

## **Positive School News – March 2022**

### **HARPSWELL COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

Harpswell Community School recently completed its Literacy Week+, which was so packed that it lasted a week and a half. During this time students participated in many literacy activities, with many of the activities related to author Chris Van Dusen's books. We created "Mad Libs" a-la-Van Dusen, had a Hat Day and read books with hat themes, had a Camp Out Day, when we wore flannels, gazed into virtual camp fires, and curled up to read with blankets and books. Dress as Your Favorite Character Day was lots of fun. The special literacy activities were capped off with virtual visits from Chris Van Dusen. He educated and entertained children of all grade levels with his books and his processes for writing and illustrating books.

During this same timeframe, the Harpswell Community School PTO sponsored a Read-a-Thon, which was WILDLY successful, raising over \$12,000! We are so grateful to have such a supportive community! Extending the strong literacy theme, we were able to welcome back an in-person Scholastic Book Fair for the first time in over two years. Every child who participated in the Read-a-Thon, regardless of whether or not they raised funds, was able to earn Book Bucks from the PTO. Every student participated, which means that every single Harpswell Community School student were able to buy at least one book.

It's been a busy past few weeks!

## **BOWDOINHAM COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

At Bowdoinham Community School we have worked to make great use of targeted Covid-relief funds. Since the Fall we have run a series of before-school academic groups to address lost learning opportunities from the past two years in reading and math. We have also utilized two additional teachers and one additional paraprofessional position to provide more small-group and individualized support to students in all grade levels. We know this work will need to continue in the years to come, but there is an encouraging sign from our fourth and fifth grades. At this time 69% of Bowdoinham's fourth and fifth graders are reading strongly at grade level; and 87% are within a grade level, meaning they are well prepared for next year's English Language Arts standards. For perspective, this data is even stronger than in many years prior to the Pandemic.

## **WILLIAMS-CONE SCHOOL**

Throughout the months of January and February our School-Wide Positive Behavior Challenge focused on being responsible learners. Students earned extra PAWS slips (small pieces of paper with a "paw" printed on them) for demonstrating responsible behavior in all school settings. Each classroom was given the challenge to fill a large jar with the extra PAWS slips. For every jar that was filled, a desk will be purchased for a student in the country of Malawi through the K.I.N.D. (Kids in Need of Desks) Fund sponsored by UNICEF USA. To celebrate our school's success with the School-Wide Positive Behavior Challenge, a special zoom assembly was held on February 18<sup>th</sup> for students featuring Phredd, a "Ukulele Flailing, Harmonica Wailing, Suitcase Drumming, Kazoo Hum-Humming Ukulele Bundle of Joy" assembly for our students celebrating our School-Wide Positive Behavior focus on responsibility and earning desks for the K.I.N.D. Fund.

The Williams-Cone School fifth grade class sponsored a fundraiser in conjunction with Wild Oats Bakery in Brunswick on February 27<sup>th</sup>. Wild Oats Bakery donated 100 Williams-Cone School Tiger-themed cupcakes resulting in the students raising over \$1,400 for upcoming fifth grade end-of-year activities.

Over 140 students completed the Winter Break 2 Principal's Reading Challenge. This challenge involved reading for 20-30 minutes daily for six days during the break. Participating students were treated to certificates of completion, a coupon from Sherman's Bookstore and a school-wide Phredd ("Ukulele One-Man Band") concert on March 16<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Bretschneider's fifth grade class won first and second place in the District's "Battle of the Books" contest. Students read books from the MSBA book list and answered trivia questions related to the books. We are so proud of our fifth grade readers.

Friends of Williams-Cone School organized a school-wide food drive benefitting the MidCoast Hunger Prevention Program throughout the month of February resulting in 350 pounds of donated food and a \$20 donation.

## **WOODSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Woodside fourth graders have been working as citizen scientists this year in partnership with the Maine Math and Science Alliance through a National Science Foundation grant project called "Weather Blur."

Students have learned how to develop research questions and are now conducting research to learn what dominant organisms are found in three Woodside vernal pools in the winter month of March and spring month of April. Students have helped drill into frozen ponds to collect samples, and recently Dr. Paty Martai from Bigelow Labs was on campus to help students set up a "lab" environment in what is normally our band room! The students have benefitted from shared equipment from Dr. Martai and recently were able to use a newly-acquired high-quality microscope to help conduct their work.

More information about the Weather Blur project and Woodside student research can be found at the Maine Math and Science Alliance website: <https://mmsa.org/projects/weatherblur/>. There you can search out the Woodside student investigation called "Vernal Pool Biotic Inventory."

## **BOWDOIN CENTRAL SCHOOL**

Bowdoin Central School students and families raised over \$1,500 for the local charity Wilderness Miracles Wildlife Rehab in Bowdoin, Maine. In addition to the money, students also collected a large amount of supplies to help rehabilitate wild animals for release. Students were very excited to participate.

Eleven Bowdoin Central School students participated in the Junior National Duck Stamp Competition this spring. Of the 11 students, six received honorable mentions; and one student won third place in his age group.

Bowdoin Central School is working to finish its grant for State funds through part of the Tier III State project. These funds will support improved learning in Math Fluency, non-fiction reading analysis and comprehension, improved professional development for paraprofessionals, and improved supports for helping students who may experience challenges socially and emotionally.

Bowdoin Central School has been working with the Bowdoin Parent Teacher Club on a successful calendar raffle. Proceeds benefit the Parent Teacher Club to help support learning enrichment for all students including books for all students at the book fairs, arts and game nights, shirts for all students for Winter Carnival and additional enrichment learning activities.

Bowdoin Central School recently re-established regular meetings with M.S.A.D. No.75 bus drivers. These quarterly meetings help to establish a strong partnership between the bus and school to make the bus environment more like the classroom environment. With a number of new drivers, this is particularly a crucial time to make sure drivers are supported to sustain a positive riding environment for all.

## **MT. ARARAT MIDDLE SCHOOL**

The Mt. Ararat Middle School Math Team is participating in the MathCounts Competition this year, which is open to students in Grades 6-8. The contest began with a school competition, which we held at the end of January. The four top students from that event then competed at the end of February in the regional contest (held virtually). They placed first as a team! The four team members are: Finn Dedek (first place individual); Miles Dailey (fourth place individual); Ryan Schultz (fifth place individual); and Erryl Timblin (sixth place individual). They will next compete at the State Level MathCounts Competition at the end of March, which will also be held virtually. The top four individuals at that competition will then advance to the National Competition, which will be held in person in Washington, DC, in early May. Congratulations and good luck wishes are extended to our Mt. Ararat Middle School Math Team.

## **MT. ARARAT HIGH SCHOOL**

Members of three different Mt. Ararat High School English classes had the joy of participating in a field trip to a theatre performance of “Last Ship to Proxima Centauri” at Portland Stage on March 16<sup>th</sup>. This was a wonderful experience and chance to return students to meaningful community learning experiences.

Next, congratulations go to the Mt. Ararat Science Bowl Team. Thanks to their awesome effort and team work, they finished seventh in a bracket of 13 New England High School teams at the Regional Science Bowl Tournament.

As we turn the focus of our advisory curriculum at Mt. Ararat High School to career exploration, we have been pleased to host two Mt. Ararat High School alums in recent weeks about local career opportunities. One such presentation featured careers in geology and physics from Katelyn Cox '17 of Wright Pierce, while the other featured Ian Messier '09 and Cameron Cox '17 of Crooker Construction.

Finally, Mt. Ararat High School is excited to begin the spring athletic season this week with pitchers and catchers and an official start to all athletics next week. Go Eagles!

