

Positive School News – April 2022

WOODSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

“Principal of the Day Returns!”

A tradition of recognizing positive behavior at Woodside continues this year with the resumption of Woodside’s “Principal of the Day” reward program. “Principal of the Day” is part of the school-wide positive behavior support plan overseen by our new Behavior RTI teacher, Mrs. Carolee Smith. Students are recognized as “Principal of the Day” after practicing the code of cooperation for being safe, respectful, and responsible and earning “paw tickets” as a tangible reward from school staff when demonstrating those behaviors. After students collect 250 tickets, they can “cash-in” those tickets for the reward of being “Principal of the Day” with Mr. Dedek. Recent winners included Hadley Byron, Jacek Godo, and Charlotte Scott. Thank you, teachers and students, for working together to demonstrate great learning behaviors.

“Big Night for Yellow Spotted Salamanders”

Every year in April there is a little known but very important event in the life-cycle of a long-time Maine resident called “Big Night.” “Big Night” usually occurs in April on the first rainy night when temperatures rise above 40 degrees Fahrenheit. That’s when Maine’s population of yellow spotted salamanders make their way to vernal pools through wooded areas including right here in Topsham.

This year’s “Big Night” happened to fall on a school night; and the next morning Woodside students were introduced to “Bus Loop Gus,” one of the aforementioned yellow spotted salamanders. He was spotted in our bus loop on the first really rainy morning after the ground thawed.

“Bus Loop Gus” measured in at about six inches from the tip of his tail to the tip of his nose and was quite the celebrity with Woodside students on arrival. He blended in so well with our curb and sidewalk paint flecks, it was hard to see him on the rainy pavement of our bus loop. After consultation with fourth grade science teacher Mrs. Scribner and her homeroom class, it was determined that a good piece of bark would make an excellent escape craft to a vernal pool on property. Luckily, there

happened to be a “Principal of the Day” award winner (Hadley Byron) to help Principal Dedek and “Gus” carefully make it to a brimming vernal pool; and it all made for a great start to the learning day, despite it being quite rainy.

HARPSWELL COMMUNITY SCHOOL

At Harpswell Community School, students hit their intermediate goals for Claw Slips for the year, earning a total of over 3,000 slips so far! Claw Slips are given to students by any staff members, for extra-safe, respectful, and/or responsible behavior. Students voted for a schoolwide reward which included a treat of hot chocolate, wearing pajamas, and cuddling with stuffies while watching a short educational video. We’ll be setting a year-end goal for Claw Slips for another exciting reward.

We recently held our fourth round of RTI meetings at Harpswell Community School looking at the effectiveness of interventions for all students. All grade levels are making very exciting progress.

BOWDOIN CENTRAL SCHOOL

The week before the spring break our fourth grade students learned about Maine native bird species with parent volunteer Anna Carnacella. As part of this outdoor learning the classes built and put up a half-dozen blue bird nesting boxes. A big thank-you goes to Ms. Carnacella.

Ms. Lisa Volk did a great job leading our students in the Junior National Duck Stamp competition. Bowdoin Central School had the highest number of participants with 16 students, including three Honorable Mentions and a Third Place. Nice job, junior duck stampers.

Friday, April 15th, was a very productive professional development day. The school teaching team worked on rosters and planning for the next school year, looked at progress on school goals for the school year, did some team building and wellness time, and enjoyed a lunch together sponsored by Midcoast Hospital.

Starting April break through the month of May, Bowdoin Central School is teaming up with Maine Masons Lodge 26 to do a new iteration of the Bikes for Books program. Due to supply chain issues, this year we are doing

“Kindles for Kids.” This program encourages reading outside school. For every ten minutes of reading during this time period, students earn a ticket that is put in a drawing for a free Kindle. The more students read, the more chances they get. The drawing will be held in early June. In previous years students read over 7,500 minutes and over 1,500 titles.

BOWDOINHAM COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Bowdoinham Community School will be hosting incoming Kindergartners and their parents for “Bowdoinham Buds” on May 4th. While the children do some fun activities with teachers, Principal Lajoie and Social Worker Nicole Dunton will meet with the parents and give a tour of the school and grounds. This is always an exciting opportunity to welcome our next group of families into the Bowdoinham community!

WILLIAMS-CONE SCHOOL

Grade-level teaching staff members met together with the RTI Strategist Team and Mrs. Rineer to review student achievement data in math and literacy prior to spring break. Using a variety of data points including NWEA data, running record data, Dreambox math data as well as curriculum-based assessments, teams created and/or revised instructional action plans for students who are performing below grade level. Instructional plans include small-group and/or individualized differentiated classroom instruction, RTI strategist support, before-school math programming and/or after-school math and literacy programming. Teams will meet again prior to the end of the school year to review data points and make instructional recommendations for the upcoming school year.

Throughout the months of March and April the School-wide Positive Behavior Challenge focused on being respectful learners. Students worked together to fill in letters that stated “Williams-Cone School Treats Others With Respect” by demonstrating respectful behavior in all school settings. The letters were on display in the main lobby for all to see as they were being filled. To celebrate our school’s success with the Positive Behavior challenge, students were treated to special activities on Thursday, April 14th. Activities ranged from arts and crafts, creating slime, Go Noodle dancing to science experiments.

The first phase of the “Earthen Crawl” playground project was completed by Williams-Cone School parent and community volunteers on April 15th under the direction of Williams-Cone School parent Mac Hunter. The structure includes large plastic tubs that are safe and large enough for students and adults to crawl through as well as a platform and rocks for climbing. Total installation time including sanding, assembling and installing the equipment as well as cleaning up the area took approximately seven hours. Williams-Cone School students and staff were excited to try out the new equipment upon their return from spring break.

MT. ARARAT MIDDLE SCHOOL

The middle school just wrapped up its first wrestling season in two years. Students from all three grades participated, and eighth grader A.J. Ward qualified for and placed third overall at the State meet.

The Mt. Ararat Stage Company presented *Matilda, Jr.* on April 8th, 9th and 10th. This was the first middle school production in more than two years and involved 61 students between the cast and stage crew – more than 10% of the middle school population! They had a large crowd for all three performances and did a terrific job. A big thanks goes to Director Adam Blais, Technical Director Jim Alexander, and Production Manager Kristen Thomas for their dedication and hard work!

Following up on a previous piece of good news about the Middle School Math Team, four middle school students participated in the State MathCounts meet. Eighth grader Ryan Schultz placed third in the State, earning an all-expenses paid trip to Washington, DC, to participate in the National MathCounts Contest on May 8th and 9th. Eighth grader Finn Dedek also earned a “top ten” finish, coming in eighth in the State!

MT. ARARAT HIGH SCHOOL

Thirty-six Mt. Ararat High School students spent a whirlwind 65 hours on a tour of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, between April 7th and April 9th touring the historic battleground and learning about the devastating battle that occurred there. While on the trip, the students stopped at a restaurant where the owner was desperately short on labor. Four Mt. Ararat High School students volunteered as on-the-spot laborers, taking orders from various tables to help the overwhelmed restaurant. Also, on Friday, April

8th, Mt. Ararat High School seniors presented their Capstone projects to the Mt. Ararat High School and community. For the first time since the new Mt. Ararat High School opened, community volunteers were welcomed into the building to see student accomplishments, in this case for their Capstone projects. Congratulations, seniors! Two nights earlier on Wednesday, April 6th, the Mt. Ararat High School band played a concert alongside the University of Maine Symphonic Band. They performed a beautiful rendition of ***Seal Lullaby***. Playing slow, lyrical music is often harder than the fast “fun” pieces; and they really knocked it out of the park. Finally, the spring athletic season is in full swing. Good luck; and go, Eagles!