

# Robertson News



Mrs. Courtney, *Editor*

**Principal: Mr. Wolf**  
**Secretary: Mrs. Hegenauer**

**April, 2016**  
**Volume 11, Issue 8**

## Message From the Principal's Desk

Thank you to all of the parents, guardians, and grandparents that came to school for your children's March report card conferences. As you know, when you participate in your child's education, students are more likely to perform to their fullest potential. Being present for report card conferences is one great way to participate! It shows your children that you care about their school performance and that you want to work as a partner with the school to help your child. Conferences offer both you and your child's teacher a chance to exchange information and to plan strategies for helping your child. Even when children are doing well academically and socially, it is important for you to participate in report card conferences because this shows them that their hard work and accomplishments are being recognized!



Regular and on-time attendance at school is an essential ingredient to academic success. At Robertson, we continue to make a strong effort to have all of our students improve their attendance. We have discovered some patterns of students missing school frequently and/or being late to school (tardy) frequently. We will continue to communicate with parents when students show a pattern of frequent absences and/or frequent tardiness.

If there is any way that we can help you to ensure that your child attends school regularly and/or gets here on time, please contact our School Social Worker, Mrs. Beverly Prager, at (860) 647-3372.



Reminder: Snow storms have caused school to be cancelled for a total of 2 days this school year. The updated last day of school is now Monday, June 13.

We all know that the current economy is causing many families to struggle financially. Therefore, we are pleased to inform you that there is financial assistance available for school lunches to families that qualify. We have applications and our school counselors, Ms. Jones and Mrs. Prager, will be happy to assist anyone that would like help completing one.



It is important to note that even if you applied at the beginning of the school year and did not qualify for assistance, you may qualify now if your job has changed or your income has changed.

## Message From the Principal's Desk, Cont'd.

### ABSENCE NOTES

Please remember that whenever your child is absent from school, for any reason, they must bring a note from their parent/guardian explaining the reason for their absence. It can be a simple note that states that they were ill.



Even if you call in and report the absence on our absence line, state law says that you must still send in a note when your child returns to school.

#### MANCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS NON-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE

Manchester Public Schools does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability (including, but not limited to, intellectual disability, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws. Manchester Public Schools' does not unlawfully discriminate in employment and licensing against qualified persons with a prior criminal conviction. Manchester Public Schools' is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons and equal access to Boy Scouts of America and other designated youth groups. Inquiries regarding Manchester Public Schools' nondiscrimination policies and practices should be directed to:

Terri Smith, Human Resources Specialist/Title IX Coordinator  
Manchester Public Schools, 45 North School Street Manchester, CT 06042, 860-647-3595

Shelly Matfess, Assistant  
Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services  
Section 504 Co-Coordinator, Manchester Public Schools  
45 North School Street, Manchester, CT 06042  
860-647-3452

or  
Linda Hodgkins, Coordinator of School Health Services  
Section 504 Co-Coordinator, Manchester Public Schools  
45 North School Street, Manchester, CT 06042  
860-647-3324

### PARKING LOT SAFETY

Please use extreme caution when driving a vehicle through the school parking lots and on the streets nearby. In the morning before school and at dismissal time there are many people, both students and adults, walking along the sidewalks and IN the parking lots. Be sure to obey the posted signs.

Those spaces marked for handicapped parking, in both the back parking lot and the front, are only for vehicles displaying a state handicapped tag. Violation of any of the parking lot regulations can result in a costly fine from the Manchester Police Department. The police will focus their attention on school parking lots and the streets surrounding the schools this fall, to insure student safety.

Unfortunately, some vehicles were ticketed last year for violations.

The parking lot regulations are designed to keep our children safe. Please keep this in mind at all times.

Please remember that pick-up of students after school and drop off of students in the morning takes place in our **back parking lot**. School staff is on duty in the morning and afternoon to supervise.

The front parking lot is not to be used for the drop-off or pick-up of students. If you are running late in the morning (after 9:05) you may park in the front lot and walk your student into the school office to sign them in. If you arrive late in the afternoon (after 3:40) you may park in the front lot and come into the school office to sign your student out.



The back parking lot is supervised by school staff from 8:35 – 9:05 every morning and from 3:25 – 3:40 every afternoon. The back doors are locked until 8:35 and after 9:05 so please do not drop a student off outside of that time frame.

## Message From the Principal's Desk, Cont'd.

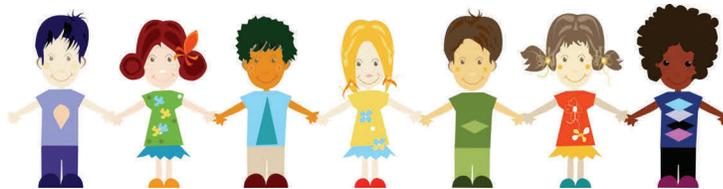
### **ROBERTSON WEB SITE**

Be sure to check out the Robertson School Web Site! You can access this site at:



[www.publicschools.manchester.gov](http://www.publicschools.manchester.gov)

Then click on the *Schools* tab, find Robertson and click. It is a user-friendly site filled with helpful school information that includes curriculum outlines, an events calendar, PTA news, photos and much more. We are continuously updating this site and including more and more useful and interesting information.



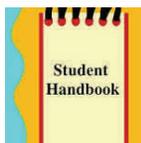
### **BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION**

This is just a reminder that we still collect the “Box Top\$ for Education” that can be found on many of the General Mills products. Please continue to clip them and save them for our next “Box Top Race.” We are able to trade-in the box tops for a monetary reward that we can use to purchase extra equipment and supplies and help defray the cost of field trips.

Thank you to so many of you who have participated in our “Box Top Races” so far this year.



### **PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK**



Our complete Parent/Student Handbook is now available to you electronically on our Robertson Website. To access our website, please go to: [publicschools.manchesterct.gov](http://publicschools.manchesterct.gov). Then click on the Schools tab, find Robertson and click.

In addition to our Parent/Student Handbook, our website contains lots of other information that will be helpful to you throughout the school year. We hope you will visit it often.

If you do not have access to our website at home, we will be happy to provide you with a hard copy of the handbook upon request.

### **BUCKLAND ALLEY**

Access to Robertson through the use of Buckland Alley is prohibited. Only authorized vehicles such as maintenance or trash haulers may use this access to the school. This is not a safe location to pick up or drop off students. When driving on the streets surrounding the school or in our parking lots, please think ***Student Safety First***.



### **EARLY DISMISSAL FROM CLASS**

While we discourage early dismissal of students from class because of the instructional time they lose, we realize that there are times when this is unavoidable – such as a doctor appointment. If you plan to pick your child up before the school day is over we ask that you send a note to your child's teacher. In the note please state the reason your child needs to leave school before the end of the day and what time you will come in to pick them up. Thank you

### **Title IX Notice**

Title IX is a federal law which states: “No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal assistance.” Manchester's Title IX coordinator is:

Terri Smith  
Manchester Public Schools  
45 North School Street  
Manchester, CT 06042  
Phone: 860-647-3595  
Fax: 860-647-3327

The Title IX coordinator is responsible for monitoring the overall implementation of Title IX for the school district and coordinating the institution's compliance with Title IX prevention of sexual harassment and discrimination.

## Message From the Principal's Desk, Cont'd.

### VALUABLE ITEMS IN SCHOOL

Our Parent/Student handbook states that there are certain items that should not be brought to school. This is a good time of year for a reminder.

Electronic games or other electronic gear, radios, or trading cards are among the items that should not be brought to school. All of these can cause a distraction from instruction. Also, gum and candy are not allowed in school. This is not a complete list and other items may be excluded from school, at the discretion of staff members.

Students will be given a warning upon the first violation of this rule. Continued violations will result

in school staff removing the item(s) from the student's possession. It is each student's responsibility to ensure the safety of his or her own personal belongings.

If something has a significant monetary or personal value, the item should not be brought to school. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen personal property.



### SPRING SAFETY TIPS

With the onset of warm weather and the increase in daylight, everyone will be spending more time outdoors. Here are a few safety reminders that you may want to review with your child.

Please remind your child that when walking to and from school or to his/her bus stop:

- \* It is safer to walk with a buddy rather than alone.
- \* Never talk to strangers. If a stranger approaches you or asks for your help, walk away quickly. Report this incident to an adult immediately.
- \* Avoid all contact with strangers in cars.
- \* If you think someone is following you, seek immediate help from an adult that you know.
- \* Stay on sidewalks and cross at designated crossing areas only. Obey traffic signals, signs, and crossing guards. Always look both ways when crossing a street.

- \* Do not cut through vacant lots and/or backyards. Do walk where you can see and be seen by other people.

Manchester Public Schools wishes to ensure the safety of all its students. All parents are asked to do their part by reviewing these guidelines with their children. Please contact the school office to report any unusual occurrences.



Additional safety information is available through various Public Safety Web Sites on the Town of Manchester Home Page as well as the Public Safety Home Page of the State of Connecticut Web Site.

Town of Manchester:

<http://www.ci.manchester.ct.us/dept.htm>

State of CT. Department of Public Safety:

<http://www.state.ct.us/dps/>

## Music: Ms. Grieco & Mr. Hayden

April Showers Bring May.....Music!!!

I can't believe it is already April! We are working on many new songs in the music room. I will list a few by grade level...

Kindergarten: Sing A Rainbow, Little Bunny Foo Foo, Sur le Pon

1st grade: The Ants Go Marching, Who's That Tapping at the Window, Bow Wow

2nd grade: Over in the Meadow, Hickory Dickory Dare

3rd grade: Over in the Meadow, This Little Light of Mine, Treble Clef Rap

4th grade: Oh Susanna, Let there be Peace on Earth, Treble Clef Rap

5th grade: Sansa Kroma, America

On April 7th at 7:00 p.m., there will be a performance of the 5th Grade Townwide Chorus at Manchester High school. Students spanning from the elementary level to high school level will be singing at this event.

The elementary chorus is an auditioned chorus with 108 voices from the different elementary schools in town. They have been working so hard and sound wonderful so please feel free to come and show your support!

Have a musical month!

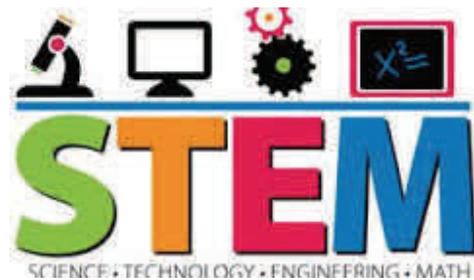


## STEM News: Mrs. Gardner & Ms. Munoz

In March, students in fifth grade prepared for and took the Connecticut Mastery Test Science. The three fifth grade classes prepared for the CMT by participating in an inter-class review question competition and by reviewing topics during STEM class. I am very proud of how hard all students worked to help one another prepare for the test! We will spend the remainder of the year working on getting ready for sixth grade science and practice our scientific writing skills.

The fourth grade has spent the past few weeks working on their measurement skills. Students have practiced using different measurement tools and identifying different measurement systems. Additionally, students worked on learning to calculate the speed of an object by measuring the distance the object traveled and dividing by the time it took the object to get there. Now, students are beginning work on their forces and motion unit where they will be experiencing what it is like to be an engineer on a car design team.

Third grade students have been engaging in meaningful research and discussions about the environment and conservation. Students are using computers and Google Classroom to engage with digital resources and practice their 21st century skills. Additionally, students discussed Dr. Seuss' *The Lorax* and its underlying message of conservation. In April, students will focus on recycling, reducing, and reusing.



## Kindergarten: Mrs. O'Coin, Mrs. Clare, Mrs. Polochanin, Ms. Smith

Thank you to all the families that came to parent-teacher conferences to discuss your child's progress. We appreciate your support.

### Language Arts

The kindergarten students are continuing to have fun reading fiction and non-fiction texts during shared reading, read alouds and guided reading. We recently finished our non-fiction penguin unit and are currently learning about bears and non-fiction book features. During those reading opportunities the students are learning to apply many reading strategies, such as sounding words out, looking at the picture, and looking for repetitive language. The students are also learning before, during and after comprehension skills, such as making predictions, retelling events and determining the author's message and purpose.

Please help us enforce these comprehension strategies at home, both when you read to your child and when he/she reads aloud. Ask them who the characters are, where the setting is, what the problem and solution were, and retell the events in the story.

We will be reading stories about plants, Earth Day/recycling, and finishing the month with our classics theme. Can your child tell you two facts about bears? Check out more stories at your public library!



During writer's workshop, children are continuing to write non-fiction books. Children used classroom research on bears to write their non-fiction books independently. The students have learned that non-fiction writing has a catchy lead or introduction, headings with facts, and a closing statement/ interesting fact.

Please continue to practice reading the 40 sight words. If your child can read all 40, have he/she write them correctly or use them in a sentence.

### Math

Students have recently completed the subtraction/addition units. However, students are continuing to practice their 21 addition and 21 subtraction facts daily. Students were taught that when the number zero is subtracted from any other number, the difference is equal to the other number. Students were also taught that when the number 1 is subtracted from any other number, the total is one less. One other strategy the students learned was that if the number you are taking away is the same number you started with, your answer is always zero. Please have your child practice adding and subtracting at home.

Currently children are learning about teen numbers. They are not only identifying and writing them, but also learning to decompose and compose them. For example:  $18=10+8$  or 1 group of ten and eight ones equals 18. Students are strengthening their place value knowledge, specifically tens and ones. Students will also be learning more about number bonds and applying them to teen numbers.

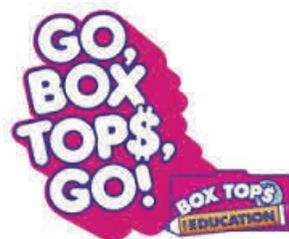
### Upcoming Events

PTA Coin War April 25-29th

Lutz Museum visits: April 20<sup>th</sup> (Podunks: Native American tribe that lived in Manchester 400 years ago!)



Box-Top Collection Competition: Please cut and send in box-tops to help our school earn money. Winners are announced at the weekly "beehive" meeting and given a class set of pencils.



## First Grade: Mrs. Dalton, Mrs. Beauregard, Mrs. Rawlins, Ms. Rubino

We enjoyed meeting with you and discussing your child's progress during parent conferences. This is a wonderful year of learning for your child. The help and support you have given are making a big difference.

### **In Reader's Workshop**



We are beginning our unit called "Readers Have Big Jobs to Do." In this unit, students will continue their work of learning strategies for hard words. Students will also begin monitoring for understanding as they read. Students will work on comprehension strategies as well.

### **In Writer's Workshop**

We are beginning to write opinion pieces. This is hard work! We need to be able to make fair judgments and give reasons why. Later, we will have to try to persuade readers to agree that something we like is the best. We will need to give our opinion and give at least three relevant arguments.



You can help your child at home by asking them to explain why they like a certain food for dinner or dessert, why they like one sport better than another, or why their favorite television show is the best.

### **Math Workshop**

We are just finishing up our unit on the counting sequence and extending our knowledge and recognizing patterns in a 120 chart. In our next unit, we will learn more about place value and thinking about numbers as tens and ones.

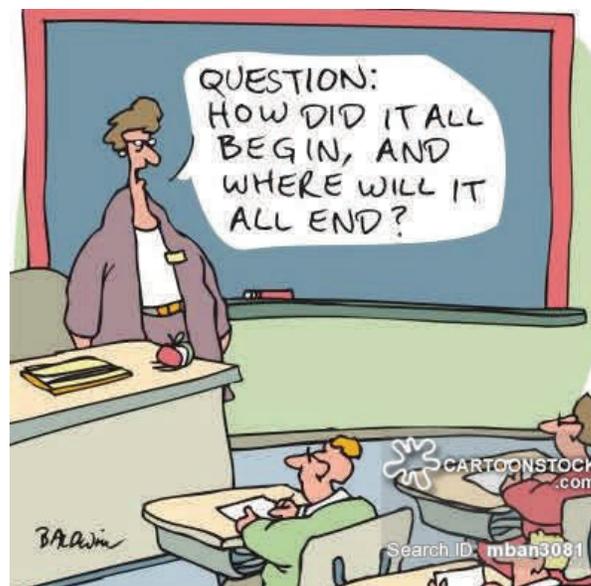
Please continue to practice addition and subtraction facts at home with your student. We are really progressing on our math fluency!

### **Social Thinking**

In Social Thinking, we are continuing to teach problem solving using "Breathe, Think, Do" strategies. I hope your child is also using these strategies at home.

Our focus this month will be on putting the plan into practice. Students will first stop and calm down with breathing, next they will identify the problem, come up with a plan and lastly they will execute their plan to solve the problem.

We will come up with a list of questions to guide our plans into action. Then we will talk about the success of our plan or an alternative plan, if our first plan is not a success.



Second grade would prove to be much tougher than grade one.

## 2nd Grade: Mrs. Osella, Mrs. Mundy, Mr. Jones, Ms. Ruggiero

April is National Poetry Month. In writing, the students will be writing poems. They will learn how to use line breaks to emphasize words and phrases in their poems, how to use feelings, metaphors, word choice, repetition and rhythm into their poems.



Students will also continue to learn about informational writing. In reading, they will research a topic to find important information that they would like to report on and share with the class. They will create a visual presentation to share with their peers. The non-fiction unit ties in with our Social Studies concepts as we explore different parts of the world and what animals inhabit certain parts of the Earth. The second grade students will be working on researching, planning, and writing an expository piece. They will be reading non-fiction texts and media sources to research a specific animal. We will continue to reinforce editing skills as a part of the writing process.

You can also emphasize editing at home with your child's homework. The reading response is a great way to reinforce editing on a weekly basis.

In math, we are continuing to reinforce addition and subtraction skills. Students are learning strategies on how to add and subtract 2 and 3-digit numbers with and without regrouping. We are using place value cubes to provide students with a visual aide as they carry out the process of adding and subtracting.

In the upcoming weeks, math will focus on exploring place value within 1,000. Students will be building, writing and counting numbers up to 1,000. We will also be applying the various addition and subtraction strategies we learned in the previous units to add two 3-digit numbers. Students will need to regroup in order to carry out the appropriate operations and come to the correct result. Please continue to review basic addition and subtraction facts every night so that they "stick."

In science, we are beginning our Plants Unit. Students will be planting various vegetables during STEM time and forming hypotheses on what will happen to the plant as it grows.



In May, we will be going on a field trip to Imagine Nation where students will learn how to make compost and how it helps plants and herbs grow. Permission slips will be going home soon!

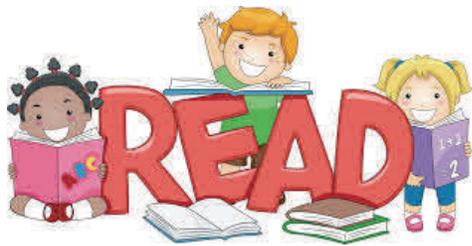


## 3rd Grade: Mr. Pepin, Mrs. Case, Mr. Moynihan

They say April showers bring May flowers, but during the month of April, the forecast will be nothing but clear for learning in the third grade! As we SPRING into action, here are some of the new thoughts and ideas that will be sprouting for third graders in the upcoming month:

### **Reading:**

During this month, we will be learning about story structure and how the action in a story rises and falls to form a “story mountain”. We will make predictions within a story based upon this concept and make connections to other stories to deepen our understanding.



We will also analyze how authors build suspense leading to a peak of action and problem resolution to help the story end smoothly.

Be on the lookout for book clubs as well! Here, your scholar will read a book together with others. Deep discussion follows and a collective discourse will take place to deepen everyone’s understanding of the book being read.

### **Math:**

In April, our grade 3 math scholars will continue to delve into various concepts surrounding multiplication and division. Scholars will be able to multiply multiples of ten using properties of multiplication and solve multi-step word problems by finding and solving the “hidden question.”

From there, we will dive deep into the world of fractions. We will learn all of the ways to think about fractions and relate them to division.

### **Writing:**

We are so proud of the growth we showed in writing opinion and persuasive pieces this past month! We know that many of our third grade scholars will be able make positive changes for themselves and others based upon the skills they learned in this unit.

Moving forward, we will focus our teaching and learning on the genre of fantasy. Here, scholars will learn the elements of fantasy and be coached on how to make an entertaining, well- developed fantasy story. Who knows, maybe your scholar could be the next J.K. Rowling, Roald Dahl, or Dr. Seuss in the making!



**4th Grade: Mrs. Blundo, Ms. Oritz & Mrs. Gatmaitan**

Thank you all for coming out for March report card conferences! 4th graders have been working hard and we are proud to share their success.

In math, we are still in Unit 4: Number Sense and Operations with Fractions. We have wrapped up our review topic on line plots and analyzing data (Topic 11). We will finish the unit with Topic 12- Understanding and Comparing Decimals. Please continue to have your child practice their basic facts at home. Our goal is to have our 4th graders master all four operations by June!

In reading, we have taken a break from our nonfiction units and we are exploring poetry. Students are recognizing figurative language in poetry, as well as other genres of literature. In writing, students have completed their opinion pieces and we are also having them write their own poetry. They are trying to incorporate the figurative language within their work.



Our next unit in reading is non-fiction. We will be reading about and researching the American Revolution. This reading unit is combined with our writing unit. Students will be using the information they have learned about the American Revolution to create an informational piece that teaches others about a specific topic. Students will use their knowledge of researching and note taking to help them with their writing.

**5th Grade: Mrs. Fagan, Mrs. Frye (Ms. Green), Mrs. Kearney**

**Language Arts:** In April, students will continue reading and writing opinion pieces. Students will make inferences and synthesize what the author's viewpoint is in different text. We will also be comparing and contrasting multiple accounts on the same topic. In writing, they form an opinion and organize their writing. They will express their own opinions on a topic and use evidence to support their viewpoints. The students are enjoying debating on different topics as they express their own ideas.

**Math:** We have just finished up our unit on fractions and are moving on to the exciting world of geometry! They have done a wonderful job with adding, subtraction, multiplying and dividing fractions! This month we will explore 2-D and 3-D figures. We will also use our new knowledge of these shapes to measure volume. Toward the end of the month we will begin looking at converting measurements. The fun just keeps on going!

**Science:** We are in for an exciting time in science during the month of April! We are headed off to Mystic Aquarium on April 28th. We are looking for chaperons so please let us know if you are interested! The more, the merrier!

**Social Studies:** In April, we will continue our journey through the past and beginning to look at the American Government! This is the perfect topic to wrap up the year since we are in the midst of an exciting presidential election! We will study the formation and structure of our government with a good dose of current events sprinkled in!

We want to thank our families for all their support throughout this year. We also want to thank our students for showing perseverance and grit by working hard during our March testing! We enjoyed our conferences and look forward the remainder of the year!

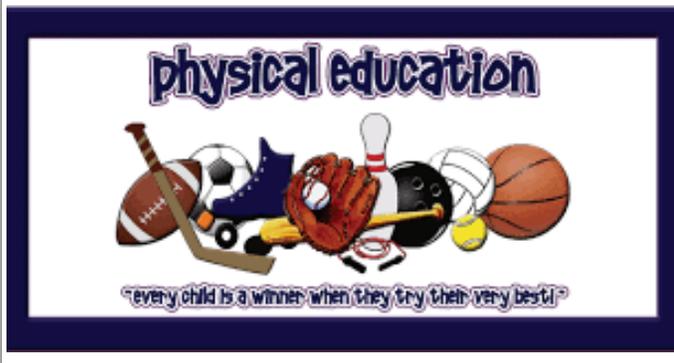
## Physical Education: Ms. White & Ms. Falkowski

In kindergarten, first and second grades, students spent the last few weeks learning about throwing and catching. We finished our throwing unit playing a game called “cookie monster.”

Some other classes completed a unit using paddles. We will now be completing a unit using the parachute and before break we will start an adventure unit. The students will have the opportunity to use our rock wall, climbing ropes, and cargo net.

Students in grades three through five have completed a volleyball unit. They learned the skills of setting, bumping, and serving.

Before vacation, we are playing a game which is a lead up to baseball and kickball rules. The students will also be starting an adventure unit. Students will have the opportunity to use our rock wall, climbing ropes, and cargo net.



“They say kids these days are too fat because we don’t get enough aerobic exercise. Maybe we should chew faster!”

## Library/ Media Center: Mr. Hadge & Mrs. Courtney

The PTA-sponsored book fair was held during March. Everyone enjoyed book browsing and selecting and the PTA’s goal of putting one book in the hand of each Robertson child was once again achieved. In addition to raising money for the PTA, many books were added to classrooms and the library. Special thanks to all the volunteers who helped out.



We will be having a 3rd book fair at the end of the year. This one will be a “buy one get one free” event to help put books into the hands of our students for the summer. Look for more information in late May.

April is National Poetry Month! Poetry books of various kinds will be displayed around the library. If you and your child have never explored the poetry genre, give it a try! Some humorous poets to start out with are Shel Silverstein, Jack Prelutsky, and Bruce Lansky.

If you have not visited the Robertson School website recently please check it out. The address is:

<http://mpspride.org/page.cfm?p=714>

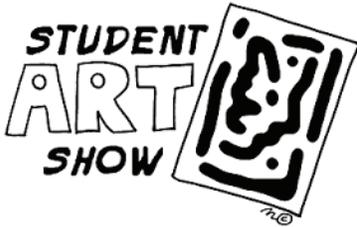
From the website you can access the K-8 Resource page (under the Resources tab) which has links to our school library catalog and many sites that are used by our students.



## Art: Mrs. Sheroff & Ms. Beyer

I hope you are enjoying the sounds and sights of the birds and blossoms returning!

We are getting ready for our Art Show at the Lutz Museum in May!



Kindergarten students made their own sculptures using pipe cleaners and beads. They also drew a series of buildings and tried a technique of oil pastels, paint, and crinkling their paper to make it look like a batik painting.



First grade artists made their own portfolio to put their artwork into to and protect it. They also studied about negative and positive space and created a collage using these concepts. Students also designed their own letter and used patterns and color to decorate it.

Second graders are learning about warm and cool colors by making a 3-D art piece.

Third grade artists' clay pots are finished! We are now practicing drawing flowers.

Fourth grade students are learning about the Elements of Art using their sketchbooks.

Fifth graders finished their clay pockets. They are starting their Vincent Van Gogh pop-up scene.

Wishing you a Happy Spring!

## Manchester Public Library

Spring Storytime Session – The four-week session begins on April 18<sup>th</sup> with programs for children from birth through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Storytimes are offered for infants, one-year olds, two-year olds, three-to-five year olds and elementary age children. Sign-up begins April 11<sup>th</sup> for Manchester residents and April 13<sup>th</sup> for non-residents. Please see a storytime brochure or ask a librarian for more details. Locations: Mary Cheney Library, 586 Main St, Manchester, CT, [860-645-0577](tel:860-645-0577); Whiton Library, 100 North Main St, Manchester, CT, [860-643-6892](tel:860-643-6892)

The Family Place program will resume this spring on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. This informal program is for children aged 0 – 36 months and their parents. It offers visits with professionals from the community, developmentally appropriate toys and art activities. The free five-week program will begin on April 19<sup>th</sup> and **requires pre-registration**. Registration will begin April 11<sup>th</sup> for Manchester residents and April 13<sup>th</sup> for non-residents. Call [860-645-0577](tel:860-645-0577) for more information. Location: Mary Cheney Library

