

Side by Side's Monthly News

September 26, 2018

Issue 158

FROM THE DIRECTOR:

Dear SBS Families,

Once again, welcome to the 2018-19 school year! The fall season is officially here and we are off to a great start.

Thank you to all of our PK-5th families who attended the Lower School Back to School Night. We had a record number of families in attendance and we look forward to an impressive turnout of grade 6-8 families at our Upper School Back to School Night this Thursday, 9/27 from 6-8 P.M.

Thank you to all staff and families for your patience and cooperation during the opening of school. Our new building is working out great and drop-off and pick-up procedures are definitely improving. At the end of the day, our main priority remains getting children dismissed to cars as safely and quickly as possible. Parents, please remember that you do not need to exit your vehicle when picking up. There is no parking allowed on Chestnut Street during school hours. The Norwalk Police Department have asked us to remind parents to remain in their cars when waiting, in order to minimize traffic congestion on Monroe, South Main and Chestnut Street.

R.I.S.E. meetings will again take place in the SBS gymnasium on the last school day of each month. Parents are welcome to join us for these all school meetings each month. Our Student School Planning Team (SSPT) facilitates these meetings, which include a variety of shares, songs, and "energizers" from our student body. Please join us if you can this Friday, 9/28/18 at 2:30 P.M.

The "Dress Down" day tradition will continue on the first Friday of each month. Students are not required to wear their school uniforms on dress-down days; however, our school dress code still applies!

We will soon send individual student score reports for the spring 2018 Smarter Balanced Assessments home to all families with students in grades 3-8. Our teachers begin the start of a new school year by looking at our students' performance last year on both school based assessments and the Smarter Balanced Assessments given to all public school students, grades 3-8, in the state of Connecticut. While we continue to outperform both the state and the local district in Mathematics, our reading scores are not as high as we would like. As a result, the current focus of much of our instructional planning discussions are how to adapt our program to improve our outcomes. One way we are doing this is through extensive professional development for K-3 teachers in the area of early literacy. Another way is to tailor instruction to meet the needs of individual learners.

Another approach we have taken to improve student-learning outcomes and their preparedness for the 21st century is by increasing overall student engagement with learning through technology integration. We are launching two platforms in particular this year to

varying degrees in PK through 8th grade. The first platform, *Seesaw* (<https://web.seesaw.me/>), is a way for teachers, students, and families to engage with classroom learning and culture using a mobile device app that bridges the divide between home and the classroom. The second, *Nearpod* (<https://nearpod.com/>), is a way for teachers to teach and foster ethical practices around digital literacy and citizenship, and to supplement the core curriculum with technology-integrated activities, virtual reality experiences, and lesson extensions. After the teachers participate in an all-day training session using these tools, we will host a parent forum so that you can also become acquainted with these exciting new ways to enhance our learning community.

I look forward to seeing and getting to know all of you as the year progresses. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time at extension 133 or mnittoly@sbscharter.org.

Sincerely,

Mr. Nittoly

ANY QUESTIONS?

Main Number	857-0306
Fax Number	838-2666
Director	Matt, x133
Nurse	Maria, x118
Social Worker	Marlene, x126
Assistant to the Director.....	Lilly, x132
Parent Coordinator.....	Evelyn, x130
Family Resource Center	Beatriz, x146

SAVE THE DATES

Thursday, September 27 at 6:00 P.M. – Upper school Back to School Night

Friday, September 28 – R.I.S.E. meeting at 2:30 P.M. in the gym.

Friday, October 5 – Miss Chocolate sale wrap-up. Please return all sales order forms and total funds collected to Evelyn in the main office.

Friday, October 12 – School Portraits

Portrait order forms are going home in backpacks next week. You may also order your portrait package online at coffeepond.com. Please return your order form with payment enclosed to your child's teacher.

Tuesday, November 6 – Election day

No school for students, professional development for teachers

Week of November 12 - 16 – Scholastic Book Fair

Wednesday, November 21-Friday, November 23

School closed for Thanksgiving Recess

Announcements

All children in grades PK, K and 6th grade must submit current Student Health Records and proof of immunizations by the October 1 deadline. Please return all emergency and transportation forms to the main office.

Classroom News:

PK 103 (Teachers, Judie and Kim) – We have had a great start to the school year! The newest members to PK 103 are adjusting well to their new teachers, classmates and school. Our days are busy and fun as we explore new materials in our work and play. The children enjoy making new friends and helping one another learn the routines of our class. It is a worthwhile process as we develop a class community of young learners and caring friends! This year our butterfly study is focusing on both the monarch and painted lady butterflies. The children are excited about the arrival of caterpillars to the classroom. They are closely watching how they move, eat and shed their skin (molt). This is a great opportunity for the children to learn about the life cycle of a living creature and the amazing process of metamorphosis.

PK 104 (Teachers, Jen and Carmen) – Students in PK 104 have been getting to know one another, learning about classroom rules and what we mean by “R.I.S.E.” For the past week, we have been talking about the word empathy, which the children demonstrate when they try to understand what someone else is feeling. We have also introduced the Zones of Regulation idea to the children, and we have been talking about the different ways we feel and the things we can do to calm down if we are feeling angry, sad or excited. We have some tiny visitors coming to our classroom this week. We are eagerly anticipating the arrival of about 15 monarch caterpillars in the mail. We cannot wait to observe them as they eat, grow and transform into butterflies.

Kindergarten (Teachers, Esther) – The kindergarteners are learning about community. We began with our own classroom community by talking about and practicing how to care for ourselves, one another, and all the materials in the room. Yesterday, after some exploration with earthworms on the playground, we decided it would be important to add “all living creatures” to the part about caring for each other. Therefore, we now say, “The people in a community care about each other and all living creatures.” Our community study will extend to a study of our neighborhood community. We will begin exploring the neighborhood with some walking tours to find out about the people, businesses and geography around us.

1st Grade – The first grade spent a few weeks talking about our classroom and school community and now we are learning all about apples as we get ready to go apple picking at the Norton Brothers Fruit Farm.

2nd Grade – The Second graders have been working very hard, and learning all of the second grade routines. As a group, we have attempted to demonstrate R.I.S.E. behavior at school at all times (respect, independence, social justice, and empathy). In Math, we recently finished module one, which focused on adding and subtracting tens and ones up to 100. Our next module focuses on measurement, and we are very eager to start using rulers. In Literacy, we enjoyed reading a selection of fairytales and tall tales. Beauty and the Beast was a class favorite! Students are now learning all about oysters, in preparation for our first field trip to Norm Bloom Oyster Company. We look forward to a wonderful and positive year in Second Grade!

3rd Grade – Third grade has been exceptionally productive in the first month of school. We are halfway through both units in Reading and Math. Students have investigated access to books in countries ranging from Chad to Afghanistan. The students are composing summary paragraphs about one of the books we read called Nasreen’s Secret School, about a young girl from Afghanistan traumatized by the disappearance of her parents. The third graders have also jumped right into math by learning about multiplication and division. Lastly, students have been exploring their own identities. They will create an Inside/Outside identity poem. I am pleased that so many parents signed up for Seesaw, a way to share student work via an app on any mobile device. If you have not registered yet, please get in touch with me about how to do so. The students will start posting their work in the coming weeks.

4th Grade – The Fourth grade class is off to a fabulous start of the school year! In Literacy, students are exploring oral traditions through the Haudenosaunee Native Americans. In math explorations, we are investigating place value and rounding. It was so great to see so many families at Back to School Night. Please remember to practice multiplication facts 0-12 with your child. The students took home a letter explaining field trip dues in their backpacks on 9/18/18. Please ask your child about our Kindness Wave Campaign for this year. “No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.” -Aesop

5th Grade – It was great meeting so many of our families at back to school night. The focus of the first couple of weeks was learning about each other, the classroom routines and the expectations for the year. Students have made a strong academic start, studying human rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This is a compelling topic with lots of really challenging vocabulary, but the students have shown great maturity so far. They will now be applying what they learned to the novel, “Esperanza Rising,” which is a historical fiction piece that extends their understanding of human rights. In Math, we have begun exploring patterns in the place value system, multiplying and dividing numbers by 10, 100, 1,000 and 10,000 fluently. We are currently working on how to round any number to the nearest tenth, hundredth and thousandth.

Upper School Humanities

All upper school students are composing “bio” poems, employing the creative writing process. The plan is to mount the finished products for display at Back to School night on Thursday. Students attempt to convey who they are in these poems, sharing something about their personal likes and dislikes, their goals, hopes, and dreams. Students should bring in a favorite picture of themselves to include with their poem. We will return the photographs to students after Back to School Night.

Upper School Math News

The **Eighth grade** class just finished a review of exponents. Students learned about the real-life applications of scientific notation and they have begun solving problems involving things such as the size and mass of planets and the population of different states.

Seventh grade students have been examining proportional relationships and exploring how this connects to the ratios and unit rates that they learned about last year. Students just completed a small group project that examined proportional relationships through graphs, tables, and equations. After completing the projects, we transformed the classroom into a gallery. The students took turns going around the room discussing the strengths of one another’s work. **Sixth grade** students have jumped right into working with ratios. They learned what ratios and equivalent ratios are and completed a skittles activity to investigate them further! Lately, we have been utilizing tape diagrams to help solve real-world ratio problems. Soon, we will be exploring how ratio tables represent a relationship between two quantities. Students will create graphs from the data.

Upper School Science News

The **sixth graders** are working to figure out how odors travel in the air from their sources to our noses. We have been creating models to illustrate our current understanding of the phenomenon. To figure out how odors move, we had to learn about air. The students are answering the question, “Is air matter?” Be sure to ask your sixth grader how we collected evidence for air having mass. In their chemistry unit on chemical changes, the **seventh graders** are learning about properties of substances. We have observed two unknown substances to determine how they are alike and different. Most recently, we tested the solubility of the substances fat and soap in oil and water. The **eighth graders** are learning about the structure of Earth in our unit, How is the Earth Changing? The students looked at earthquake and volcano data to discover patterns. We are currently researching the evidence to support Alfred Wegener’s Continental Drift

Theory. The students are creating presentations to teach their classmates about their assigned phenomenon.

Music News

It has been a fun and busy start to the new school year. **PK through 2nd grade** classes have been engaged in singing songs like "There was an old lady" in addition to some movement exercises. Please encourage your children to sing and dance as much as possible and to listen to a wide variety of music. Studies show that children exposed to classical music, jazz, and music from around the world, develop more musically and that, in turn, positively affects reading, math and logical reasoning skills. **Third and fourth graders** are beginning to develop their music literacy skills. Third grade students have begun Recorder Karate lessons and are making good progress. Students in fourth grade class have selected which band instrument they will play and have now begun instrumental lessons. All instrumental students will have a group lesson once a week, before or after school. We instituted a change last year to accommodate an instrumental lesson for everyone in the Band Program, and it was clear that students who attended these lessons made much better progress than those who elected not to. Please encourage your children to get to their lessons on time, and thank you in advance for whatever you need to do to get this to work. Private music lessons are expensive, so this is a very valuable opportunity for your child.

The Upper School students have started the year by creating their own Rap Songs on the subject of Respect, Independence, Social Justice and Empathy, in keeping with Side by Side's commitment to R.I.S.E. and a positive school climate.

Physical Education News

PK-2 grade: Students have had a blast playing games so far in class. In these first few weeks, our focus has been on moving our bodies safely and in different ways. We are learning that movement can take many forms, levels and speeds and that it is important to understand these differences.

3rd-8th grade: Students are now preparing for the fitness tests. Students began the year doing fitness activities designed to get their bodies in shape. The tests are comprised of a 15-meter pacer run, a push up test and a sit up test. We will announce school record holders at the November R.I.S.E. meeting. Stay Tuned!

Art News

In **PK**, students are currently using many different kinds of media and getting a feel for the art supplies. Students have been focusing on the process of printmaking and stamping using watercolor and tempera paint.

In **Kindergarten** students are studying line by following directed drawings and using oil pastels, the students then apply color using a technique called crayon/water resist. So far they have made flowers, elephants and trees inspired by the artist Hundertwasser.

In **First and Second** grade, students are exploring line by drawing a turtle and then using pattern to draw interest. The students then apply crayon, marker and paint.

In **Third and Fourth** grade, students are studying radial lines, repetition and color theory. Students are drawing flowers by using a repeating pattern, drawing the outline, and applying analogous color schemes.

In **Fifth and Sixth** grade, students are learning about Indian culture in art and studying line. They are drawing an elephant adorned in paint and colorful blankets; a tradition that happens during a yearly celebration held in March in the city of Jaipur. Students are drawing elephants and then painting them with colorful attire.

In **Seventh and Eighth** grade, students are studying surrealism. Students are drawing a mixed up animal by combining two animals together. The students then draw an environmental element out of something unexpected. This is mainly a pen and ink activity.

Parent Community Coordinator

The Miss Chocolate fundraiser will close on Friday, October 6.

Thank you to parents who purchased books and school supplies at the Scholastic Book Fair over the years. We use the Scholastic Dollars, awarded to us as a percentage of sales, to renew classroom subscriptions to the Scholastic News Magazine. This age appropriate publication is a terrific springboard for discussions of current events and other topics of interest to our students. In addition, many of our teachers purchased new guided reading books to fill in some of the gaps in our collections this year. Another Scholastic book fair will take place during the week of November 12 through the 16th.