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# ❖ Knightly News ❖

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January 2011

Hollis Brookline Middle School

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## *From the Administration*

Certainly we would be hard pressed to find one word that would accurately describe this winter thus far! Our experiences and personal stories will inevitably be told again and again. Those of us who love snow are elated!

Grade 8 students have been introduced to the details of creating their **ICT (Information Communication Technology) portfolios**. Each student will select a word document, spread sheet, presentation and web page and one choice from their cumulative work during 7th and 8th grade thus far. A reflection must accompany each sample describing the project that was selected, three reasons supporting the choice and a summary statement. Portfolios will be evaluated in March. Students who do not receive a proficient rating will have another month to make improvements. Proficient status will allow a student to elect any computer class at the HS. We encourage parents to check PowerSchool for your child's progress.

As you are aware, our primary building goal continues to be **literacy**; writing, reading, speaking, listening, thinking and viewing across all content areas. Writing has been the primary focus. Please note the math literacy article in this newsletter

**Second quarter** has been extended due to our recent snow days. Grades **will close January 28th** and report cards will be sent home Monday, February 7th. Please make note and watch for your child's second quarter grades. Please sign and return only the envelope.

A sample of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at HBMS have been selected to take the **NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress)** on February 18<sup>th</sup>. Should your child be chosen you will receive an Alert Now message with more details.

Parents of 8th grade students have received a letter describing the **final Washington, DC payment and behavior agreement plan**. Please return the signed contract with final payment attached. Also, two dates were enclosed for the mandatory student - parent meeting. Please note the change of one date for the parent meeting: cancel **March 14** add **March 10**. **The two optional evenings are March 10 and 15, 6:30 pm HBMS gymnasium.**

Our **Winter Recognition Assembly** will be held **February 23<sup>rd</sup> (snow date the 24<sup>th</sup>)**. Please mark your calendars and hold the date!

Sincerely,

Patricia Lewis Goyette, Principal  
Stephen R. Secor, Assistant Principal

### **SAU 41 Parent Partnership Community Workshop**

The SAU 41 Parent Partnership, consisting of Hollis and Brookline parents in conjunction with Jeanne Saunders, SAU 41 Special Education Director, is hosting a **FREE** community workshop titled **Disability Awareness** on February 3, 2011 from 6:00-8:30 at the Lawrence Barn in Hollis. Students from Hollis and Brookline will be presenting an interactive workshop designed for the community to experience what it is like to have a disability. Students, parents, staff members, and community members are encouraged to attend. Please email Jeanne Saunders at [jeanne.saunders@sau41.org](mailto:jeanne.saunders@sau41.org) by January 30, 2011 if you will be in attendance.

## LITERACY NEWS FROM . . . THE MATH DEPARTMENT

The math department is trying for a balanced approach to literacy instruction in order for all students to develop the proficiency, confidence, and fluency in the areas of reading, writing, and thinking needed to meet the math literacy demands of the 21st century.

Mathematics is a language: math students must learn to read and understand math problems. Mathematics literacy is a gateway to future vocational, post secondary and professional opportunities.

In 7<sup>th</sup> grade, we integrate literacy into all areas of our mathematical studies. We teach vocabulary using non-traditional strategies. We use active note taking to improve student comprehension. We bring students to a higher level of thought by incorporating discussions into the daily repertoire. We stress the importance of speaking mathematically and being literate in aspects of their learning.

We have recently asked students to use their literacy skills by writing professional business letters. The mathematical goal of this lesson was to redesign a food container (such as a cereal box) to minimize surface area while maintaining the current volume. Students used their mathematical reasoning and communication skills to express their environmental concerns with the current packaging design and offer a design, which would prove to be environmentally sound. We will continue to enforce literacy in the written form as students write poetry, explain mathematical properties and utilize the Fibonacci sequence.

Students will continue to enhance their note taking skills. The focus not purely being based on notes from the overheard but also learning to take notes from a text; learning to read beyond the words and vocabulary. Students will continue to see a stress on mathematical terminology throughout their 7<sup>th</sup> grade year. This includes such activities as explaining what they see and understand in mathematical diagrams, writing descriptive emails to their teachers and summarizing what they have seen, heard, learned, made connections to and struggle with; all using proper mathematical terminology and vocabulary.

In Team Hypatia math classes, we continue to incorporate reading and writing of math concepts, ideas and discussion of mathematical quotes into the BCW (before class work) to practice literacy components. Students are learning that reading and writing in mathematics is an important communication tool. All math classes have also been writing paragraphs comparing, contrasting and describing various math concepts in conjunction with learning the traditional algorithms.

Students are being taught how to encode /decode words to math symbols and math symbols back to words. The recent math ICT project “Spreading the Text” was designed to help students connect mathematical concepts to concrete experiences. Students are in the process of being taught to understand how their math book can be a great resource in helping them master math content. Ask them about why certain colors are chosen by textbook distributors.

On Team Prescott, literacy has been woven into the curriculum as well. As they continue to write mathematically, students are learning how to justify their work in the written language, as well as presenting it to their peers. In order to make connections to the real world, the Algebra students have just finished a cell phone project where they investigated a cell phone carrier and did some comparative analysis based on a customer’s criteria. They later combined their analysis with a team to become a consulting firm exploring various carriers and which plan they would recommend and why. As they continue to explore linear relationships, they are getting ready for the “Case of the Missing Student” where they will begin to use deductive reasoning. As for the Pre-Algebra students, they just finished working on a project where they either had to plan a dream vacation or buy their first car. In either case, they had to look at costs and what they could afford, searching for the best deals to maximize their money. After analyzing and comparing their options, the students were able to make a decision. Some of them were quite surprised as to how much things cost!

Sierpinski . . . I know it sounds like an advanced helicopter, but really, it’s a triangle . . . a triangle with some very interesting attributes. In Geometry we have investigated Sierpinski’s triangle and along the way run into some interesting words like fractal, iterate and self-similarity. With GSP (Geometer’s Sketchpad), we created stage one of a Sierpinski triangle and then by using the iteration feature of the software, continued the pattern until there were not enough pixels on the screen to depict the ever diminishing triangle sizes of Sierpinski. Using their own interactive models of the Sierpinski triangle, students then explored the relationships and patterns of the number, area and perimeter of the triangles of Sierpinski. In conclusion, students were asked not only to describe these relationships in mathematical terms, but also to explain in words how the mathematical expressions represented these relationships. In other words, they wrote in math class! Eloquent or not, right or wrong, it’s always good to know what the students are thinking.

## PTSA Update....January

Despite all of the snow, cancellations and delays, the PTSA remains active.

Michelle Jimeno did a wonderful job running this year's Reflections program. The winning entries from each category are now in Derry where the state level judging occurs. Thank you to all the parents who encouraged their children to participate. We are pleased that we doubled the number of participants this year.

Our staff appreciation committee put together boxes of holiday treats for each staff member. Thank you to Rachana Suchdev and her committee for your time, and thank you to all the parents who baked and donated the goodies.

A few volunteer opportunities: Spirit Wear is looking for someone, or a small group to run this fundraiser. The students love the clothing so we would really like to continue this next year. If you can help out, please contact Ruth or Lisa (addresses below). Speaking of next year, the nominating committee is looking for people to help on various committees, as well as officers for next year. All of the current officers and committee chair people are more than happy to talk with you about their responsibilities as well as have you "shadow" them for the remainder of the year. Please contact us if you are interested.

Scrip orders will be due Thursday, Feb 10. Remember, 1% of your total order goes into an account for your child's DC trip. 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents can use savings from the rest of the year for their child's Canobie Lake trip at the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Please join us at our next PTSA meeting on Friday, February 18<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 in the library.

Lisa Schmaltz ([lschmalz@charter.net](mailto:lschmalz@charter.net)) and Ruth Kabel ([arkabel@juno.com](mailto:arkabel@juno.com))

## Calendar Of Events

*Each month we will share dates that span the upcoming two months. The dates may help with reminding students or, in fact, support your schedules. We hope this will help with your planning.*

*Feb. 7—Report Cards Issued*

*Feb. 10—Early Release*

*Feb. 23—Winter Recognition Assembly, 7:35 AM*

*Feb. 28-March 4—Mid-Winter Vacation*

*March 8—Early Release*

*March 10—Washington DC Parent Night, 6:30 PM*

*March 15—Washington DC Parent Night, 6:30 PM*

*March 22-25—8th Grade Washington, DC Trip*

*April 13—No School—Teacher Workshop*

*April 25-29—Spring Vacation*



**Teen Pizza and Support  
Wednesdays  
February 2, March 2,  
April 6 and May 4  
3:30 - 5:00 pm**

For Teens whose parents, family members or loved ones have cancer. Come meet others, share stories and enjoy pizza and drinks together.

Facilitators: Roxanna Shinall, BA, MSW Intern and Gavin O'Brien, BA, MSW Intern

Please call 603-230-6031 to Register. Group will be held at Concord Hospital's Payson Center for Cancer Care 1st Floor Conference Room

The same group will also be held at Elliot Hospital on 2/23, 3/30, & 4/27. Please call 663-2398 for more details.