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# Backpack Express

## Dates for October

October 6, 2011	Girls Soccer Game Home	4:30pm
	SDM Meeting	6:30pm
October 7, 2011	Superintendent's Conference Day	NO SCHOOL
October 10, 2011	Columbus Day Holiday	NO SCHOOL
October 11, 2011	Progress Reports Mailed Home	
	Cross Country Meet	4:15pm
	Schenectady	
	PTO Meeting	6:30pm
October 13, 2011	Girls Soccer Game Home	4:30pm
October 14, 2011	Builder's Club Meeting	3:20pm
October 18, 2011	School Pictures	
	Girls Soccer Game Home	4:30pm
October 20, 2011	Girls Soccer Game Home	4:30pm
	Board of Education Meeting	7:00pm
October 21, 2011	Cross Country Meet	4:15pm
	Grafton State Park	
October 22, 2011	Girls Soccer Game Home	4:30pm
October 26, 2011	Girls Soccer Game Away	4:30pm
	Albany	
	Cross Country Meet	4:15pm
	Saratoga	
October 28, 2011	Girls Soccer Game Away	4:30pm
	Amsterdam	
October 29, 2011	Cross Country Meet	9:00am
	Knickerbocker Park	

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## Principal's Message

With the beginning of October we again focus our attention on safety concerns at home and school. Of particular concern is our students' awareness of safety procedures. Thus far we have practiced both fire drills and bus drills. We very much appreciate your support in our effort to inform students of safety procedures in school and on the bus. Please take a moment to review these procedures with your child, beginning on page 9 in the student agenda. You will continue to hear from your child during the year about our Arts in Education programs. This year we will be having a few presentations to promote character development, including "The Hill Brothers" on October 27<sup>th</sup>. The focus of this assembly will be on Respect and Responsibility for students at all grade levels. We appreciate your continued support of our Character Education Program here at Gardner Dickinson School.

Fire prevention is the week of the 10<sup>th</sup>- 14<sup>th</sup>. Please take a moment to review your plan for the emergency evacuation of your own home with your child. It is so helpful for children to know that there is a plan in place.

Our Picture Day is Tuesday, October 18<sup>th</sup>

Parent Teacher Conferences are November 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>.

The Emergency Early Release day is November 10<sup>th</sup>.

Enjoy this Autumn season.

## Kindergarten News

Kindergarten is off to a great start! The children are learning to follow our classroom rules and get used to the daily routines. We would like to thank you for coming to Open House. If you missed us, please let us know if you would like to participate in our Mystery Reader Program or help organize fun parties throughout the year.

We are looking forward to Kindergarten Family Fun Night on October 14<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30pm. A great Big Thank You to Mrs. Cupp for organizing this wonderful event! Hope to see you there! Lastly, Don't forget picture day, Tuesday, October 18<sup>th</sup>!!

## First Grade News

First grade is off to a great start. We are having fun practicing independent centers and building stamina in our reading and writing. The EDU wand game is an exciting way to learn math! First graders love leading the morning meeting and using our fun Smart boards. First grade is looking forward to our upcoming Harvest Festival and learning all about comparing and measuring in science. Miss Adams and Miss Griffin are very proud of the first graders and all their hard work.

## Second Grade News

As usual 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade is off and running with many activities! In celebration of National Orthodontic Month we will be visiting Dr. Brendan Cooney's office.

Guided Reading and centers are one of the main focuses of our school day. The children are striving to become independent workers at their centers. We are very proud of the growth they have shown since the beginning of school. In Math this year we are introducing the students to the En-Visions math program, which is interactive between home and school.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> graders are excited about our Balancing and Weighing Kits, which we are experimenting with in Science. In Social Studies we have started to discuss our Wynantskill community.

Our team is looking forward to a very successful year! Thank you for your continued support. **Remember .....read, read, read with your child!**



## Third Grade News

Third Grade is off to a great start! We have just started our unit on addition. Students are reviewing how to add with regrouping and how to use estimation to help with their addition. We are also beginning multiplication with the 0's and 1's. In writing, we are working on our Author Study Unit on one of our favorite author's, Patricia Polacco. Students love her books, so please feel free to take some of her books out at your local library! In reading, students are working on making connections to their texts, themselves and their worlds. In Science, we have been having so much fun learning about Rocks and Minerals. Students are learning about all of the different properties of each rock and mineral and have been testing each mineral for luster and color. We would like to thank all of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade parents who have signed up to join PTO. The PTO appreciates all of your support!

We look forward to meeting with each of you during Parent/Teacher Conferences which will be coming up in November.

See you then!

## Fourth Grade News

Fourth grade is off to an AWESOME start! We have finished our author study on Chris Van Allsburg. (Ask a fourth grader who Fritz is!) After examining Van Allsburg's writing, we completed our first writing piece modeling some of his techniques! In science we have started our electricity unit. Some activities include making flashlights and question/answer boards! In math we have improved our mad minute class scores from a starting average of 12 per minute

## Fourth Grade News Continued

to 23!!!! Way to go fourth grade! As we figure out where we are in the world, many students have taken an interest in a challenging website where they locate the 50 states. Log on to our classroom *SS page*, click on *USA Map Games* and go to *Expert Cartographer* for a fun challenge! Good Luck!

## Fifth Grade News

5<sup>th</sup> Grade is off to a great start!

Most of our focus so far in math has been on place value. Students are seeing the importance of this now that we are adding and subtracting decimals. If you need to subtract 2, subtracting 2 hundredths just doesn't work. We've also seen a great improvement in our mixed facts results - many students doubling (from Sept to Oct) the number of mixed facts they can do in 4 minutes. Keep working on those facts!!!

In science, students have been using the land and water kit. In particular, we have focused on how the water cycle works, and have started using stream tables to observe the effects of erosion on land. Much of students' learning is a result of their before and after observations.

In ELA, we've just started a writing unit on essays. Students are being introduced to narrative, persuasive, descriptive and expository essays. Their end product will be in the form of an expository essay on a topic of their choosing. In reading, students have been working on effective partner reading, writing responses to their own books and our read aloud, The Mostly True Adventures of Homer P. Figg.

Our "New World Mapping Project" in SS, is a cumulative activity to reinforce the concepts related to rights and responsibilities, and geographical features. Students are enthusiastically tackling the tasks that lie before them!

## Art Room News

Hello from the art room!

We have been so busy here in the art room making wonderful creations that it's hard to believe October is upon us already! Kindergarten through fifth grade are presently finishing their "**Original Works**" pieces of art. For those of you unfamiliar with the program it is a wonderful fundraiser for the Gardner Dickinson's PTO. The children draw a picture on a piece of paper during art class that you can have made into a variety of items, such as, a

## Art Room News Continued

mug, a mouse pad, tote bags, and many more items. Order forms will be going home shortly and are due in the beginning of November. The products ship in time for the holidays!!!

Middle school has been working on some "larger than life" paper-mache projects. We have super-sized food items, hello kitty, and a giant box of skittles ready to go on display. I would like to remind all parents to have their child bring in an art smock if you haven't done so already (usually a large button down or old big t-shirt works best!) I look forward to an exciting year and will be taking photos of the children's artwork in the next few weeks to display on my web page, so check it out!!! Thanks for your continued support of our children's creativity!!!

## Media Center News

We are off to an exciting start in the Media Center this Fall. If you have not done so, please take a look at my classroom page which you can link to from the Gardner Dickinson home page. There you can access my grades K - 5 curriculum to see what your children are doing during their Library time. If you ever have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call or email me at any time!

I am delighted to announce the arrival of our new **e-book** collection. You and your children can access our 248 electronic titles any time from anywhere you have an internet connection. Just go to <http://gds.ind.opalsinfo.net> and type "ebk" into the search box at the top of the screen. For starters, we purchased core elementary and middle school collections, as well as nonfiction elementary math and middle school social studies bundles. You'll find a variety of materials ranging from cool picture books to popular titles such as *The Hunger Games* by Susan Collins. Some of these titles may be downloaded to portable devices, and instructions for that process will soon be posted on my classroom page. Until then, you can explore and read all of our titles online by clicking on the one(s) you want and then clicking on the "Weblink to more info" web address within the book's record. Again, call, email, or even stop in if you'd like more information or help accessing our titles.

Middle School will also soon have access to many more electronic titles through Questar School Library Services. I am currently in the process of registering our students and faculty for our exclusive access to Overdrive. Be watching my classroom page and future Backpack Express issues for updates!

And of course we still have lots of thrilling new print books for our eager readers, too! We added about 100 new print titles over the summer, and I'm expecting a new order to arrive any day now featuring the complete Geronimo Stilton collection as well as lots of other great titles such as several "Who was" biographies and more popular graphic novels. Be watching

## Media Center News Continued

for some of these items to come home with your children soon!

Happy reading! Ms. Fecura

## Physical Education News

Kindergarten Through third grade have definitely stepped it up this year. They have been working extremely hard on their skills, such as locomotor, creative tag games, relay races, hula hoops, and the classic parachute! The children have done a wonderful job remembering their sneakers!

Fourth grade and fifth have enjoyed creative tag activities, relays, and soccer. In soccer, they have learned the rules, safety, and several skills such as dribbling, shooting, and throw ins. During games they gave 110%

Sixth through eighth are also off to a good start. They have been working well together and have put forth a strong effort. They enjoyed a soccer unit whereas they learned several skills. It culminated with a three team soccer tourney each class. Lots of sweat in the GD gym! Recently, they were assessed in Physical Education regarding their fitness level. Flexibility, muscular endurance, strength, speed, and stamina we're measured. They plan on training hard all year long; and trying to beat these scores in June. They have been exciting to watch!

## Music Room News

We have been busy learning about music in all classes. Students have had the opportunity to participate in singing, movement activities and performing on classroom instruments. The highlights of our classes include: Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade have been learning about the movement of pitch and melodies by using pitch maps and manipulatives such as our finger puppets and scarves. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades are working on the concept of beat verses rhythm and are learning to recognize written musical notation. 4<sup>th</sup> grade has just completed songs about doing a kind act for someone and we will be singing about work songs from Ireland and the US. Grade 5 has had the opportunity to play the tubano drums as we were learning about syncopation and music from other cultures. Our 7<sup>th</sup> grade music class is finishing up the composer unit by presenting their composer interviews, a research project about a famous composer. Our band and chorus students are working on performance etiquette as we prepare for our winter concert. Congratulations to our All-County Band Students who will be participating in the RCSMA Fall Festival at Hoosic Valley on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. They are Jessi Dickinson (Flute), Rebecca LaBelle (Clarinet) and Owen Miller (Percussion). All-County Chorus members are Gracie Driscoll, Jaylee Green, Courtney Miller and Leah Thomas

## PTO News

PTO would like to thank all of you who have joined already and let you know that our membership drive will continue through November. Help your class "Roll the Dice" and win the class party!! If you haven't joined yet there is still time, just contact Tina Turbiasz at [tturbiasz@gmail.com](mailto:tturbiasz@gmail.com). PTO would also like to thank Tina for getting our membership drive off the ground this year!

**Yankee Candle has been extended to Wednesday October 19<sup>th</sup>, no later. This is the last weekend to get all those family orders. If you haven't received a catalog and order form please contact Mary Lou LeFevre at 286-1979. If you haven't placed your orders yet, you can still get them in!**

PTO would like to welcome all our new Kindergarten families this year. **Kindergarten Family Night** will be held on October 14<sup>th</sup> from 6pm-8pm, a fun filled night . It looks like they will have a great turnout this year. Thank you to Barbara Cupp, Kate Kaczala, and Jen Hallenbeck for getting everyone together this year!

**Picture Day** will be held on Tuesday October 18<sup>th</sup>. Thank you to Aggie Casale and all her volunteers who will be helping on Picture Day!!

**The Fall Book Fair** will be held from November 2<sup>nd</sup> thru the 8<sup>th</sup>. They will be open during Parent Teacher Conferences and Election Day. Thank you to Michelle French and Sue Czubek for making the book fairs so successful. They are still looking for helpers please contact Michelle at 283-1609 or email at [bsfrench17@aol.com](mailto:bsfrench17@aol.com).

**Family Movie Night** will be held on Monday November 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm. "Gnomeo and Juliet" will be playing that night, so bring your whole family and your favorite blankets and snuggle up for the evening. There is NO SCHOOL the next day!!! Thank you to Michelle Fanning for pulling this all together, and her volunteers that will be helping with concessions.

**PTO Night Out** will be held at Niche's on November 15<sup>th</sup> from 7pm-9pm. Come, enjoy, bring your friends and get some shopping done early! We will have lots of different vendors and much more available! Thank you Michelle Fanning for chairing this fun event!!

Coming in November.... Talent Show audition information will be going out, and Student Banking will be starting soon, more info to come!!! In December... Holiday Craft Night, Restaurant Night, Holiday Shop!

Please join us at our next PTO meeting on Tuesday November 29<sup>th</sup>. We value your ideas and your opinions, hope to see you there.

Thank you to all our great Parents and Teachers who give their time to help with all our events!! Please contact me at anytime for anything at [gardenbunny28@aol.com](mailto:gardenbunny28@aol.com) or you may call me at 283-6421.

Danielle Montagna, PTO President