

Cannon River STEM School News

Volume 2, Issue 8

April 2014



Measured In Many Ways

Schools are evaluated in many ways. As CRSS reaches the five year mark one of our successes has been a growing enrollment. The lottery on March 13th yielded full sections in kindergarten through sixth, and waiting lists. This is a strong example of the health of our school.

Another way that charter schools are evaluated is in the opportunities they provide for an education that looks different. Monthly service projects; regular buddy classroom activities; outdoor celebrations in fall, winter and spring; hosting a Chinese teacher, Reading Corps Tutor and Promise Fellow; a Robotics team; a judged Science Fair; field trips that regularly and purposefully supplement the curriculum are some examples of our success.

State mandated testing is a more publicized evaluation, yet it is only one measure. On the calendar the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) dates for our 3rd through 8th graders are listed. NWEA tests in May will be for 2nd grade. Kindergarten and 1st grade students will be doing individual assessments in their classroom. The teaching staff has provided lessons, experiences, feedback in conferences and report cards, worked as a team to build a deeper understanding of the standards and best practice in their teaching, and prepared students to be questioning learners. As families you have read the Weekly Peeks, participated in conferences, reviewed report cards, and gotten your child to school. The students have set goals, participated in class, received extra support, and been expected to be learners.

CRSS staff would ask your help as these testing days approach. Students should:

1. Get adequate sleep not just the night before but starting the week before.
2. Have a balanced breakfast
3. Dress in layers and comfortable clothes since the testing sessions last several hours.
4. Glasses and medications are only helpful if students have them.
5. Encourage your child to "do their best" and give specific examples:
 - a. In math it means solving each problem on the paper provided not just mentally.
 - b. In reading it means taking notes on the sides of the articles.
 - c. When choosing the correct answer it means going back into the text, guessing is rarely okay on the MCAs.
 - d. Ask for help, even if the adult can only reassure you, it will make a difference
 - e. Identify ways that help to stay focused – close your eyes for 30 seconds, take a deep breath, flex your muscles
 - f. Slow down or set a steady pace depending on the child.

Remember that MCAs are just one measure of each child's academic success. We encourage you to visit with us often about your child academically, socially, emotionally and intellectually.

Finance Award

Cannon River STEM School was awarded the MDE school Finance Award for the fourth year in a row. It is a good reflection on our school and on Minnesota's charter public school movement. 85% of charter schools and 69% of traditional school districts received this award this year.

Earth Week



During the week of Earth Day (April 22nd), classrooms will be investigating different ways we can become more educated about our use of resources and discussing ways we can be more sustainable with our use of those resources. Some of the Earth Week activities will include measuring, recording, and graphing the amount of energy used in each classroom. By analyzing the data, we will develop techniques for reducing this energy use. We will also be calculating our ecological footprint, learning about the trash we create and where it goes, and discussing ways that we can reduce our impact on the Earth at school and at home.

Ken Lonquist—Music Residency

Cannon River STEM School is excited to host Ken Lonquist, environmental educator, songwriter and musical theater writer/performer. He made up his first song at age seven, took up the guitar at twelve, and has been performing professionally since his college days. Ken will be working with our students to write and perform songs about our place: the natural world, our campus, Faribault and more. This opportunity allows us to share our knowledge and love of our environment through storytelling and song. Ken will be working with our students in person from April 7-11th, and will participate in Skype introductory conversations next week in preparation for being on-site. Students will perform for each other on Friday, April 11th, and will perform their songs to the larger community at the school music concerts scheduled for early May. We are thrilled to have the opportunity for this added dimension to our project-based and place-based learning!

Book Fair

Volunteer Opportunity: If just 24 parents or grandparents signed up to help out at the book fair for just one or two hours we would be able to have the fair open for preview, Grand Friend day, and after the spring concerts. Volunteering involves greeting shoppers, straightening the merchandise, and using the cash register provided by Scholastic – which almost runs itself! Training will be provided and this volunteer opportunity helps promote reading and allows us to purchase books and equipment for the school. Call Ms. Ashley today to sign up for a volunteer time.



Sustainability



There is an exciting new initiative that matches the focus of our school. The National Action Plan for Educating for Sustainability was recently released and outlines a goal for all 50 states to adopt a comprehensive green schools policy. This idea of Education for Sustainability (EFS) weaves together the best intentions of environmental education, place-based learning and community-based education. According to the plan, research shows that this type of hands-on environmental education has a measurably positive impact on student achievement not only in science but also in reading, math and social studies. Some of the current hands-on environmental projects at CRSS include our 8th graders collecting spent markers to be sent to Crayola where they will be transformed into clean burning fuel. If you have spent markers at home please send them to us so they can be recycled. Our Kindergarteners are collecting clean, rubber soled tennis shoes or sneaker like shoes to be donated to the Green Sneakers program. Our staff is also looking through the sustainability lens by reviewing our processes and procedures. We used our first online form to collect re-enrollment data this year and are hoping to convert many of our other forms to an electronic format. If you would like more information about this initiative please visit the Center for Green Schools website at <http://www.centerforgreenschools.org/nationalactionplan>.

April 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Strengthening Families Program (SFP)	2	3	4	5
6	7 Ken Lonquist Music Residency	8 SFP	9 Early Dismissal @ 12:50	10	11	12
13	14 TOLBY visit	15 TOLBY visit SFP	16 MCA Reading 3-8	17 MCA Reading 3-8	18 NO SCHOOL	19
20	21 MCA Math 3-1 Earth Week Celebrations	22 MCA Math 4-1/3-1 SFP	23 MCA Math 3-2/4-1 Yearbook Orders due	24 MCA Math 4-2/3-2	25 MCA Math 6th/4-2	26
27	28	29 MCA Math 5th SFP	30 MCA Math 8th			

Green Sneakers Drive

Last year CRSS and some generous community members donated 464 pounds of sneakers to the Green Sneakers Drive. Our kindergarten classes will once again take on this project and are asking for clean, rubber soled tennis shoes or sneaker like shoes to be donated. Green Sneakers strives to recycle shoes and provide appropriate footwear for people in need around the world. Watch for more information on this project in the Weekly Peeks and through CRSS Info emails. We will be collecting shoes during the week of April 21-25 as we celebrate Earth Day.

May 2014

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

				1 MCA Math 7th Book Fair Music Performance K-2nd 6:30	2 Book Fair Grand Friend Day	3
4	5 NWEA Math 2-1 Book Fair Music Performance	6 MCA Science 8th	7 NWEA Math 2-2 Early Dismissal @ 12:50pm	8 MCA Science 5th	9	10
11	12	13	14 NWEA Reading 2-2	15 NWEA Reading 2-1	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26 NO SCHOOL	27	28	29 Summer Li- brary Reading Program with Ms. Deni	30	31

Yearbook Orders

The yearbook is another great example of project based learning at CRSS. Our students have been working hard to collect pictures of a variety of activities and events in and out of the classroom to create a colorful depiction of students and staff throughout the campus. This yearbook is sure to be a great keepsake for students. The order form is on our website and will be coming home in backpacks soon. We hope you will consider purchasing a yearbook.