



MacArthur Messenger

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Douglas MacArthur Elementary School

Holiday Edition

December 2011

Character Pillar for December is “Caring”

Principal’s Corner

During this season of thanksgiving, we are very grateful for our MacArthur “Stars” and their families. Teachers were delighted to have the opportunity to meet with parents or guardians to talk about their child’s progress this first quarter as report cards were given out. We can see from the success of our students how involved parents and families are in their education. Thank you for working with us to ensure each child is guaranteed success.

Studies have shown a huge difference in student’s achievement when their parents are focused on their education. Students whose parents often read with them during their first year of primary school showed markedly higher scores in reading comprehension and ability, the most important skills for succeeding in college and life.

Ask your child what they are reading about in school as you read stories together before bedtime – or when helping or reviewing homework.

From our MacArthur family to yours – we wish you the happiest of holidays.



- 12/1-12/2 Scholastic Book Fair
- 12/5 PTA Meeting – 7:00 p.m.
- 12/7 Picture Makeup Day
Math Night for Parents
(Grades 3, 4, 5) – 6:45 p.m.
- 12/12 Professional Work Day –
No school for students
- 12/22 American Girl Tea Party
3:00 p.m.
- 12/23-
12/30 WINTER BREAK
- JANUARY 2-6**
- 1/2 Return to school
PTA Meeting – 7:00 p.m.

Thanksgiving Family Feast

The Thanksgiving Family Feast, sponsored by the PTA on November 10, was a big success! The food was delicious and the decorations were beautiful. We served 699 Thanksgiving dinners to students and their families. Many thanks to all who worked so hard to make this day of celebration and thanksgiving happen: Ms. Frickleton and her cafeteria staff, and Jennifer Gelker, Cleo Greene and their team of volunteers. Our kindergarteners were adorably dressed as Pilgrims, reminding us all of that very first Thanksgiving.

Staff Happenings

We extend a warm MacArthur welcome to **Courtney Goldfinger**, our new Kindergarten teacher. She is working with Linda Jimenez (Ms. J) and is having a great time getting to know her new students.

Congratulations to **Andre Wade**, our Custodian, and his lovely bride, Candice who were married on November 12. The very happy couple is living in Alexandria.

We wish a speedy recovery to **Mary Flynt**, Guidance Counselor, who recently underwent shoulder surgery. Mary is doing well and looking forward to returning to the MacArthur family.

News for Parents

MacArthur "Stars" Emma Davis, Hunter Dickinson, Diego Segovia, Sydney Anderson, Noa Vizzaccaro, Campbell Weiss, Anthony Eaton and Leslie Lytle were chosen to lead the Pledge of Allegiance at a recent School Board meeting. They presented information about our students' involvement in various community service projects, including Treats for Troops, SCA Food Drive, Holiday Giving Tree, Pennies for Patients, and Stuffed Animal Drive for Earthquake Victims in Japan.

Congratulations and thank you to these students who were selected to represent Douglas MacArthur.

Does the school know how to reach you in case your child has an emergency? Please be sure that you have completed a Student Information/Emergency Data Card. A good suggestion is to periodically check to ensure we have up to date contact information for you. Just ask Bari or Lilian in the office, and they will be happy to help you update your information.

There is a change to the school calendar. Please be aware that Monday, December 12 is a Professional Work Day for teachers. Students will not attend school. Previously, the day was to be a half day for students. The Alexandria Recreation Department is offering child care options at designated schools by registering online at www.alexandriava.gov/recreation or visiting Lee Center. Space is limited and fee is \$10/day.

MacArthur Wins 2011 Energy Award

In recognition of superior energy performance, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has awarded the 2011 ENERGY STAR to Douglas MacArthur. In order to win this award, our building must use 35% less energy and generate 35% fewer greenhouse gas emissions than similar buildings across the nation.

Special thanks to Ms. Angie Moran, who runs the after school Environmental Club and is on the city-wide Environmental Steward Committee, for spearheading our school "green" initiative.

News from the Health Center

Infestation with head lice is extremely common in the United States—there are approximately 6-12 million cases each year among children 3-12 years of age. A head louse is a small insect, approximately 2 to 3 mm long, which survives by feeding on blood on the person's scalp. It lays eggs called nits which hatch in 7-10 days. The nits attach to the hair and may vary in color from silvery white to tan to dark brown. Itching of the scalp is the main symptom seen in a person with head lice.

There is no association between head lice and uncleanliness. They do not cause any diseases, but they can be a nuisance to eradicate. Head lice are spread by direct head to head contact, but most transmission occurs in home settings because of close contact. Another opportunity for head lice transmission is a sleepover with other children. Lice cannot jump, fly or crawl long distances. According to *The Journal of School Nursing*, it is unlikely that head lice are transmitted in school because close head to head contact is required.

If you suspect that your child has head lice, you should examine the scalp, especially at the base of the scalp on the back of the neck and behind the ears. You should separate the hair and look for the nits or the adult louse. Treatment for head lice includes over the counter products such as RID or NIX and combing with a special nit-removing comb and finger picking to remove nits. Most products recommend a second application. It is also important to wash personal items such as hats, clothing, and bed linens in hot water and dry clean items that cannot be washed. Stuffed animals should be placed in a plastic bag for 2 weeks.

If you have any questions, please contact the school nurse at 703-461-4192. Sources: *KidsHealth.org*; *Sciscione and Krause-Parello, "No-Nit Policies in Schools: Time for Change"*, *The Journal of School Nursing*, February 2007; *School*

Safety Information for Parents and Guardians

Do you know emergency procedures followed by MacArthur should there be a natural disaster? Would you know who to call at the school in the event of an emergency? Do you know the difference between “lockdown/lock-out” and “lockdown/lock-in”?

The Alexandria City Public Schools were awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to develop computer-based, site specific plans in coordination with the City of Alexandria emergency management team, including the police, fire, health and mental health agencies. This plan has been in place since the beginning of the school year. The grant also includes U.S. National Incident Management System (NIMS) emergency management training for staff members from each school.

MacArthur students practice regular drills organized by the administrators and emergency team so they know what to do and where to go in case of an emergency occurring as a result of severe weather, fire or other outside disaster. Recently, students practiced a bus evacuation drill in case of any emergencies occurring on the bus.

A “lockdown/lock-in” situation would occur should an intruder be in the building or during school searches (drugs, weapons, etc.) Movement would be prohibited within the school.

A “lockdown/lock-out” situation might occur when a threat to safety exists outside the building. All exterior doors should be secured and outside entry would be restricted until notified that all is clear.

The Alexandria City Public Schools have asked that parents/guardians and staff complete a short survey to evaluate perceptions of the current level of safety and security at their school. It is preferred that surveys be answered online at <http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22DNG3F5LH8>. There are also hard copies of the survey in the Lobby at MacArthur. Thank you in advance for completing the survey.

Should you have any questions about safety and security at MacArthur please feel free to ask any of us in the office.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a process for creating (or developing) safer and more effective schools. PBIS, as it is more commonly called, is a systems approach to enhancing the capacity of schools to educate all children by developing research-based, school-wide and classroom discipline systems. The process focuses on improving a school's ability to teach and support positive behavior for all students. Rather than a prescribed program, PBIS provides systems for schools to design, implement, and evaluate effective school-wide, classroom, non-classroom, and student specific discipline plans. PBIS includes school-wide procedures and processes intended for:

- **ALL** students, **ALL** staff and in **ALL** settings
- Non-classroom settings within the school environment (e.g., hallways, cafeteria, bathrooms)
- Individual classrooms and teachers
- Small group interventions for the approximated 5-15% of students that require a more specialized approach to social skills and behavior instruction
- Individual student supports for the estimated 1-5% of students who present the most challenging behaviors

Specific expectations are required for the Instructional Area, Cafeteria, Playground, Restrooms, Hallways and Buses. Please see the attached matrix showing descriptions for each area of the school.

VISION STATEMENT

Alexandria City Public Schools will set the international standard for educational excellence, where all students achieve their potential and actively contribute to our local and global communities.

MISSION STATEMENT

Alexandria City Public Schools will provide the environment, resources, and commitment to ensure that each and every student succeeds – academically, emotionally, physically and socially.

The Alexandria City School Board does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, status as a parent, or pregnancy in its programs and activities. Please direct all inquiries regarding ACPS non-discrimination policies to the Executive Director of Human Resources, 2000 N. Beauregard St., Alexandria, VA 22311, 703-824-6946