

Catamount Newsletter

January, 2012



Dear parents,
Greetings and Happy New Year! We are set to continue our powerful teaching and learning at the St. Johnsbury School.

During our in service day last Monday, the middle school team engaged in exciting work around the future for our middle school. One of the key topics that emerged was increasing student leadership and student voice, and our plans include developing a strong government, incorporating service learning into the advisory program, investigating peer mediation as a way to teach problem solving and conflict resolution skills, and attending some summer professional development on how to create and sustain responsive classrooms for young adolescents. We are committed to setting rigorous academic expectations for middle school students and plan to design a goal setting procedure that will increase student ownership in their learning process. Strong communication with parents is currently and will continue to be very important to us so we will be spending time brainstorming how to effectively maintain home-school connections. We selected transition from sixth grade to seventh grade as another focus area, and middle school teachers will be meeting with sixth grade teachers to coordinate a transition plan for this spring, including an open house sometime in May for sixth grade students and parents as well as a "step-up-day" for sixth graders in June. Our last focus area is enrichment, and we are committed to increasing enrichment and career awareness opportunities for middle school students.

Teachers in grades three-six were involved in another exciting project during last Monday's in service. We are starting a new reading program in February, the National Geographic Reading and Writing Workshop and teachers spent time on Monday studying this program. It is a set of rigorous, engaging informational texts designed around six key skills: visualizing, making connections, determining central ideas or themes and summarizing supporting details, questioning, inferring, and synthesizing new textual information with prior knowledge to form interpretations.

Teachers in Kindergarten-grade two are taking a course together in Early Literacy Instruction, and they spent time during in service developing a common approach to using read-alouds as a strong teaching tool. Math teachers in grades one-six engaged in professional development together on analyzing student data in math, generating ways to support struggling students, and planning effective lessons. Unified Arts teachers spent their time investigating how to use technology to enhance instruction.

We are committed to ongoing learning as professionals so that we may continually improve students' learning. A teacher recently said, "There is a great spirit at our school." Indeed there is!

My warmest wishes for a healthy and fulfilling 2012!

In the Catamount Spirit,

Dr. Martha Dubuque, Principal for Instruction

CATAMOUNT HAPPENINGS

January 16th - No School - Teacher In Service

January 17th - 3rd Quarter Starts

January 17th - High School

Informative Sessions for 7/8 grade -
6:30 Auditorium

January 18th - Farm to School Taste
Test - Grade 4

January 19th - Parent Math Workshop
and Art Show - 6-7:30 (Snow date
1/26)

January 20th - PTO Collections
Program ends for Labels and Education
& Box Tops

January 20th - PTO Movie Night-5-
8:00

January 23rd - School Board Meeting-
6:00

January 25th - School wide assembly-
9:30 -Grade 5 Showcasing

January 26th - Coffee House Music
band/chorus 7:00

Please visit our website at
www.stjsd.org

Dear Friends and Family of the St. Johnsbury School:

Happy New Year! I hope you had an enjoyable and relaxing winter break. I am looking forward to continued success with the students in 2012.

This month we have a couple of events taking place at the school that I would like to draw your attention to. The first event is the music program Coffee Shop. The Coffee Shop is scheduled for January 26th beginning at 7:00 PM in the cafeteria. There will be more seating space available.

The second event scheduled is a parent math workshop. The workshop will be held on January 19th from 6:00-7:30 PM. Please read the announcement in this newsletter for more important information.

It is important that students are dressed appropriately for the weather so they are comfortable for outdoor recess by wearing coats, gloves/mittens, and hats. It is our goal to have outdoor recess as much as possible in order to allow students to be engaged in physical activity with peers.

Sincerely,

Bernice Burroughs, Principal General Operations



Parent/Principal Brown Bag Luncheon

The next Parent/Principal Brown Bag Luncheon will be held on February 13, 2012 from 12:00-12:30 in Conference Room B. Please come and share your thoughts, concerns and questions.

Register now for a math workshop for parents!

Have you ever wondered....

"How can I help my child learn math? Everything is done so differently from when I was in school..."

"What can I do to help my child who struggles - or excels - in math?"

If so, please join St. Johnsbury School's Math Director, Regina Quinn for an evening workshop, 6:00 - 7:30 PM on January 19 in the Upper Library.

Arithmetic: Building Skills and Understanding.

Explore strategies for helping children develop a rich understanding of numbers along with strong skills in arithmetic. Connect the procedures you learned when you were a student with other approaches you may see your child using. Learn strategies for helping your child with practice and homework.

**snow date: January 26: you will receive a call by 5PM if postponed*

Workshop and light refreshments are free, but **pre-registration is required.**

To register call or email Regina Quinn before January 18: rquinn@stjbsd.org 748-8912, #2313



Student Art

There will be some upcoming student art displays throughout our St. Johnsbury Community this winter and spring! Keep your eyes and ears open for future news about student shows and dates happening at the Welcome Center, the Athenaeum, and NVRH!



PLUGGED-IN Technology, the Internet, and Child Safety

A Training Program of



Prevent Child Abuse Vermont
(802) 229-5724

The Plugged-In training helps adults better understand the risks and benefits of having technologically-savvy children and adolescents. Trainers will review issues such as screen time, cyber-bullying, exposure to internet pornography, online gaming, "sexting", cell phone usage, and warning signs displayed by children in trouble are covered. This workshop is intended for parents, professionals working with children, and concerned community members.

Workshop participants will learn how to:

- Explore issues regarding use of technology by young children and in early childhood education settings
- Identify the benefits and risks of children's use of the internet, computers, cell phones and other handheld devices
- Review signs that a child or adolescent may be in trouble online and practice responding in ways that promote healthy communication
- Create agreements with children about computer and internet usage
- Report suspicious activity

**Plugged-In will be presented at
The St. Johnsbury School
Wednesday, February 1st from 6:30 - 8:00
There will be door prizes, snacks and childcare available.
See you there!
Please register with the nurse's office ext. 1172**