



FALCON UPDATE

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NEWS FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear families and students,

I am pleased to have the opportunity to share with you updates about the many wonderful events that have taken place in our school over the last month. As usual students and staff found themselves involved in many activities that provided our students the opportunity to continue to grow as learners.

As you know, in early February all middle school students in Framingham took the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP), an assessment which allows us to gauge whether or not the students are making the expected academic growth in math and in English language arts. I am very pleased to share with you that we have received the results and it shows that Fuller students exceeded the expected growth in both subjects across all three grades. This is a testament to the hard work of our students and teachers over the last 6 months. I encourage any parent who wishes to know their child's score on the MAP to call the school. The MAP has been found to be a good predictor of MCAS scores. Additionally, I am also pleased to share that our behavioral data shows a substantial reduction in the number of major incidents and a significant decrease in the number of students suspended. It is good to see the interventions that were put in place are yielding results.

As we continue to work to improve the quality of the work that we do with our families and students, the school site council has developed a survey that will be sent to all families to get your opinion on how we are doing as a school. I asked that you complete the survey and return it to us by the 24th of March. Your thoughts are important to us.

Finally, I want to inform you that 2nd trimester report cards will be sent home 24th of March. I thank you for continued support and look forward to seeing you on Saturday the 18th for the Chili/Feijoada cook-off and on the 24th for the Staff Variety Show.

Staff Variety Show
March 24th



VARIETY SHOW
2017

LIME TEAM

Math: In Mrs. Hakar's math classes we have been learning about our Rational Numbers unit, including integers, opposites, absolute value, magnitude, inequalities and real-world situations to encompass all of these concepts. Students have been working hard to explain their thinking and we hosted a day of Judge Hakar in which there was a team of defendants and a team of plaintiffs to both present and defend their math reasoning both verbally and in writing with evidence using diagrams. This module wraps up with the coordinate plane and a math battleship game was played to introduce ordered pairs and quadrants.

Science: In Mrs. Rogan's Science class students have learned about the fascinating process that continually creates new oceanic crust called sea-floor spreading. They used a model of the ocean floor that shows where lava erupts at the mid-ocean ridge, the matching pattern of magnetized rock on both sides of the ridge, and the deep-ocean trench where older, cooler, denser rock subducts back into the mantle.

Social Studies: Students in Mr. Zieky's class recently completed a mini-unit on the Galapagos Islands. Students studied the various animals and vegetation found exclusively on the Islands. Additionally, students learned about Charles Darwin and his theory of natural selection. In the coming weeks we'll be shifting our focus to the geography of Europe and students will participate in a model European Union. In Mrs. Bonner's Social Studies class, students have started a new unit studying the continent of Africa. Students have completed physical and political maps of Africa, and are starting to learn about its natural resources.

ELA: In Mrs. Bonner's English Language Arts class students have begun building background knowledge about the Great Depression to prepare for reading the novel, *Bud, Not Buddy*. Students analyzed photographs and informational text about the causes and effects of the Great Depression, and have been reading poetry about the Dust Bowl. Students will begin reading the novel this week.



CRIMSON TEAM

Crimson students made a smooth transition back from February break and were ready and eager to learn. In math, the Patriots and Red Sox continue their work on the Order of Operations. They were introduced to the rules of exponents within the equations and are learning how to solve the equations using the Order of Operations including exponents. Patriots and Red Sox are also practicing for MCAS by familiarizing themselves with the Equation Editor as well as practice questions. Bruins are working on basic math skills for everyday living including time, money, math fluency, and calculation skills. In addition, the Bruins continue their work on MCAS alternate assessment portfolio work. In Social Studies, the Patriots and Red Sox are continuing to explore ancient history. Recently, they had to recreate a civilization based upon artifacts found at a dig site. They will be writing an essay about the earliest humans collecting evidence from a variety of historical documents. In addition, we are reading and taking Cornell notes on our Early Humans chapter. The Bruins are learning map skills. Recently, we each took turns being a guide and used our school map to navigate to different places in our building.

In Science the Patriots, are completing a unit on the Circulatory System and have learned how the heart and lungs function in conjunction with one another. The Bruins are wrapping up a unit on weather and seasons and will be starting to explore objects in the sky. Some questions we will answer are "What makes day and night?", "Why is the sun important?", and "Why do we have seasons?".

The "Red Sox", in the area of science, have recently finished up a unit on body systems. I hope your student was able to share with you a book s/he made on each body system! Some students have reported to me that their parents enjoyed reading the short, paper books with them at home. The exclaimed that they had fun teaching their parents what they have learned about the body systems!

Moving forward, the "Red Sox" will explore, on a basic level, heredity, genes, and traits. They will learn about the fact that children inherit traits, such as hair color, from their parents and other generations. They have previewed this unit and many have expressed excitement for it!

In English Language Arts, students have been learning and reviewing skills in many areas. They continue to explore informational and realistic fiction text. We will continue to read about important events and Americans, such as Maya Angelou, Martin Luther King Jr, and Cesar Chavez. In addition, they have also begun exploring poetry. Poetry can weave into the exploration of informational and realistic fiction text, by exposing students to poems written about time periods that go along with the time and place of another text students are reading. We will continue exploring these types of text over the next couple of months, and look forward to National Poetry Month in April!

Students have also been reviewing and/or getting some additional exposure to plays. Many plays can also help student to understand the setting of different type periods. Student will be able to enjoy a production of Romeo and Juliet on March 6th from 12:49-2:30 PM in the school auditorium!

Finally, students in ELA will continue engage in activities to help them in preparing their MCAS portfolios or MCAS test. These activities, which involve building their reading, writing, and vocabulary skills, tie into their overall ELA learning.

The next Falcon Cafe will be held on Friday, March 10th from 11 - 1

BLUE TEAM

The Blue Team students continue to grow and develop their skills as we enter the third trimester of the school year. As teachers, we continue to show our commitment to our kids by recognizing their efforts and celebrating them in meaningful and fun ways. Please ask your child about the blue ticket raffles and the “left hand, right hand” prizes from the Box of Awesome!

In Mrs. Sullivan’s Language Arts classes, students have begun the Civil Rights unit, centered on Harper Lee’s classic novel, *To Kill A Mockingbird*. This Pulitzer Prize winning story narrated by six-year-old Scout Finch tells of a small Alabama town divided over issues of race, class, and the question of what justice truly means. Our students will put themselves in Scout’s shoes as she tries to navigate these complex issues. Please take some time to discuss this beautiful and thought-provoking story with your child.

Ms. Cezar’s Science classes are working on a major science project about the Periodic Table of Elements. Each student will become an expert on one element from the table, and all students will demonstrate their learning in a way that best meets their own style. Students will choose from options such as, songs, poems, Facebook pages, most wanted or informational posters or PowerPoint presentations to showcase their knowledge. Their hard work will be on display in Fuller's hallway, and we hope that you will come and check out their projects!

Ms. Virdinlia’s Social Studies classes continue to explore the new U.S. History curriculum while focusing on the essential skills of thinking, reading, and writing like historians. Students have been examining a plethora of primary sources and gaining insight into the lives of the men and women who founded this country. In addition, all of the students have started their own “History Detective” investigations about some item or topic from their own lives. This important research is expected to last through the end of April and then the students will move into the digital presentation development stage with the assistance of our Media Specialist, Mr. Kline. Final presentations should be ready by early June - please mark your calendars!

OPAL TEAM

Science: Opal United students just completed a 3-week project about building an earthquake resistant structure. The project based learning assignment included two major component. Students were tasked to design a blueprint of a 10 story building and then build the prototype out of balsa wood. In addition, students had to create a www.weebly.com website of what their building was going to be used for and where it would be located. The culminating activity was to test their towers on the shake table which was graciously donated to Fuller five years ago by the Framingham Education Foundation.

ELA: Opal United Students have completed their Literary Analysis unit, Students completed a five paragraph essay that analyzed a short story. We are now beginning our new unit. We are reading Bud, Not Buddy and other texts that focus on Rules to Live By. As a culminating project, students will be creating their own Rules to Live By and writing the story of their rules.

Math: This month Opal students worked on their STEAM projects, and started to plan what major cities their food trucks would visit. Students calculated the distances between the cities on a map, and used this total distance to calculate their gas costs. Once their costs were calculated, they created a special menu item to go with each city. Mapping these cities helped students see the connection between our four quadrant graphing and latitude and longitude on maps. We are now finishing up our Module with graphing and calculating distance on the coordinate plane.



TANGERINE TEAM

The Tangerine team would like to warmly welcome and introduce you to our new Special Educator and Social Studies teacher – Pat Bernard. She comes to us from Newton Public School system but has been a teacher for over 30 years. Most of her experience is from the Boston Public School system as a Social Studies/Special Education teacher. She has worked in varied educational settings (DYS youth facility as teacher, EDCO as alternative ed teacher, McKinley Tech, part of BPS, as a Sped teacher with emotional/behavior issues students, etc.). She has even an Advance Placement US History II class. She is excited to join Fuller Middle School.

Have you ever thought about the team work involved in tying your shoe? Your eyes locate the laces. Muscles, bones, and nerves coordinate an intricate series of maneuvers to pull them tight and tie the knot. In the background, lungs and the bloodstream work constantly to bring oxygen and chemical fuel to those muscles and nerves. The body is an incredible machine, but what is most extraordinary is the way in which its systems and organs work together. The Grade 7 science classes are studying the body systems beginning with the skeletal system. "Them bones, them bones, them dry bones!"

7th grade students recently completed the Argument Unit! Each student completed a multi-paragraph essay arguing whether child labor is a more harmful or beneficial practice. We have now started our Civil Rights Unit with a number of poetry and annotation lessons. Together we are discussing behaviors of respectful and reflective classrooms. Each class will create and sign a "class contract" to monitor our in-class behaviors. We hope that students will carry themselves professionally and respectfully as we read Melba Patillo Beals' memoir *Warriors Don't Cry*.

A majority of our Tangerine students are in the process of completing their Expressions and Equations unit. Students have been using math vocabulary to create their own real-world situations that would require an inequality to solve algebraically. They have also been working on how to visually represent a solution set using a number line. Students in the advanced math class are finishing up their Percent unit where they have been using percent relationships to answer questions about everything from leaving a tip, to percent error, even simple interest! Next they will be moving on to their statistics and probability unit!

GREEN TEAM

As the Green Team students continue to prepare for high school, they are being challenged in many different subject areas. In math, the students in Mr. Cardarelli's Integrated Algebra class are working on solving, writing, and graphing equations using a proportional relationship showing a constant rate. The Algebra class is finishing a unit on functions and will begin exploring exponential functions. Both classes are preparing for MCAS 2.0 which will be assessed via computer and students will be using the equation editors to show their work!

In ELA students in Ms. Gonzalez's class have been hard at work reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*. We have been analyzing the characters and even took a dive into *To Go Set a Watchman*, Harper Lee's "rough draft" to *To Kill a Mockingbird* where students analyzed Atticus through the changing perspective of Scout. From here we will continue to work on digging through *To Kill a Mockingbird* as we move toward our argument writing piece.

Students enjoyed taking on the roles of various "founding fathers" in our own "Constitutional Convention" in Mr. Zieky's Social Studies class. Students are currently studying the structure of the United States government as laid out in the Constitution. Next week, students will be learning about the Bill of Rights and how they relate to current events.

The Green Team Science classes are completing their unit on beginning chemistry. They have learned the history of the atom all the way from Democritus to Neils Bohr and then moved onto the study of the periodic table. These students have mastered the skills of creating the Bohr Model of the atom by using the periodic table. Just ask them what period and family the element is in and they will whip you up a model before you can say Mendeleev!

Ms. Gallagher's classes will now begin playing mad scientist as we begin whipping up different potions in the lab to create Elephant Toothpaste and other exciting chemical reactions. Will they absorb heat (endothermic) or will it release heat (exothermic)? Only your students will be able to tell you.

STUDENT SUPPORT

The student support team has been working with the 8th grade students on the high school transition process. We have taught a series of lessons regarding what to expect at Framingham High School. Our team has also worked with 8th graders on how to complete their course selection forms. The pink course selection forms should be completed and returned to homerooms by Thursday March 9th. Once course selection forms have been turned in, the Middle School Counselors cannot change the recommendations. If you would like to make a change to the courses your child should set up an appointment with their high school Counselor during the add/drop period in the fall. Freshman will receive their schedules in the mail during the summer which will also indicate who their School Counselor will be. If you or your child has any questions about FHS or the course selection process please contact your child's School Counselor.

The School Counselors have been working with the 8th grade Gold team teachers to plan a trip to Framingham State University. Students will tour the college, speak with students and get to learn about college life and how to plan for their future.

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FRAMINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS ANNUAL K-12 VISUAL ART SHOW



FRAMINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY

MARCH 6 – MARCH 31



RECEPTION

MARCH 8
5:30 – 7:00 PM

Refreshments will be served

PLATINUM TEAM

Math: Students in Ms. Penalzoza's A block have recently started the Percent and Proportional Relationships Unit. They are using and extended the knowledge they gained at the beginning of the year, in the Ratios and Proportional Relationship Unit, to problems involving percentages. Some of the upcoming topics include percent increase/decrease, markups and markdowns, finding the percent error, and simple interest. Students in C and G blocks are currently wrapping up the Expressions and Equations Unit, where they learned how to create equivalent expressions and how to solve real-world problems by writing and solving two step equations and inequalities. They will soon be moving onto the Percent and Proportional Relationships Unit.

Science: In Mr. Faller's science class, students have been studying the process of heredity and the passing of traits. The unit began by looking at how parents pass their chromosomes and the genes they carry onto their offspring. From there, they examined many important words involved in genetics and how Punnett squares can be used to predict what genes an offspring will inherit. Next, we will be focusing on the systems of the human body.

Language Arts: Mrs. Rowlings's ELA class has just concluded an essay-writing unit in which students researched the conditions in which modern-day child laborers work, and considered opinion pieces from writers who discussed the benefits and drawbacks of modern-day child labor. Students then used their research to answer the analytic question: Is child labor a more beneficial or a more harmful practice? Interestingly, students took a variety of approaches to answering this question. While some students considered the question from the perspective of child laborers, other students considered the question from the perspective of not only child laborers, but also employers and consumers. As a part of this unit, we also worked hard to understand how an argument is structured, using the MEAL pre-writing strategy, and worked to frame, explain, and analyze evidence using the "quotation sandwich" strategy. After using so many strategies that reminded us of food, we all felt very hungry at the end of our essay writing process! We have just begun our Civil Rights unit, in which we will be reading Melba Patillo Beals's memoir "Warriors Don't Cry," as well as historical documents and short stories to explore the essential questions such as: "Where do stereotypes come from? How can they be used and abused?"; "What informs the way that people make choices in times of injustice?"; "What can we do alone and with others to confront racism?"; and "How can we as individuals and as citizens make a positive difference in our school, community, and nation?"

Social Studies: We have ventured into Ancient Greek society! We have discussed the four types of government Ancient Greeks experimented with, which include Monarchy, Oligarchy, Tyranny, and Democracy. We have compared Ancient Greek's Direct Democracy with the United States' Representative Democracy. We have also collaborated with ELA to use argument essay structure to break down primary sources. As we dig deeper into our unit on Ancient Greece, we will learn about Alexander The Great, Greek trade and currency, and the differences between Athenian and Spartan civilizations!

WORLD LANGUAGE

The 8th grade students of Spanish and French World Language will be headed to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston! The all-day field trip is generously funded by Target, through a grant awarded to Ms. Fuoti that covers the cost of two buses. On this trip, students will have the opportunity to experience a guided tour, view art first-hand and discuss artists and events from their foreign language curriculum. Students love this trip every year. If you are interested in visiting the museum with your family, the MFA offers opportunities for [free admission](#), and museum discount passes are available at your [public library](#).

HEALTH TEAM

The Fuller Garden is slowly starting to spring back to life. The garden is a spring and fall project that Ms. Stempleski and Mrs. Gagen will work on continuously with the Crimson team students, in their Health classes. The classes will research regional crops that can be planted and then harvested in the spring and fall. The students will learn about sustainable gardening, planting a wide variety of vegetable and flower seeds in a variety of growing mediums. Starting some seeds indoors, the classes will transplant the seedlings to the outside garden beds in the courtyard. Some seeds will be planted directly outside in the ground. The students will maintain the garden, record and journal growing data gathered from now until the end of school. The students will learn about the lifecycle of plants, harvesting the mature crops at the end of the growing season. Understanding the health benefits as well, students will learn how to use the vegetables and herbs that they grow by researching healthy recipes and sharing their bounty with others.



LIBRARY MEDIA

The library media center hosted a special event on Civil Rights. Ms. Bernard, our new Social Studies teacher, was the featured speaker. Mr. Kline introduced the event with an introduction to the Civil Rights materials located in the library. This included two book talks (*Freedom's Children* and *Stella by Starlight*).

Mr. Kline also web conferenced with Dorothy Corrigan whose father was a police officer in Philadelphia during this period. Mrs. Corrigan told personal stories of her experiences.

Ms. Bernard was our main speaker. She spoke of her life growing up in Wisconsin, her family's experiences in Tennessee, the struggles associated as a descendant of slaves, and working for the first integrated school in Boston. Students were riveted to her stories from the difficulties rising from not having a birth certificate to the expectations she was expected to meet when traveling in the South during summers .



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*News from Commissioner Mitchell Chester & the
MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*

On the Desktop – March 6, 2017

Dear Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, and Principals,

Please feel free to share the following information with parents, teachers, and your school community.

This spring marks the start of the next-generation MCAS assessments in English language arts and math in grades 3-8. After considering for several years how to best update our already strong statewide assessment, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted in November 2015 to maintain a test unique to our Commonwealth that would draw some of its questions from the existing MCAS, some of its questions from the PARCC assessment developed by a consortium of states, and some questions created specifically for the next-generation MCAS. This spring is the debut of that new test.

The Board also voted to transition to computer-based testing. For the next-generation MCAS tests this spring, most students will take the computer-based version in grades 4 and 8. Many schools have also chosen computer-based testing in grades 3, 5, 6, and 7; the remainder will be taking the paper version.

Many people ask us why we conduct statewide testing. These tests are required by both state and federal law, but more importantly:

- Test results help parents gauge whether their children are making academic progress.
- Test results help educators identify strengths and weaknesses in their curricula and instructional methods.
- A student's participation in statewide testing helps provide context to other students in the same school, students in other schools within the district, and students in other districts. Failure to participate denies this perspective not only to the student who refuses to participate, but to other students and parents in the school, district, and statewide.
- Test results help the state target additional resources to underperforming schools.
- Test results help document our progress to the Governor and the Legislature as we seek to ensure adequate funding for all our schools.

MCAS was first instituted as part of the 1993 Education Reform Law. The programs and funding in that law have led to nearly a quarter-century of steady improvement in our K-12 schools. Today Massachusetts is number one in the nation in elementary and secondary education.

Refusal to Participate in State Tests

Every year, some families ask whether students are allowed to opt-out of taking a statewide test. In brief, the answer is no. Testing is a mandatory part of the curriculum, the same as a spelling test or math test, and statewide assessments are most useful when all students take them. Neither the Commonwealth nor Congress provides an opt-out provision. Tenth graders who refuse to take MCAS jeopardize their high school diploma. In addition, refusals to test can impact a school's accountability

rating. The accountability system is set up to encourage high participation rates (if it weren't, results would not be reflective of school-wide achievement). The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires a 95 percent participation rate. Schools with a lower participation rate run the risk of having their accountability rating lowered.

Under draft regulations that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education sent out for public comment on February 28, 2017, schools and districts that fall below a 90 percent participation rate will have their accountability status set to Level 3 (out of 5). Further, the 2016-17 and 2017-18 participation rates will be combined to determine participation rates for the 2017-18 accountability levels. In other words, refusals to test in spring 2017 could impact a school's accountability rating for two years.

Students who refuse to take the MCAS test may remain in the testing room as long as they are sitting quietly and are not interfering with other students. If a student becomes disruptive, they should be removed from the testing room and placed in a safe location until testing is completed and regular classroom instruction resumes. Given that statewide standardized tests are a legal requirement, it is my department's expectation that all students will participate.

More information about the next-generation MCAS, including information for parents, is available online at our MCAS page at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/>. Questions relating to testing refusals can be directed to Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson at jwulfson@doe.mass.edu.

Sincerely,

Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner