

The Principal's Pen

Dear Vine Street Families,

Welcome 2012 and Happy New Year! I sincerely hope that you and your family enjoyed vacation, the holidays and were able to spend some family time together.

It is incredible to think that the end of the 2nd Quarter is rapidly approaching. The 2nd Quarter ranking period ends Friday, January 20, 2012. Rank cards will come home Wednesday, February 1st. For Kindergarten parents, this will be your first rank card of the school year. As always is the case, please call your child's teacher if you have any questions about your child's rank card.

Please remember to send your child to school with winter outerwear including boots, hats, mittens, etc. It is very cold out and they love to play in the snow at recess. It's a good idea to dress in layers as some classrooms vary in temperature and your child may wish to have a little something extra or less on inside.

Bangor Day was a big success last month! Thank you for having your child participate by wearing crimson & white and thank you for those who brought in a nonperishable food item! We gathered 10 boxes of food for the event that was donated to a local food cupboard. Vine Street staff donated approximately \$100 go towards donated heating oil. All together the Bangor School Dept. rose over \$2,300 in funds towards home heating oil.

We have a couple of healthy activity opportunities beginning this month for children with snowshoeing and Jump Rope Club. Please see Mr. Pangburn's section of this newsletter for details!

It is very important to start right in with routines here at school and I always ask that parents do the same at home. Please try to have set bedtimes, mealtimes, etc. Children need at least 8 hours of sleep each night. Some other very important routines to have at home is to check your child's backpack each night and to have continued contact with your child's teacher. It's important for your child to know that you communicate with their teacher and that you're part of their education. All of these routines help your child perform their best at school. There are several assessments taking place this month for them, so we want them at their best!

We continue to encourage students to strive for perfect attendance each month. We are excited with the results! Please continue to discuss the importance of attending school everyday with your child (while also keeping them home when they are truly sick). At the end of the 2nd quarter, we will give away two family movie packs provided by our PTO. The drawing for those will take place at our February Attendance Assembly.

Our school day begins at 9:00 a.m. If your child does not ride the bus, please make every effort to have them here by 8:55 a.m. which is when our morning recess ends and students head down to their classroom. Additionally, if your child ever needs to be dismissed early on a certain day, please

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send in a note to their teacher. Please call us first thing in the morning if your child is out sick for the day. This is a big help to us!

Please be reminded that there is a **vacation day on Monday, January 16th to celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Keep our district goal to promote health and wellness in mind this winter. There are many physical activities that are special to this weather we're having, so please take advantage with your children.

The next **PTO meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 9th @ 6:00 p.m.** Childcare is available! Please come and be part of the team that enhances the educational process at Vine Street School!

As a staff, we all are enthused to hear about the work that you as parents do at home with your child (children) to support their learning at school. Please keep up your great effort reading with them and working with them on their math and writing skills at home. Together, school and home make a solid team.

Please call me anytime you have questions, comments or concerns about your child's education.

May you all enjoy a very happy and healthy 2012!

Sincerely,

Timothy M. McCluskey
Principal



Important Dates for January

Jan. 9 - PTO meeting... childcare provided! 6 p.m.

Jan. 11 - School Committee Meeting 7 p.m.

Jan. 16 - NO SCHOOL (Martin Luther King Day)

Jan. 20 - 2nd Quarter closes.

Jan. 25 - School Committee Meeting 7 p.m.

Feb. 1 - Rank Cards go home



Throughout the month of December our music students have continued to explore storytelling through music. Our Kindergarten students have "bundled up" with hand bells and enjoyed Mr. Mozart's, "Sleigh ride, and Mr. Anderson's Sleigh ride. Oh what a ride as we listened to the horse pull us over the ground with snow! One of our first grade favorites is "December Is", although it is a two part song I am certain our young musicians could sing the entire song solo! Second grade students have become familiar with the music and story from Mr. Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker". And our second and third grade students attended a live concert performed by Bangor High band, orchestra and chorus. At this performance our students clearly demonstrated their responsibility as a member of the audience.

Third grade students became the musical storytellers when they performed "This Old Gingerbread House" by Theresa Jennings. The students were responsible for memorizing music, script and creating the set and props for the story. As a result of this learning activity the students understand the relationship between music, the songwriter, visual artist and literature. In keeping with the theme of the story to "lend and helping hand" our students created an opportunity for Vine Street students and staff to be involved in a community service project. Throughout the month of December they collected can good items to be delivered to a local food cupboard. BRAVO!



Happy New Year to all Vine Street Families. Students have starting working on their jump rope skills in physical education classes. This ranges from students jumping over non moving ropes for some of our younger students to our more skilled students jumping Double Dutch with 2 ropes turning at the same time! To help give some extra jump rope practice and create some activity on mornings that it is too cold to go outside for recess, the before school jump rope program will begin on Monday, January 9 and continue until February vacation. Students may come to the gym when recess begins at 8:35 on their designated day and jump until recess ends.

Mondays	Grade 2
Tuesdays	Grade 1
Wednesdays	Grade K
Thursdays	Grade 3

Fridays will be used as make-up days for Martin Luther King Jr. day and any snow days that we may have.



Have You Read With Your Child Today?

Just 20 minutes a day reading aloud with young children strengthens relationships, encourages listening and language skills, promotes attention and curiosity, and establishes a strong reading foundation. These skills are essential for life and in school.

It takes hundreds of hours of "lap time" for a child to acquire the pre-literacy skills necessary for learning to read early and well. From birth to age five, the pleasant activity of listening to and talking about stories trains a child's brain, ears, and eyes for eventual success in learning to read.

"The early years set the stage for later"
Once a child begins to read, it is essential to continue reading aloud together. Like other skills, reading is mastered over time, with lots of practice, and with the help of another person. There is practically no way to do it wrong, but there are ways to do it better. We are here to help you. The routine of sharing books together creates lifelong readers.

The magic of this process is the simplicity of action. Any adult can do it, in just about any place, with little or no expense. It doesn't matter what language is spoken. Non-reading parents can make up stories to go with the illustrations. The essential elements are scheduled time with books and a positive attitude!

Make reading together the most important - and happiest - 20 minutes of your day!

Children's Reading Foundation



PTO



The Vine Street PTO welcomes everyone back from the break. We are looking forward to a great 2012. With events like the Family Dance and Carnival quickly approaching we are very excited. I want to thank everyone who helped us have a successful fall fundraiser with our believe kids catalog. I also want to thank the many parents, family members and faculty who helped make the cookie decorating and book fair a success. We had an incredible turnout of volunteers and donations of frosting and decorations. Thanks so much to everyone.

We continue to collect box tops and labels for education. With the help of Vanessa Young we have started a Box Top event. Our goal is to collect 4,000 box tops between December 1st and April 15th. Ask your friends, family and neighbors for their Box Tops and you can help Vine Street School reach our goal and maybe even win a prize or two (or maybe even all three)! Attach your Box Tops for Education Labels to the forms sent home each month, making sure to include the student's first name, last initial, grade and teacher's name on the form to ensure that you receive credit for your contribution! When you fill up your form, bring it in to your teacher and they'll give you another! There's no limit to how many you can bring in. Box Tops do expire, so don't wait to return your labels.

If you are interested in joining our email list please send an email to Laurel Grosjean at Laurel.grosjean@gmail.com. Our next PTO meeting is scheduled for Jan. 9th from 6:00 - 7:30pm at the school cafeteria and child care is provided. I hope to see you there.

Counselor's Corner



We have started the year in Kindergarten and 1st grade having discussions about filling another person's bucket. Based on the book "How Full is Your Bucket?" By Tom Rath and Mary Reckmeyer, students have come up with ways to fill other people's buckets at school and at home. Don't be surprised if your child does something nice to fill your bucket today.

Second graders have been working hard at the Bullying plays they have been writing and designing with Ms. Crahen in art. To go along with what they are learning in art, in guidance class we are reading "Simons Hook, a book about teasing and put-downs" by Karen Burnett and "Say Something" by Peggy Moser. I am so excited to see the student's plays on bullying where they have a problem and a solution to the bullying situations and this was all created on their own in small groups.

Talk of feelings will be the focus of the guidance program this month. All grades will be learning about feelings by reading books about feelings, making books, learning feeling words, and discussing body language and feelings. The goal is to help students learn more about their own feelings and the feelings of others. When we are done, the children should know how to STOP and THINK about feelings and know more about what to do with their feelings. I am proud of the students when they know how to use their words to share feelings and when they know how to work out problems.

Many of the skills that the children are learning through the STOP and THINK social skills program can be taught at home also. If you would like to use some of the steps to reinforce skills at home please call me and I can give you information to help your kids make better choices at home.



Art

- Happy New Year! Pre-K is helping to usher in the new year by learning all about Chinese New Year Traditions. Chinese New Year is on January 23, and our Pre-K was introduced to some of the art and symbolism of the holiday. They created colorful and symbolic lanterns that will "illuminate" our lobby.
- Kinders shared some of their wisdom while creating majestic owls. Following a conversation about wisdom and symbolism, students drew and colored owls. They focused on anatomy, proportion, and feather pattern. Each owl is featured with a nugget of wisdom from the artist.
- First Grade revisited the book *Duck on a Bike* by Caldecott Honor winner David Shannon. This gave them a chance to fine tune their drawing skills. After learning a simple method for drawing bicycles, they did a great job making cut paper backyard animals to ride the cycles. They are really funny!
- Second Grade is hard at work preparing for the performance of their small group shadow puppet theaters. They've blended a beautiful combination of writing, art making and storytelling, all dealing with the very real problem of bullying. With help from all three 2nd grade classroom teachers, and Dana Morris, this has become a very powerful and memorable learning experience.
- Our third graders excel at observational drawing! I am so impressed with the incredible still life drawings they completed, with attention to perspective, object placement, texture, and color theory. As a common assessment lesson for all Bangor third graders, I am so proud to bring their work to the table when I meet with the other Bangor art teachers. This art lesson is one of three that is shared by the entire city.