

The TOAST Times

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December 2008/January 2009

Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology

<http://toast.albany.k12.ny.us/index.html>

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Theme Team: Mrs. Ciufo, Mrs. Florance, Mr. Flynn, Mrs. Reynolds-Hoffman, Ms. Whipple

From the Desk of Mr. Fowler

It's hard to believe the Holiday Season is already here. I encourage everyone to enjoy this special time of year and be safe. In reference to the holidays, I would like to commend Amanda Eichenhofer in Mrs. Ellis' class for her PJs for Presents idea. A special thanks goes out to everyone who contributed and participated; it was a huge success! Your consideration for others in need will certainly be a welcomed surprise for the special recipients.

There are a number of special events and after-school activities coming up so please pay close attention to the calendar of events. The New York State Assessments for students in grades 3-6 is around the corner and we will begin the English Language Arts exams in January, followed by Mathematics in March.

Below you'll find a few tips to help with overall performance for the State Assessments. Please note that these suggestions are also helpful with maximizing your child's daily performance at school as well. As they say, practice makes perfect.

1. Make sure that your children get a good night's rest so that they can be well rested and alert on the day of the test.
2. Feed your children a good source of protein for breakfast on the day of the test. For example, they might have a hard-boiled egg, almond butter on toast, or a bowl of granola with nuts.
3. Children should eat regular meals on the day of the test, since the brain requires glucose to function effectively. Make sure they eat lunch or have a snack if the test is in the afternoon.
4. Lastly, good student attendance is very important. Please avoid scheduling appointments or time away from school during the testing times.

Mr. Fowler

What is the TOAST Theme Team?

The Theme Team is the core group of special area teachers that support the integration of the TOAST magnet theme throughout the school community.

What are the special magnet areas?

The special curriculum areas of TOAST include: additional specialized instruction in computer and science where the students are taught by certified teachers in our Computer and Science Labs. We also provide enriched instruction in the areas of Museum, Music, Art and Spanish. Lastly, we have an award-winning Library Media Center, which acts as a resource for students and faculty.

How do they work as a team?

The Theme Team works collaboratively on special projects and they brainstorm ways to support the teachers and students with integrating our theme into the classrooms.

Upcoming TOAST Events:

December, 2008

- **Wednesday, December 3rd:** TOAST Family Jazz & Music Night; 6-7:30 in the Auditorium
- **Tuesday, December 9th:** TOAST PTA Meeting; 6:30 pm in the Cafeteria
- **Thursday, December 11th:** Classroom concert dress rehearsal--all classes in auditorium to watch performances; 9:00 am in the Auditorium
- **Friday, December 12th:** College Friday: Wear any college t-shirt or sweatshirt
- **Friday, December 12th:** Winter concert-- Performances in Auditorium for parents; 9:00 am
- **Wednesday, December 17th:** TOAST T-shirt day: wear your favorite TOAST t-shirt
- **Wednesday, December 17th:** Winter concert--Chorus, Band & Strings Performance: 7:00 pm in the Auditorium
- **Monday, December 22nd-Friday, January 2nd:** NO SCHOOL; Holiday Recess (classes resume on Monday, January 5th)



January, 2009

- **Thursday, January 1st & Friday, January 2nd:** NO SCHOOL; New Year's Day, Holiday Recess
- **Tuesday, January 13th:** TOAST PTA Meeting; 6:30 pm in the Cafeteria
- **Thursday, January 15th:** TOAST Unity Day; wear black and white today
- **Monday, January 19th:** NO SCHOOL; Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- **Saturday, January 24th:** Magnet Community Day. Come celebrate and learn about our Magnet Schools in Albany. 10:00 am-1:00 pm, event held at ASH on Whitehall Road
- **Tuesday, January 27th:** TOAST T-shirt day: wear your favorite TOAST t-shirt
- **Wednesday, January 28th:** Magnet Open House; 9:30 am-1:30 pm and 6:00-7:30 pm



From The Desk of the Home School Coordinator

I can't believe we are so quickly approaching this Holiday Season and of course, WINTER! With cold weather just around the corner, please make sure students are dressing appropriately. Hats, scarves, gloves.....BUNDLE UP! We have also started going outside at recess so we would like students to be dressed accordingly.

We have had a great start of the year and we have a lot of exciting events coming up! Some quick reminders...the Breakfast Program does not start until 7:40 am and that is when the TOAST building is open to receive students. Also, there are no student pick-ups between 2:15-2:30 so please be here before 2:15 pm if you need to pick up a student early, otherwise they will be dismissed outside the Western Avenue door at 2:30. Thank you for your cooperation and support!

Ms. Cascone

Fifth Grade Happenings

The 5th grade has been very busy! We just took our New York State Social Studies test and it'll be okay with us if we don't see another DBQ for a while! Now we're on to settlement and colonization in Social Studies. In Math, we've been learning fractions and division. We've been learning about plants and cells through hands-on experiments in Science. Another exciting thing we've been doing has been talking about college and what we want our majors to be. There are so many to choose from! Did you know that we will graduate from college in 2020?

Happy Holidays from the 5th grade team!

~Mrs. Chaiyng, Ms. Tanenhaus and Ms. Franke

Fourth Grade News

The First Annual Fourth Grade Fall Festival was enjoyed by all of the students. Each class celebrated by eating products from New York State such as apples, apple cider and cheese! Mrs. Ciuffo our museum coordinator set up a presentation with Dr. Tom who is a chiropractor who has had several interesting careers throughout his life. Dr. Tom brought in artifacts that were over a thousand years old that he collected when he was an archaeologist. He also discussed posture with the students and showed them what could happen to your spine from not sitting correctly!

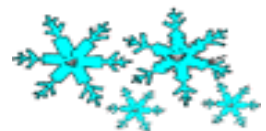
For November, classes have been studying Native American culture in New York State. As the holiday season quickly approaches, the Fourth Grade teachers would like to remind everyone that Agenda Books need to be signed every night. Also, multiplication flashcards for quick recall need to be practiced nightly. Have a happy and safe holiday season & thank you for your continued support!

The Fourth Grade Teachers

Mrs. Corazzini's Third Grade Class-

We have been very busy and working hard as we approach the holiday season! To support our science units on rocks/minerals and landforms, we took a wonderful field trip to Howe Caverns. The kids loved learning about the history behind the cave and its amazing features. We even had a lesson built around communities we passed along the bus ride! In writing, the students have been gathering ideas and starting informational books. They have been exposing their classmates to information in which they are becoming experts; please look for our finished pieces in the upcoming weeks! Students have also been working on multiplication and problem solving in math. In November, we enjoyed a Thanksgiving celebration where friends and family were invited to join us as we gave thanks for all the wonderful blessings we have. Keep warm as the cold weather approaches and have a great holiday season!

Mrs. Corazzini



News from the Second Grade

Over the past few weeks the second grade classes have been busy. At our Harvest Festival we learned about bats and the human body. Thank you to all the parents who sent in snacks and came in to help us with the activities. We are looking forward to starting our first Service Learning project. Through these activities, students learn about helping others in our community. The first project will be to make tray toppers for patients at St. Peter's Hospital.

Ms. Lo, Ms. Nies & Mrs. Scandurra

NOTES FROM THE HEALTH OFFICE

WE ARE COLLECTING PLASTIC CONTAINERS (6-10" HIGH AND 8"WIDE) TO USE AS "TUMMY TROUBLE TUBS" IN EACH CLASSROOM. IF YOU HAVE ANY CONTAINERS THAT WE COULD USE PLEASE SEND THEM TO THE HEALTH OFFICE

IT IS NOT TOO LATE FOR STUDENTS/PARENTS/GUARDIANS TO HAVE THEIR FLU SHOT. IT IS RECOMMENDED FOR THOSE STUDENTS WHO HAVE ASTHMA. CALL YOUR PEDIATRICIAN FOR DETAILS. IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE OBTAINING A PEDIATRICIAN OR INSURANCE FOR YOUR CHILD, PLEASE CALL THE HEALTH OFFICE AT 462-5248.

Mrs. Greenwood

THE HEALTH AND WELLNESS

COMMITTEE arranged for the 4th grades to have a hands on activity conducted by the Honest Weight Food Co-Op. "Snack Attack" showed the students how to make healthy snacks. The students sampled fruit smoothies and homemade soda. They also make their own trail mix and fruit/veggie kabobs; they truly enjoyed themselves!

Our fruit of the month for November is pumpkin. Yes, the pumpkin is a fruit!! The students will sample homemade pumpkin seeds in their classroom. Please encourage your children to pick healthy snacks!

On March 13th, 2009 in conjunction with the Family Reading and Writing Night, we are going to have a health fair at TOAST! If anyone would like to help or if you know of any person or organization that would be willing to participate, please contact the Health Office.

2008-2009

TOAST Techs Basketball Team

Thank you to everyone who tried out this year; it was a great turnout! Congratulations to the following students who will be on this year's team: Inshallah Brown, Jake Flynn, Jordan Hoffler, Emmanuel Matias, AnQuan McLean, Thomas Merrill, Elijah Mitchell, Jeremy Nixon, Carlos Penandara, Ranaveya Richards, Elsinaja Sturdivant, Malik Wiley and Zaymear Young. Practices will be held on Tuesday's and Thursday's. Games will begin in January and will be held at the VI.

Library Lowdown

November began as a busy month in the Library Media Center. TOAST students predicted that Barack Obama would be our new President even before Election Day. Fifth-graders prepared online for their Social Studies tests and the first, much-anticipated, RIF Distribution was enjoyed by all. We've read about the significance of Thanksgiving in books such as Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree*, and, historically, in *Giving Thanks: The 1621 Harvest Feast* (Kate Waters) and *The First Thanksgiving* (Jean Craighead George). In December, fourth-graders are looking forward to a visit by retired Albany District educators and newly-published authors of *Friday: A Dog's Tale*, Eleanor Bartlett and Kathy Pautler. Stay warm and keep reading!

Mrs. Florence

Websites For You To Check Out

World Almanac For Kids:

<http://www.WAforkids.com>

Computer Lab Kids:

http://computerlabkids.com/what_to_do.htm

I Know That: <http://www.iknowthat.com/com>

NIEHS Kids Page:

<http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/home.htm>

Hanukkah Activities:

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/hanukkah/teacher-resources/6627.html>

Christmas Activities:

<http://holidays.kaboose.com/christmas/>

Kwanzaa Activities:

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/kwanzaa/teacher-resources/6638.html>

Ms. Whipple

News From the Science Lab

Our November monthly bird watch was a success. Special thanks to Bob Reilly for his help and vast knowledge of birds! Due to the cold weather, the Lost Ladybug Project is over. Thanks to everyone who brought in a ladybug to be photographed. TOAST is now participating in PROJECT FEEDERWATCH! Students began watching our feeder and recording data. Information on both projects is sent to Cornell University for their research.

Family Science night was a great time for all. I think that Emily (our three-toed box turtle) was the big hit of the night. Thanks to Mrs. C. for opening up the Museum room for our TOAST families to explore (and for serving pizza for dinner!)

For lab, I picked up a few chunks of dry ice (frozen carbon dioxide or CO₂). We learned about the sublimation. Students were amazed as they watched the interesting process of a solid turning directly into a gas and watching it 'smoke' as it changed states.

Mr. Flynn

News from the Museum Room!!

November was very busy. We've been exploring all kinds of things from our weather observation window to building rock sculptures. In the museum's Career Series, we met chiropractor, "Dr. Tom" who shared his career experiences and had pizza with six lucky students. Eight more students were able to have lunch with Naval Aviator/Nuclear Engineer, Ron Volungus. Jendy Murphy, the children's librarian for the Albany Public Library will be coming to read to the Kindergarden-2nd Grades on December 8th. Also this month, the whole family is invited to a night of GREAT music with some of the area's awesome musicians. On December 3rd, it's Jazz N' Such Family Music Night. The concert is FREE and Pizza will be sold. Join us for a night of family fun!

Mrs. Ciufu-Inaleston

Music News

Parents, as December and the Holidays quickly approach, please remember that learning does not stop. The two weeks of vacation present a great opportunity for students to progress on their instruments as they have a lot of extra time. Coming back to school prepared is the expectation.

For those of you who give gifts over the Holidays, there are many musical gifts that are great for students. **Ms. Reynolds and Mr. Cady** will send home a list with some potential ideas such as instrument accessories, music, etc.

Dates to remember: Wed. December 17th - Winter Concert, 7:00 p.m.
Fri. February 6th - "School House Rock", 7:00 p.m.
Sat. February 7th - "School House Rock" 3:00 p.m.

Computer Lab Updates:

Students in the lab have been learning about various topics through different websites and applications. We have covered topics such as the human body, animals, the rainforest and weather as well as sharpening our math, reading and keyboarding skills.

Please remember to monitor what your children are doing at home on the computer and have it in a place that is visible. Be aware that the minimum age to have a MySpace page is 14. Remind your children to never IM anyone that they do not know and to never give out any personal information. Feel free to contact me for more information. **Ms. Whipple**

What is College Friday?

College Friday is an opportunity for us to spend 5-10 minutes discussing various aspects of college and/or college life. For example, in November, classes discussed what college is and projected what year they would be graduating. Other topics for upcoming months include career choices/majors and minors, dorms/roommates, financial aid, location of colleges, athletics, extracurricular activities, responsibility/independence and much more!

The second Friday of each month will be designated as College Friday. Faculty, staff and students are encouraged to wear a t-shirt or sweatshirt of a college of their choice.