

W.S.C.S.

APRIL 2011

Parent Requests for Student Placements

The 2011-2012 school year is just around the corner! Our school believes that the placement of children in classes for a new year is a decision of great importance. All students' placements are within a balanced scheme of gender, academic achievement, ability, and social mix. Input for these decisions comes from student records, previous teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, and parents.

If you have information about your child regarding the kind of learning environment in which he/she works and learns which would help us in the placement decision, we encourage you to share this with us. Parent information regarding placements must be submitted, in writing, no later than May 6, with a focus on educational reasons. Please state directly, and with as much detail as is necessary, the needs that your child may have. Parental information is welcomed, and is considered equally with all other information. Students at each grade level will experience a variety of teachers. For this reason, we feel confident that your child will receive a well-balanced, high quality education with the placement that is determined.

In order to maximize children's learning it is essential that equitable, compatible, balanced classes be assembled which reflect conditions under which all children function best. If you have specific questions relative to programs offered at William S. Cohen School, please feel free to call the Guidance Office at 941-6230.



School Absence & Homework

Parents are encouraged to call school by 9:00 a.m. on days when their child will be absent. If your child is absent two or more days, you may request that homework assignments be gathered. This request must also be made before 9:00 a.m. as all requests are put on a daily bulletin for the teachers to read. Parents may pick up homework assignments in the office after 3:15 p.m. Teachers sometimes do not have a chance to bring assignments to the office (due to their schedule) until after the school day has ended at 2:30 p.m.

CONGRATULATIONS!

The Cohen Math Team recently won the State Championship at the State MATHCOUNTS competition in Fairfield. Team members were Conor Thompson, Andrew Ye, Dan O'Brien, and Tyler DeFroscia. The team was coached by Mrs. Jamison. Conor Thompson finished as the top scorer in the State, so he will join three other Maine students and form a team that will represent Maine in the National Championship Meet to be held in Washington D.C. next month. Mrs. Jamison has been asked to coach the State Team and accompany them to the national meet.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

APRIL 1ST - 3RD QUARTER ENDS

APRIL 12TH - ALL CITY ORCHESTRA

APRIL 13TH - REPORT CARDS GO HOME

APRIL 18TH - 22ND - SPRING VACATION

MAY 3RD - ALL CITY CHORUS

MAY 9TH - 5TH GRADE PARENT NIGHT 6PM

MAY 18TH - ACADEMIC AWARDS NIGHT

MAY 30TH - MEMORIAL DAY - NO SCHOOL

Skateboard Safety A Major Concern

It is critical for the safety of our children that they use skateboards wisely. Students who misuse their boards may have them confiscated by school or law enforcement officials, and may lose their privilege to have boards on school grounds.

Please talk to your children, with an emphasis on safety, about their use of skateboards.

Skateboard Rules:

Skateboards and roller blades are not to be ridden on school grounds. Maine Law: 505. Obstructing public ways:

1. A person is guilty of obstructing public ways if he unreasonably obstructs the free passage of foot or vehicular traffic on any public way, and refuses to cease or remove the obstruction upon a lawful order to do so given him by a law enforcement officer.

HANDLE WITH CARE - IBOOKS RULES

1. Do not put your iBook in your backpack or locker.
2. Carry your iBook with lid closed and zipped in its case.
3. During lunch and PE store your iBook on a shelf in the hallway.
4. Do not stack your iBook on top of or under books.
5. Close the computer carefully; do not touch the screen.
6. Use the iBook on a flat stable surface.
7. Do not close a pen or pencil in your iBook.
8. Store and charge overnight in your homeroom.



2. As used in this section, "public way" means any public highway or sidewalk, private way laid out under authority of statute, way dedicated to public use, way upon which the public has a right of

access or has access as invitees or licensees, or way under the control of park commissioners or a body having like powers.

3. Obstructing public ways is a Class E crime.

PAPERWORK NEEDED FOR INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

Before students can participate in any interscholastic practices or games, they must have filled out and returned the following documents:

1. *Health Examination for Interscholastic Sports.* A physical examination form must be completed by the child's physician. This form must be done once while the child is a student of the Cohen School. One completed form covers the child for the three years he/she is a student here.
2. *Form P - yellow form:* This parent permission form giving students parent permission to participate in athletics is filled out once a year. The form covers the student for all sports that year. Parents must provide insurance information and emergency contact information. The forms are available at WSCS or on-line at Bangorschools.net.

Dress Guidelines @ WSCS

The following general guidelines for student dress are published in the student handbook. With the welcome arrival of warmer days we ask parents to discuss these guidelines with their sons and daughters and to help us promote a learning environment free from distractions.

Students at WSCS are expected to take pride in their appearance. Parents are encouraged to monitor their child's dress for school. Daily dress should be appropriate to promote a positive school environment.

Students shall not wear clothing which distracts from the learning environment. While the school will not prescribe clothing styles, students are expected to exercise good taste and good judgement in their personal grooming and dress.

Clothing items that promote or display cigarettes, drugs, alcohol, nudity, profanity, or phrases that are offensive are not acceptable. As a guide, bare midriffs, bare feet, uncovered undergarments, chains, hats and headgear, and coats and jackets are not appropriate to be worn in school. Students inappropriately dressed will be asked to change.

Taming the Homework Beast: Helping Your Child Take Charge

Believe it or not, even in April there are still students who are struggling with homework completion (and parents and teachers who are struggling along with them). Usually this is a result of a breakdown in the essential teamwork between home and school, often caused by a student who can't (or won't) use the Agenda Book as the tool it is designed to be. So what's the solution?

Consistency - a clear, written system that spells out everyone's responsibilities in support of the key player, and holds the student ultimately accountable for following through with the plan. If the student is accountable, the results will be obvious; completed homework facilitates thorough learning and quality grades. If, however, the student chooses not to carry through on the expectations, a consequence at home is essential. There will be logical learning which will show on quizzes and tests. Parents need to have logical consequences that occur when the student comes home in the evening as well.

What is the best system for using the Agenda Book? The following is a suggested approach which has worked well with a variety of students:

Every Class Period:

1. Show your teacher any notes from your mom or dad.
2. Write down either the assignment or NH for no homework each and every class period.

3. Have the teacher initial for accuracy.

At the End of the Day:

Look at each assignment in your Agenda and MAKE SURE you have the papers or books required for completing them packed to go home.

At Home:

1. Show mom or dad your Agenda Book for signature.
2. Settle into a quiet place with your Agenda, homework, and all materials.
3. Make sure you complete all questions, problems, or sections of an assignment as written in your Agenda Book.
4. Ask mom or dad to double check for you that everything is done.
5. Ask mom or dad if they want to write any notes to your teachers.
6. Pack all your homework, books, and Agenda Book in your book bag for return to school.

Special Situations:

The student will make arrangements with individual teachers for additional help as needed.

When the student is absent, he/she will see each teacher the first day back to fill in every spot in the day's Agenda Book. Check with the teacher to see if individual sessions are necessary to catch up on instruction missed.

Mom and Dad will check your book, provide a quiet place for homework completion, check to make sure everything is done at the end, and use the Agenda to direct any questions or concerns to teachers.

So what happens if your child comes home without the initials of teachers? Or blank spots? Or mission books? The best time to plan for this is before it happens; instead, sit down with your student, show them this plan, provide a copy for their Agenda Book, and agree what the consequences will be when they do follow the plan, and what will happen if they do not. Put it in writing, and post it in all the obvious places, as well as in their Agenda. Keep the system simple: staying up an extra 1/2 hour (or going to bed early), getting to choose the TV program or read a book out loud, getting out of a chore on occasion, whatever is meaningful and appropriate. Your conversation with your child will reveal a wealth of suggestions.

Once the plan is developed, be consistent. Follow through at home, and write a note in the Agenda Book to let us know what is working, or what is not. Expect your child to get a response, and provide appropriate consequences, just like the plan says. With teamwork and consistency, your child will develop the responsibility for homework completion that is so essential to academic success.

WANTED!!!!

Parents to help make the 2011 WSCS 8th Grade Send-Off a very special day!

We are planning the annual 8th grade send off on the last day of school and we need your input and help. This event has been one of the fondest memories for former WS Cohen students. The event typically begins with a luncheon put on by volunteer parents at about 12:30 in a specialty themed & decorated cafeteria with food provided by both volunteers and the community. Lunch is followed by a viewing of a DVD of all the 8th grade students put to the popular music of the day in the auditorium. Finally, it concludes with what is described as the best part, a final 8th grade visit to the gym to dance to a few beloved songs (line dancing included) with WSCS's very own Coach Rich and a chance for the kids to say goodbyes until high school. This is a long standing tradition but it takes a lot of volunteers to make it happen.

The opportunities that are available for volunteering are Planning, Communications to 8th Grade Parents, Secretary, Treasurer, Fundraising, Decorating, Food, SetUp, Serve, Clean Up, Thank You Notes, Sponsor Board, Student Gifts and DVD creation. We may even be able to have a blog, if someone has the technical expertise, to keep everyone updated. Many of the above will require a 3-6 person committee do the work. The more the merrier and nothing is insignificant in terms of helping out.

If you cannot make the meetings but would like to be kept informed, we need to know how to contact you so please let us know what works best for you below by numbering your preference 1 or 2 and return to WSCS with your child or mail to WSCS 304 Garland Street, Bangor, ME 04401.

Name: _____

Student Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Cell Phone for Text Message _____



LAST BUT NOT LEAST

We will need you to provide three pictures of your 8th grader. They can be current or you can use one that is a baby picture, elementary school pictures, can include family members or other 8th grade students. Kids in the past have had an array of pictures used. Every child deserves to be in the video and we need your help with this. It would be even more helpful if you could email the pictures to Wendy Morrill at bangor86@gmail.com so that we do not have to have the added step of being scanned and returned, but this is not necessary. Do make sure to mark the name of the student clearly on the back if you give us actual pictures so we can get them returned to you.

COMMON SENSE ON SOCIAL NETWORKS

SOME FACTS:

- * 55% of teens have an online profile on a site like Facebook and MySpace.
- * Each site has privacy controls.
- * Inappropriate contact happens.
- * Both sites require kids be older than 14 to have a page - but kids lie about their ages.
- * What gets posted is there forever, somewhere. Deleting an account is difficult.

Where's their favorite hangout? Online.

It's 8:30 on a school night - do you know where your child is? Sure, he's at his computer, but if he's like most kids, he's on a social networking site. But do you know what he's doing? It's a whole other world and we'll help you understand (instead of worry) where your kids are hanging out.

What are they?

An online social network is like any meeting ground, group, or club. The sites work pretty simply: Anyone who signs up (for free) gets a page to do with whatever they like. Although many exist, MySpace and Facebook are the most popular. Kids post pictures of themselves, artwork, links to songs, and write about what they enjoy. They are great outlets for creativity and voicing opinions.

These sites also form a communication hub with all sorts of options, from Instant Messaging on MySpace to "writing on someone's wall" or "poking" someone on Facebook. Both sites offer the cyber equivalent of "clubs" you can join. On Facebook, there are also thousands of applications that let kids play games with their friends, send hugs and drinks, or download quizzes and profiles.

Why they matter

Unless your child uses privacy controls, everything he says about himself in pictures or words will be available for all the world to see. And people do see these pages - strangers, college admissions officers, even potential employers. Kids are savvy enough to post things, but not always mature enough to understand the consequences of doing it.

Even if your kids think they have figured out their privacy controls, there are different ways to get into people's pages. That's why revealing personal information is worrisome.

Tips for young kids - Social networks are not for kids under 14 unless they are specifically designed for tween ages. Kids lack the maturity to make smart, responsible decisions all the time.

Tips for middle school kids:

- > **Common Sense does not recommend this for your middle schools kids.** That said, we know that kids like to "age up" so really it's an individual family decision.
- > **Ask them if they have an account.** They may not fess up if they think they will get in trouble. But it's more important for you to know they have one than for them to be appearing to play by your rules.
- > **Review the basics of Internet safety** with your kids - whether or not they say they have an account. Nothing identifiable, no meeting people.
- > **Make sure they set their privacy settings.** They aren't foolproof, but they're important. Show them where the privacy settings are.
- > **Set ground rules** for what is and isn't appropriate for your kids to communicate, play, and post online.
- > **Go online. Get an account for yourself.** Explore it, then have your kids link to you so you can monitor what they're doing and saying. And do a search for their friends and see if your child shows up on their sites.

Tips for high school kids

<Ask them to show you their sites. They may object, but they're still under your roof.

<Tell them the rules: **No drugs, no alcohol.** Remind them that anyone can see what's on their pages - even if they think no one will. Potential employers and college admissions people can find their way around these sites.

<Kindness counts. Lots of these sites have things like "honesty boxes" that allow users to tell their friends what they think of them. Rule of thumb: If they wouldn't want someone saying it to them, they shouldn't say it to anyone else.

<Watch the clock. Kids can get so sucked into their pages that hours and hours can go by. Not the best use of their time.

<If they meet someone, it better be in a public place, preferably with a friend. We would all like to think that kids wouldn't meet strangers - but sometimes they do. Stress to your kids this is not a safe or smart idea.

Superintendent Betsy Webb will provide an overview of the proposed FY12 School Budget on Wednesday, April 6th from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. in the Bangor High School Lecture Hall. Interested parents and community members are encouraged to attend.

STUDENT COUNCIL NEWS

Student Council is joining with the Bangor School Department to sponsor a "Coins for Caring" fund drive to benefit Japanese citizens. We'll collect coins for 2 weeks beginning April 1st.

The Council joined with the Voices of Change service group and Boosters to sponsor an Autism potluck dinner. Student Council President Stephen Riitano and Vice President Joey Moir arranged to get food donations, and Council members helped serve and clean up at the event.

Our next dance will be held April 9th with a "neon" theme. Council members will sell glow necklaces at the dance to create some extra spirit. Now that 6th graders have been introduced to the line and square dancing in PE, they will be even more active at the dance!

A portion of the dance proceeds will go to the Japanese fund, with discussions at a later date about another organization receiving the remainder of the profits.

Recently two new flags, one US flag, and one Maine State flag, were raised at the entrance to the Cohen School. The Maine flag was given to the school by Governor Baldacci in his last month in office, at the request of Mary Butler, Student Council Secretary. We are happy to see the new flags, since the old ones were very tattered.

Student Council purchased books for Mrs. Susi, and Ms Maxim to be used for classes and for after school book clubs.

COINS OF CARING

The country of Japan recently was hit by a series of earthquakes, causing widespread destruction and suffering. Many United States helping organizations are reaching out to the people of Japan. Bangor schools are providing an opportunity for the school community to support our friends in Aomori, Japan through participation in "Coins of Caring" for a two week period of time. We will begin collecting the coins on Friday, April 1 and end on Friday, April 15. The nearly 4,000 Bangor students may choose to donate any amount of coins-pennies, nickels, dimes, or quarters-that will be added together and sent to aid the people of Aomori, Japan, a city with with a special relationship with Maine known as the Maine-Aomori Sister-State Council. The combined donation will be donated directly to the Friends of Aomori-Earthquake relief.