

BELLOWS FALLS MIDDLE SCHOOL

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From the Office: Spring News at BFMS

May 2, 2010

Dear Bellows Falls Middle School Families:

Coming Events and Special Happenings.....Please Mark your Calendars!

- May 4th-May 7th-Tuesday through Friday-Grade 8 Trip to Washington, DC
- May 8th-Saturday-special presentation at BFMS Library-10:00 am-Sex, Drugs, & the Internet-
What Every Parent Should Know- please note a delicious catered brunch will be served
Sponsored by the Great Falls Prevention Coalition/ 21 Century Afterschool Program
- May 11,12, 13- Grade 8 NECAP-science testing
- May 11th-5:30 pm -PIRC meeting-BFMS library
- May 11th- 6:30 pm -Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meeting- BFMS Library
- May 14th-Friday-Grade 8 Semi-formal-7:00 pm-BFMS gymnasium
- May 17th- 7:00 pm-Monday-Rockingham School Board meeting-Central Elementary School Library
- May 19th-6:30 pm-Wednesday- Spring Arts Festival-BFMS auditorium
- May 20th-Thursday-Grade 6 to Echo Lake Aquarium
- May 20th-Thursday-4:00 pm-BFMS renovation committee meeting-BFMS library
- May 21st-Friday-PASS Program trip to Green Mountain Rail
- May 24, 27, and June 1, 4- grade 8 visits to BFUHS
- May 31-Band performance and Memorial Day parade
- June 3-Friday-Grade 8 trip to River Valley Technical Center- Springfield, VT
- June 3-Friday departure- Band trip to the High Note Festival, Lake George, New York
- June 15-Tuesday-4:00 PM-Moving Up Ceremony-8th grade
- June 16-Wednesday-Last day of school- grade level activities planned
- June 20-Sunday-1:00 pm- BFMS band at the Alumni Day parade

Please note this list includes activities and events that are on our school calendar. There may be some grade level activities that are not currently posted on the calendar that families will be informed of through teacher notices. Additionally, spring sports schedules for track, softball, and baseball are available through your student's coach or posted on our school website www.bfmiddleschool.org

Box Tops for Education

BFMS has been collecting BoxTops for Education and for each label we submit the school earns money that can be used to support student activities. Sounds good right? *Yes, but we have not been collecting to our potential in this program!!* **We could be earning a lot more money if we all work together.** There is an extensive list of products that carry the BoxTops for Education label. We ask families to look over the list (included in this mailing) and take a moment to cut out and collect the BoxTops symbol. Over the course of the year the average family



could easily buy 50 products with the label.

If each student collected 50 or more Boxtops we would raise \$1300 for our school if all 260 students participated!!! Please cut out and save your Boxtops throughout the summer and we will put them to good use in our school. For more information, please feel free to visit the BoxTops for Education website at <http://www.boxtops4education.com/>

Speaking of Collecting for a Cause.....

Beyond BoxTops for Education, BFMS is also collecting used ink cartridges which we can turn in to raise money as well as the tabs from aluminum cans to benefit the Shriners' Hospital. Your support in this is greatly appreciated!

Earth Day Actions

In honor of Earth Day which is celebrated on April 22nd (during our spring recess week) our 5th grade students accompanied by Mr. Ferenc participated in a neighborhood cleanup. We received phone calls from appreciative neighbors thanking us for our efforts. "Bless you" said one of our elderly neighbors for cleaning up road side litter from her yard. Some of the students also got caught in a downpour in the afternoon for some added excitement!

Did you hear about the camera crews at BFMS?

The rumors are true! For two days we had camera crews and representatives from the Rachel Ray television show at our school to work with our 8th grade students in preparation for their trip to Washington, DC. The focus of the filming was about moving beyond PB & J and how to prepare healthy lunches on a budget for our traveling students during their stay in Washington. Wow--it was such an honor to have our students be a part of this experience. There are so many people to thank -Kelly Tully, Carol Purley, Bethany Coursen and other 8th grade parents and PTO members. Our admiration and gratitude to our 8th grade core teaching team-Russell Williams, Carmen Sanderson, Dennis Ladd, and MaryLou Martin and our custodial staff, Wally Sauve and Rick Schuhmann for their efforts to support the film crew and to make the DC trip possible. Special thanks to Jennifer Cota who has shown us all that a little inspiration and a good idea can make such a difference!

Summer School/ Summer Reading / Summer Camps

We are anticipating offering a summer school program for students in grades 5/6 and 7/8 to address skills in mathematics and literacy. The tentative dates are projected to be July 5-Aug. 12th. More information will follow if this is a recommendation for your child.

Summer reading lists will be sent out prior to the close of school. Grade level teams will have required reading as well as a list of titles for suggested reading. Families should know TD Bank North offers an incentive to summer reading participants where each participant can earn up to \$10.

As for summer camp options- we will be compiling a listing in a student services office of opportunities that are available in the greater Bellows Falls area. The Boys and Girls Club, Parks Place, Recreation Departments are also other avenues for families to explore. Middle school aged children benefit from maintaining some structure and consistency during the summer break as well as regular engagement in reading and enrichment activities.

Schedule/ Grade Level Plans for Next Year

We have a group working on how to use our time in learning and daily structure to improve student academic outcomes. We will have a 5/6 teaching team and a 7/8 team of 5 teachers in each team with about 125 students. In this process our emphasis has been on high quality content teaching, integration of technology, and differentiation of instruction in order to maximize learning opportunities and outcomes for all students.

Seasonal Clothing/ Dress Code

With warmer weather upon us we want to remind families of our dress code and appropriate clothing for school. This is a middle school and the expectation is that clothing is safe, comfortable, and meets a basic standard of modesty. Ultra low rise jeans, belly shirts, low cut shirts that show cleavage, short shorts or skirts, or clothing that exposes undergarments (sagging pants, spaghetti straps, tiny tank tops) are not appropriate to the school environment. Your child needs to be able to comfortably bend, sit, and move about without clothing exposing them or being unnecessarily burdensome or distracting. Footwear should be comfortable and secure, allowing your child to move freely through the building, and safely go up and down stairs. Additionally, we do not permit clothing that promotes or depicts violence, alcohol and/ or substance use.

On end of the year trips where students have an option of swimming girls are expected to wear one piece bathing suits or a t-shirt over the top of a two piece suit.

Have you heard about the NBC?

In response to some incidents of anti-Semitism and hateful writing that was written in a bathroom we had a group of 8th grade students and staff members come together to address what this has meant for our school community and how we want to respond as a community. It was a pretty impressive display of compassionate, thoughtful and responsible behavior by our students. Members of the 8th grade class developed The NBC-No Bystander Crew. This group, coupled with adult support, presented on this issue to the whole school. In addition, they have established a Face book page, made posters for around the school, and crafted a NO-Bystander pledge. In addition, group members have presented to younger grades during advisory on issues of stereotyping, targeting, bullying, and how to respond to these issues including taking the pledge to not be a bystander. Russell Williams, Becky Spaulding, and Dianne Ellis, along with Curtis Reed of the Vermont Partnership and Kari Fletcher of the Great Falls Prevention Coalition have been involved in these efforts.

Finishing the Year Strong.....!

We are working with our students and families to finish the year strong. We need students here every day and for families to support their children in maintaining consistent and punctual daily attendance as well as habits of the mind. What are habits of the mind? Developing the skills necessary to focus, maintaining and directing attention to task, keeping track of assignments, notebooks, and materials, planning and executing what needs to be done, listening to others, reading for information and understanding, following directions, and more. We all have to have these skills as we progress in school and life. These are also skills that have to be taught and practiced both at school and at home. Please monitor your child for completion of daily homework, inquire about what projects or things they have been learning in each of their classes. What have you been learning about in social studies? Please continue to check student agendas and the parent portal on your child's work habits. It is tempting for children, especially as warmer weather is upon us, to start checking out and getting behind on his or her assignments.

At BFMS we will be supporting students in developing and maintaining their "habits of the mind" as well as their conduct in relation to our school expectations of respect for self, others, and property. We appreciate all of our families in supporting students to finish strong.

Warmly,

Cheryl McDaniel-Thomas
Principal

Dianne M. Ellis
Assistant Principal