

January 23, 2015

Dear Fuller Families,

Happy New Year! The days are getting longer now, and before we know it, Spring will be here. Fuller staff is working very hard on a number of initiatives — we have our upcoming *Presentations of Learning* (more information will be mailed home soon), PARCC, winter MAP testing and the day to day planning and teaching.

STEAM

Save the date - June 10 Exhibition of Learning at Fuller Middle School (7:00-8:30)

Upcoming PTO Meetings

Jan 26 - Meet the FLT and learn about the Fuller SIP

Feb 23 — Parent Perspective on PARCC with Dr. Grace Wai

Fuller prepares students for ACCESS testing

At Fuller Middle School, the Bilingual Department staff, along with Ms. Seyller and Mr. Stevens, held an engaging ACCESS assembly with all students on January 7th, 2015, to get students excited about showing their growth in English language proficiency over the past year. All teachers in the department have worked hard this year to make the language of WIDA come alive in their classroom instruction, and to have their students set realistic goals for growth on ACCESS. After the assembly, teachers commented that students were asking more questions about the test in their classes, and that they were making connections to their learning. It was a successful team effort!

From Dr. Digisi, Department Head at Fuller

The ELA department at Fuller focuses on creativity, innovation, close reading, sophisticated writing, and improving students' speaking and listening skills. Hopefully you've noticed your students becoming better speakers and listeners at home! If not, I invite you to remind them of some of the sentence stems we use at school such as,
“ I agree with what you are saying and I'd like to add....”
“ I hear that you said, and I disagree because....”
“ I'd like to build on what you are saying....”

Students in our ELD classes are working very hard to learn these phrases through academic conversations, and we encourage all our students to use phrases like these to deepen their discussions.

In the upcoming months, students will begin studying works of literature that are set from 1930 to 1960 in the United States. Students in 6th grade will read a classic novel, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor. Students in 7th grade will read a memoir, *Warriors Don't Cry* by Melba Pattillo Beals. Students in 8th grade will read the well-known literary work, *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. Understanding the historical setting is essential to comprehending these books. Through working with the organization [Facing History and Ourselves](#), ELA teachers have been trained to teach the historical events of this time period in a sensitive and developmentally appropriate way. We look forward to engaging your students in thoughtful discussions about how individuals respond to complex social issues.

So far this year, our sixth grade students have been hard at work —reading, analyzing, and writing their own original folktales. I have been reading my copy of their folktales in the evening and finding these original stories to be funny, descriptive, and creative. Mrs. Doucet brought some of our students to read their folktales to the students at McCarthy, where they entertained them with their innovative writing in a traditional form. In addition, the sixth graders were reading and writing about erosion of the beaches for their STEAM projects. Students from both teams analyzed data on beach erosion, read position statements, and developed arguments for and against private citizens protecting their own beaches. These students demonstrated some strong debating skills, and they are learning the important of having evidence to back up their claims.

Our seventh grade students studied Greek mythology. They analyzed myths, studied how important the myths were to the ancient Greeks, and wrote their own myths to explain natural phenomena like volcanic eruptions and thunder. Our students studied so well that when Jeff Benoit from [Chariot of the Sun](#) came to perform, our students could answer all of his questions about Greek gods, goddesses, and demi-gods. He remarked, “I travel all over the country, and these students are an amazing audience. They are authentic, warm, and willing to participate. They really learned what their teachers have taught them.” Thank you for all your support at home, and for PTO fundraising that supports live performances like this for our students.



Jeff Benoit as the Greek god Phaethon

Seventh graders are now busy analyzing the issue of whether or not middle school students should play competitive sports. They are reading articles that offer perspectives from the medical community, health professionals, and parents about the risks and benefits of playing competitive sports at a young age. Expect to see some powerful claims, evidence, and reasoning in their written work.

Our eighth grade students analyzed short stories and are currently engaged in reading *Night*, Ellie Wiesel's memoir of the Holocaust. Mrs. Sullivan organized a visit by Rena Finder, a Holocaust survivor who was on Oskar Schindler's list. Rena charged our students with the responsibility of being an "upstander" to injustice. Eighth graders have taken this responsibility very seriously, helping one another as they analyze propaganda and poetry, and will soon be writing essays based on their analysis.

Our 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Curious Crimson students have been connecting their writing to authentic audiences by interviewing Ruth Evans, President of the Natick Garden Club, to get ideas for their Fuller Garden. They also interviewed Veterans at a special Veteran's Day gathering organized by Ms. Robbins. They have put their literacy skills to use, writing detailed thank-you letters that incorporate facts learned from their discussions and important details to make the letters appealing to the reader.



Curious Crimson students interviewed Natick Garden Club President, Ruth Evans.

As our ELA and ELD teachers work hard to support students' English language development and analytical skills, they never lose sight of the importance of students reading books for pleasure. Students who read books they choose become lifelong readers and learners, and that is our ultimate goal. Please ask your students about what they are reading and encourage them to read at home.

You can find some excellent book selections [here](#), or at the Framingham library, or just ask your child's teacher!



Middle School Display at the Framingham Public Library

Upcoming Fuller dates

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| Fri 1/23/15 | 7:00 “Once on This Island” Fuller Drama production (Fuller auditorium) |
| Sat 1/24/15 | 7:00 “Once on This Island” Fuller Drama production (Fuller auditorium) |
| Mon 1/26/15 | 5:30-7:00 School Council – Fuller Library
7:00-8:00 PTO in Fuller Library |
| Fri 1/30/15 | Professional Development Day – No school |
| Thu 2/5/15 | Early Release Day |
| 2/9-2/11/15 | Fuller STEAM <i>Presentations of Learning</i> during the day -- schedule will be mailed to families soon |
| 2/10 & 2/11 | Keefe Tech. interviews (8 th grade students) |
| 2/16-2/20 | Winter Recess – no school |
| Mon 2/23/15 | 5:30-7:00 School Council – Fuller Library
7:00-8:00 PTO in Fuller Library -- Dr. Grace Wai presents information about PARCC |

We hope to see you at Fuller for our drama production and at one of our *Presentations of Learning*!

Sincerely,

Sharon

