Ex: 880L is 880 Lexile.

Delta Math: Delta Math is a math assessment that provides teachers with information about mastery of important skills. Part of the test is taken on a computer; part is taken with paper and pencil. Students are tested on the previous year's skills to see if they are retaining the building blocks of math. Students take the Delta Math test 3 times per year. Delta Math data is used to plan and provide instruction for students during Math RtI time. What is RTI? Keep reading!

RtI/MTSS: Response to Intervention or Multi-Tiered System of Support is a method of academic intervention used in the United States to provide assistance to children. Small RtI groups provide support to students who might be struggling and also provide enrichment opportunities for students who are excelling. RtI or MTSS time gives us a chance to work with students both in reading and math. We call RtI groups Rock Star Reading and Rock Star Math time. Rock Star readers meet 4 times per week during RtI. Rock Star mathematicians meet 2 times per week during RtI.

Specials News

Please check out the news from our Special Classes on the back of this newsletter. Find out what our students are learning in Music, STEM, P.E., and Library!

Word of the Week

Doppelganger: **A person's look alike**

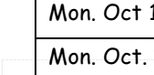
Ex: Who is your celebrity doppelganger?

Thank you to **Addi Garvelink** in 4th grade for suggesting this fun Word of the Week!

Fire Safety Month

We want to remind families October is Fire Safety Prevention Month. Please talk with your children about fire safety rules and develop a fire safety plan for your home in case of an emergency.

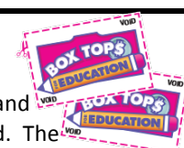
Mon. Oct 16-20	Bus Driver Appreciation Week!
Mon. Oct. 16	If you want the weekend to make a few mores sales for our fundraiser, no problem! Please send the white & yellow forms with money to school today.
Wed. Oct. 18 Thur. Oct. 19	Parent-Teacher Conferences and Book Fair 4:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Fri. Oct. 20	Half-Day for Students Pick Up at 11:45 a.m.
Mon. Oct. 23	No School for Students Professional Development Day for Teachers



Bus Driver Appreciation Week

Bus Driver Appreciation week is October 16-20. Please take the time to say thank you to your child's bus driver for all she does to keep children safe. We love the Blue Star drivers: Ms. Diane, Ms. Lisa, Ms. Tanya, Ms. Kim, Ms. Cathy, and Ms. Deb!

Box Tops Labels Contest



The PTO is sponsoring a Box Tops collection contest the week of Oct. 16-20. Please clip and send Box Top labels to school with your child. The class that collects the most Box Top labels will win a pizza party. On your mark…Get set….Clip those Box Tops Labels!

Parent-Teacher Conferences – OCT. 18 & 19

We aim for 100% participation/attendance from our families. Please show support for your child by attending.

During conferences, be sure to meet the specials teachers and the support staff. They will be in our building on the day and time below:

Mrs. Brandonisio, School Psych.–Thurs. Oct. 19 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Mrs. Faber, Speech – Wed. Oct. 18 4:00-9:00p.m.

Mrs. Israels, Music- Wed. Oct. 18 4:00-5:30p.m

Mr. Losik, S.T.E.M.– Thurs. Oct. 19 4:00-9:00 p.m.

Mr. Petroelje, P.E. – Wed. 6:30-9:00p.m.
Thurs. 6:30-9:00p.m.

Mrs. Sal, Social Worker – Wed. Oct. 18 4:00-5:30 p.m. &
Thurs. Oct. 19 4:00p.m.-7:30p.m.

Staff who are at Blue Star for one day of conferences also work in other buildings in the district and need to attend those conferences as well.

If you and your child's teacher discover you have more to discuss than your conference time permits, please schedule another appointment. We want to respect each person's conference time *and* address all of your concerns.

Book Fair in 4th Grade Hallway

Blue Star will hold its annual Scholastic Book Fair during Parent-Teacher Conferences on October 18 and 19. **The book fair offers the newest, most popular books your kids will want to read!** Students will be able to shop for two days on their lunch/recess hour. (We will have adults to help students count their money.) Parents may shop during conferences. Books make great gifts for birthdays and holidays!

Plan Ahead for Oct. 20 and Oct. 23

Elementary students will be dismissed on Friday, Oct. 20 at 11:45 a.m. You may pick up your child or have your student ride the bus home. Remember, there is no school for students on Monday, Oct. 23. We hope you enjoy a fun and safe extended weekend.

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Music Teacher: Mrs. Israels

It is so great to be back teaching music and singing with the students at Bentheim & Blue Star! Though it is unfortunate that we only have music class for one semester, I am so impressed with how much the students in first through fourth grades have retained since first semester last year. I have also enjoyed meeting the kindergarten students and students new to Hamilton!

In music class, we focus on helping every student develop their innate abilities as "tune-ful, beat-ful, and art-ful" musicians. In other words, we work on steady beat, using singing voices, and matching pitch. We also learn to be expressive with music. We do this through telling stories in our songs as well as moving to recordings of music. I'm so pleased with how responsive the kids are to the work we've done thus far. They make music class so much fun!

One of our first music events, Hamilton's Got Talent, is coming up this Saturday, October 14 at Hamilton High School. This is a vocal music fundraiser open to solos or groups of all ages. I'm so excited that some Bentheim and Blue Star students have already signed up to share their talent at auditions! It is not too late to sign up at www.HamiltonsGotTalent.com. You are welcome to just come and watch as well. The Top 15 acts will perform at 7pm on Saturday, October 28. Anyone is welcome to come to watch the show and vote for the winners. Tickets are available at the website above.

Gym Teacher: Mr. Petroelje

It has been a wonderful start to the 2017-2018 school year! We have been able to get outside with the upper elementary students for a soccer and football unit. When the weather is right, we will complete a timed mile run. Students have been learning about form for sit ups or "curl ups." See if your son or daughter can show you 10 good sit ups without any "violations!"

The lower elementary students have been learning and/ or reviewing various games and activities. Soon we will focus on loco motor skills. This will challenge them with balance and agility while keeping the sequence/ pattern of the movement. We will focus on underhand throw with these students in the next coming weeks.

I hope that you have taken advantage of the beautiful weather by getting outside and being active as a family. I also hope that you can take your children to Hamilton High School and Middle School sporting events. Seeing sports in action will reinforce some of the lessons we have had, and at the same time, build Hawkeye pride. Go, Hawks!

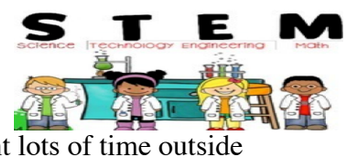
Library Time: Mrs. Buus

Fall is fun in the library! We began the school year by reading a couple of books you may remember from your elementary school days, *Miss Nelson is Missing,* and *Miss Nelson is Back*. Those timeless books provided plenty of laughs!

Our third and fourth graders have started using Epic, an online resource of hundreds of books. This tool engages the students and provides endless reading options. To use Epic at home, you may sign up for a free 30-day trial, and then pay $5.99 per month. It is available via computer or tablet. If you are interested in starting the 30-day trial, email me at mbuus@hamiltonschools.us, and I will get you started. This offer applies to everyone, not just our third and fourth graders.

The Scholastic Book Fair is around the corner! Mark your calendars now. **The Book Fair will be Wednesday, October 18, and Thursday, October 19, from 12-1 p.m. (during lunch/recess), and 4-9 p.m. (during conferences).** See you there!

S.T.E.M. Teachers: Mr. Losik & Mrs. Sikma



STEM is off to a great start in what is now our second year. We have had tremendous weather and all groups have spent lots of time outside exploring the habitats that are part of our playgrounds. Here is a rundown of major themes for each grade level.

4th Grade: Students are investigating the principles of flight and have flown kites to see *lift* and *drag* in action. They are currently applying what they've learned by building large cardboard gliders.

3rd Grade: Students are learning all about technology in agriculture and are designing farm equipment of the future. Next they will do a simulation where they have to program our Sphero robots to "plow" a section of the playground.

2nd Grade: Students are tracking changes over time and monitoring individual sections of our playgrounds. Fall might be delayed a bit, but we are noticing details and documenting those like real scientists do.

1st Grade: Students are investigating the physical properties of things and noting similarities and differences. This past week all students investigated real-life fossilized shark teeth and compared two in their STEM journals.

K: Students are exploring their worlds and how everything works. We've flown kites, gone on grasshopper hunts, and engineered Lego vehicles among many different weekly activities.

Mrs. Sikma and I will once again be rotating schools. We will trading buildings the week after Halloween. I will return to Blue Star in January. In the meantime, please ask your child what he or she is enjoying learning in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, a.k.a. S.T.E.M.