

SPRING NEWS - APRIL 2018

ROBERTS RACCOONS

ROBERTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

889 CROTON ROAD, WAYNE, PA 19087



April 6, 2018

Dear Roberts Parents/Guardians,

I cannot believe how fast the 2017-2018 school year has been progressing! Since the start of the school year, your children have been participating in many exciting, engaging, and fun academic events and activities and will continue to do so through the remainder of the year.

For the 2017-2018 school year, students continue to be challenged and engaged through our Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) teaching philosophy. The STEM teaching philosophy not only challenges students academically through fostering critical thinking skills, but also improves students' skills in collaboration and teamwork. Students throughout the school year have participated in STEM Engineering challenges (e.g. Creating a Rube Goldberg Machine), as well as have been engaged in solving real world problems within an integrated STEM teaching unit as presented through the students' English Language Arts curriculum (e.g. Creating stress relieving devices for students with disabilities).

The implementation of the School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support Framework (SWPBIS) has been a great success at Roberts Elementary School this year. Though SWPBIS, students have been taught "Robbie's 3Rs" of being Respectful, Responsible, and Ready throughout all areas of the Roberts Elementary School. Additionally, students also have the opportunity to be recognized for demonstrating Robbie's 3Rs through receiving a Robbie's ticket, earning a Robbie's Ribbon (sticker), as well as having the opportunity to win a prize in the Robbie's 100 Club, in which all students that earn a Robbie's ticket are randomly entered to win a prize. Also, all students have been rewarded for displaying Robbie's 3Rs through our Robbie's Rewards Rallies. The Robbie's Rewards Rally for students in December included a school-wide movie and the Rally in February had students participate in school-wide games inspired by the Winter Olympics.

As we move to the close of the school year, please see below some important dates to remember: PSSAs (3rd and 4th Grade)-English Language Arts (April 10th-12th), Math (April 17th and 18th), Science-(4th grade only- [April 24th and 25th). Fourth grade commencement is tentatively scheduled for June 13th at 9:40AM. Additionally, due to our snow days, the last day of school is tentatively scheduled for June 15th. Thank you for your continued partnership in inspiring excellence in our students each and every day!

Dr. Grazel
Principal
Roberts Elementary School

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IN KINDERGARTEN:

The kindergarten students continue to sharpen their language arts and math skills this year! They are learning to read sight words and practicing very important phonemic awareness and phonics skills such as rhyming, blending and segmenting. In math, the children are currently focusing on teen numbers and story problems.

The kindergarteners are also building their technology muscles. Mrs. Davis and Mrs. Lotz are so impressed with how quickly they learn new skills and applications on their iPads. For instance, the children had lots of fun using Keynote to create their own Me Maps! This was a wonderful way to make connections and get to know one another better. The children have also been learning how to use Book Creator and are currently writing and illustrating their very own their ABC Book!

The kindergarten students are looking forward to our upcoming field trip where they will experience live theater - possibly for the first time! We are going to see "The Elves and the Shoemaker" at Storybook Musical Theater (or at Gratz College) on May 10th. The play will correspond with our Reading Wonders and Social Studies unit on Community Helpers.

Both classes have also taken in a dive into STEM. One of our favorite design challenges has been designing RAFTS that can float for 20 seconds or more. The children are quickly becoming skillful problem solvers, collaborators, and innovators and discovering how maintaining a growth mindset helps them to persevere even when the going gets tough!



Mrs. Kilian and Mrs. Gambone's classes



The students from the Multiple Disabilities Classroom and the Autistic Support Classroom have two upcoming trips planned.

On April 10th we will be going to a gym called "We Rock the Spectrum" and on April 25th we will be going to the Elmwood Park Zoo.

We are looking forward to working out and meeting all the animals!

ART

Don't forget to save the date for the **District Arts Festival**, which will take place on **Wednesday, May 9, 2018 at the Middle School from 6 pm until 8:30 pm**. This is an amazing evening showcasing the talents of all our Upper Merion students. In addition to the enormous fine art exhibit, there are musical and dramatic performances, fashion displays, dances and even free dessert!



Fourth grade has spent the last few weeks being inspired by contemporary American artist Jim Dine. They created self portraits, but instead of painting their faces, they represented themselves as pieces of clothing. Now we are starting still life drawings and soon we will be making coil pots out of earthenware clay. Third grade combined their enthusiasm for the work of artist Keith Haring with their enthusiasm for the Winter Olympics and created some bold and beautiful drawings of athletes in motion. Second grade has been studying birds in the classroom and that has continued during art as we build bird, nest and eggs out of clay. First grade has already studied many of the art elements: line, shape, color, texture and value. Solid form and space are our next challenges.

IN FIRST GRADE:

First grade has had a VERY eventful start to spring. To celebrate the Winter Olympics, we decided to hold our own MEASUREMENT Olympics! Students participated in Ski Jumping, Scooter Skeleton, and Cooperation Skiing. Students used several tools of measurement to determine the winner of each round. All students earned medals for their class. We had such a great day and were able to practice these essential skills!

March into April has been a very busy time! We have been learning ALL about animals! We are studying animal groups, their habitats, and how animals use their adaptations to survive. We are so excited because the Philadelphia Zoo on Wheels will be coming in and bringing live animals and will be teaching us all about animal adaptations. It will take place right in our classroom!

We also learned how people work with animals and we had a special visitor. One of our first graders has a Service Dog who works with her father. The family came in and taught us all about what it is involved in training and living with a service dog. It was a wonderful experience and the students got to see the dog in action!

As a first grade, we are very excited by our progress and cannot wait to continue learning, exploring and growing! We have been VERY busy students and are preparing ourselves for next year. We are so excited to see what the rest of the year will bring! We are wishing you a happy, warm, dry spring!



LEARNING SUPPORT & ENRICHMENT

Technology is everywhere. Our students each have their own iPads to use throughout the school day. Technology and computer based games are a great way for students with unique learning needs to engage with material and be motivated to complete a task independently and feel successful. Here is a brief article that highlights the research and benefits of game-based learning.

How Game-Based Learning Can Help Students of All Ages Learn

By [Melissa Nott](#) on March 22, 2016

In school, kids play during recess and work during class. But some of the biggest names in psychology, including [Jean Piaget](#) and [Jerome Bruner](#), believe that play is a child's work. The best way to teach kids, they say, is through hands-on, active learning. But with state benchmarks and performance-based teacher evaluations hanging above our heads, it's hard for educators to imagine spending precious academic time playing games with kids. That's where game-based learning (often confused with [gamification](#), which isn't quite the same thing) comes in. With this approach, learning and play aren't at odds with each other; in fact, games are the vehicle and environment for learning.

Bruner's Discovery Learning Theory

According to Bruner, students who engage in hands-on learning and play-based activities experience the following benefits:

- increased motivation
- buoyed creativity
- enhanced problem-solving skills
- a greater sense of personal responsibility
- the joy of autonomy and independence

What teacher doesn't want her students to be motivated, creative, smart, responsible, and filled with joy? If playing games truly benefits students in this way, we can't afford not to play with them. But what does that mean in real terms?

Reference:

Nott, Melissa. "How Game-Based Learning Can Help Students of All Ages Learn." Edudemic, 22 Mar. 2016, www.edudemic.com/game-based-learning-help-learn/.



MUSIC NOTES



Spring is a very busy time of year in the music room.

Band and String students are preparing for our spring concert, which will be held on **May 17th**. We have just begun our large ensemble rehearsals and the students sound great. Letters with the rehearsal dates went home in early March (check your child's music folder if you did not receive one). Please continue to encourage home practice as playing in the larger group creates new challenges. The more confident each person is individually, the more confident the group plays as a whole.

IN SECOND GRADE:

Run! Jump! Skip! Laugh! This is a priceless time of year because we get excited about all that's growing around us. Second graders are currently looking at Nature with poets' eyes... practicing poetic devices galore in order to help our audience consider the world in totally new ways. This takes deep, creative thinking and patience. As readers, we are celebrating all the ways that our learned metacognitive habits now serve us as powerful readers. We can truly see for ourselves how these strategies help us to better comprehend and fully enjoy our reading material. In math this spring, we are covering so much ground from geometry to fractions to measurement to money and arrays! We can't wait to plant in the Learning Garden and begin studying frogs. We are excited about the upcoming Warbler Migration.....all of you bird lovers understand how we feel! We will be observing these beautiful birds with binoculars and the help of our bird expert Mr. Dale . We are so lucky to have an outdoor classroom as well as an entire nature center right in our backyard! We will be utilizing this great resource as soon as May rolls around to observe birds and participate in a citizen science lesson by testing the health of the stream. We have so much to look forward to including Earth Day, a field trip to the Academy of Natural Sciences, and Fun Day. Welcome back Spring

— Love, Second Grade!



ESL NEWS

It's important to provide your child with opportunities to develop English through books, play time, and conversations. It's just as important to provide your child with opportunities to continue development of their home language.

Benefits of Being Bilingual

- Many research studies have shown that bilingualism improves brain functions. Bilinguals are accustomed to switching languages. They are flexible in their thinking which fosters problem solving and creativity.
- Once a child is bilingual, it becomes much easier to learn other languages.
- Speaking more than one language increases job opportunities.
- Maintaining a home language keeps children connected to family members near and far.

IN THIRD GRADE

"How Empathy Helps Us Grow" remains a constant theme throughout the third grade curriculum. Through the reading of various genres including realistic fiction and biography and analyzing articles and websites, students are understanding things from others' perspectives and recognizing what it feels like to "walk in someone else's shoes." They are learning that overcoming challenges is common to many. Our students have proven that even though they are 8 or 9 years old, they value compassion and consideration for others.

To enrich our curriculum we invited two guests to speak to our students about this theme of empathy and overcoming obstacles. Kyle Bryant is a local man battling a debilitating disease called Friedreich's Ataxia. As he recounted his expedition on his trike across the USA, he taught our students the power of perseverance and that nothing is too tough to get in the way of overcoming your obstacles. Our second guest speaker, Dan Gemmill and father of an Upper Merion student, used hands on activities to demonstrate what a school day is like for a student with disabilities. He talked about how being a friend, role model, and including others goes a long way.



An exciting upcoming project based on "How Empathy Helps Us Grow" that we will soon be focusing on is called the "Junior Activist Showcase." On **May 10th**, all are invited to join us in the multi-purpose room as our students WOW us with their presentations based on a matter close to their heart. More information to come!

LIBRARY

From now until the end of the year in both 3rd and 4th grade, students are learning the steps of the research process. They are learning how to identify appropriate sources of information in both print and digital form, and how to pull out pertinent information while they research topics. In 1st and 2nd grade students will continue to practice finding "Just Right" books in the library by using the 5-finger rule. They are also continuing to learn about different genres and literary elements. The students have voted on their favorite book from the Pennsylvania Young Readers Choice Awards and a winner will be announced soon! In 2nd grade, the students are starting to learn how to use the library's OPAC (Online Public Access Catalog) system on their iPads, in order to appropriately and independently locate books in the library.

I am excited to work with the Roberts' students as we finish out this school year!

A NOTE FROM THE HEALTH SUITE

Some reasons to keep your child home when not feeling well include:

Fever, flu, vomiting, diarrhea, pink eye, rash, untreated active case of lice, coughing excessively, no energy and the inability to actively participate in class.

Students may return to school after 24 hours with no fever (without use of fever reducers), vomiting or diarrhea. Pink eye should be treated for 24 hours with prescribed eye drops before returning to school. Consult your health care provider for any of the illnesses mentioned above. Please inform the health suite for any new medications prescribed or that need to be administered at school. All medications should be brought to school with a consent form completed by your health care provider and signed by a parent. Medications should be in the original pharmacy box/container. Please call the health suite for any medical concerns at 610-205-3755. It is important to get your flu shot for prevention. Please stay home if you have the flu so you do not infect others.

Stay well hydrated and drink plenty of water throughout the day.

Seasonal allergies can cause you to sneeze, have a runny or congested nose, and/or a scratchy throat. By reducing your exposure to allergens you may help reduce your symptoms. Here are some tips to try:

- Stay indoors or limit your time outside on dry, windy days.
- Avoid lawn mowing and pulling weeds/do gardening wearing a pollen mask.
- Remove clothes you have worn outside and shower/wash your hair before going to bed to remove pollen.
- Do not hang clothes outside to dry. Pollen will stick to towels and sheets.
- Listen to the forecast to find out pollen counts for the day.
- Start taking your allergy medicine before symptoms start. Consult your doctor for the best medication for you.
- Close doors and windows at night. Always keep bedroom windows closed.
- Use air conditioning in the house and car when pollen counts are high.
- Clean/vacuum floors with a HEPA filter vacuum.
- Rinse your sinuses with distilled saline water to flush out mucus and allergens. Use a neti pot or squeeze bottle, they can be found at your local pharmacy.

I hope these tips are helpful and you can enjoy the beautiful spring weather outside without too many allergy symptoms!



LITERACY CORNER

You may already know that language provides the foundation for literacy and learning. However, did you know that recent research found that the number of conversations parents have with their children has a bigger effect on their child's language development and related assessment scores compared to the number of words they use or expose their children to. The turn taking and social aspect of conversation was more powerful than the number of words used by parents.

At home, you can support your child's language and literacy development by talking with them about their learning and/or reading.

IN FOURTH GRADE:

Throughout our endless winter, fourth grade has been engaged in a variety of projects that will come to fruition during our spring months. Foremost among them is the Invention Convention. As students encounter problems in their homes, school, or everyday lives, they have sought to rectify these issues in many novel ways. Since the STEM process requires research and exploration of previously devised models, the students have begun to learn how to improve on existing contraptions and brainstorm unique solutions to a problem. Student perseverance will culminate on **May 17** when the invention convention will give them an opportunity to present the complications initially encountered and the innovative manner in which the problem was addressed. We look forward to your attendance! In addition to the invention convention, our fourth graders have nearly ascended to the pinnacle of elementary school and are primed to begin their middle school journey. The month of May will present them with an opportunity to travel to the middle school to become more familiar with the building, routines, and sights of this environment of learning! Roberts has prepared them for this next step in so many ways!



HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

This year the Upper Merion School District is supporting the American Heart Association. Each building will participate in “Jump Rope for Heart” to raise money for doctors and scientist researching heart disease. Too often, however, people believe that heart disease happens only when people get older. Everyone can benefit from exercise especially kids. Children who exercise on a regular basis and get at least 60 minutes have stronger muscles and bones, are less likely to become overweight, have lower blood pressure and decrease the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Choices that children make as young people will definitely effect their quality of life as they get older. Parents should not only encourage their children to exercise on a daily basis but to also do a variety of activities in order to improve on the 3 elements of fitness: endurance, strength and flexibility.

Kids.health.org offers some tips for raising healthy kids:

- 1 Help your kids participate in a number of age appropriate activities.
- 2 Establish a regular schedule for physical activity.
- 3 Incorporate activity into daily routines.
- 4 Embrace a healthier lifestyle for yourself and be a great role model.
- 5 Keep it fun, so you can count on your kids to come back for more.

