

The Penguin Press

Benjamin J. Phelps Elementary School

Looking Ahead.....

Dates to Remember:

October 30, 2009
Crazy Hat Day

November 3
Professional Day/No School
Election Day/Bake Sale

November 4
Picture retakes

November 11
Veterans Day/No School

November 12 (6:30 PM in Café)
Butter Braid Delivery

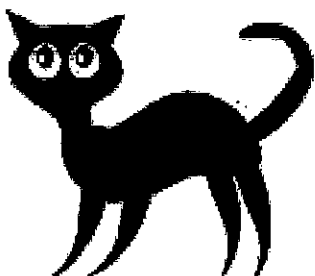
November 12 (7:00 PM in Café)
PTO Meeting

November 17
School Banking Day

November 25
Early Release Day

November 26 & 27
No School
Thanksgiving Break

**School Portrait
Re-Take Day
Wednesday
November 4, 2009**



Principal's Message

Dear Parents and Guardians:

My message this month centers around ways you can help your child strengthen his/her math skills and build strong positive attitudes toward math. A booklet published by the U.S. Department of Education, *Helping Your Children Learn Mathematics*, provides activities that you can use and you don't need to be a great mathematician or have a college degree in math to use them. Your time and interest and the pleasure that you share with your child as part of working together are what matter most.

What kind of attitude do you have towards math? Do you believe that math skills are important job and life skills? Do you see math as useful in everyday life? Or do you dread doing things that involve math – like figuring out how much carpet you'll need, balancing the checkbook or reading the technical manual that came with the new computer or DVD player? Attitude matters.

Although parents can be a positive force in helping children learn math, they can also undermine their children's math ability and attitude by saying such things as "Math is hard," or "I'm not surprised you don't do well in math, I didn't like math either when I was in school," or "I wasn't very good in math and I'm a success, so don't worry about doing well." Although you can't make your child like math, you can encourage her to do so, and you can take steps to ensure that she learns to appreciate its value both in her everyday life and in preparing her for the future.

In everyday interactions there are many things that parents can do – and do in a fun, no pressured manner - to help their children learn to solve problems, to communicate mathematically and demonstrate mathematical reasoning ability.

Let's look closely at what it means to be a problem solver, to communicate mathematically and to demonstrate mathematical reasoning ability.

A problem solver is someone who questions, finds, investigates and explores solutions to problems; demonstrates the ability to stick with a problem to find a solution; understands that there may be different ways to arrive at an answer; and applies math successfully to everyday situations. You can encourage your child to be a good problem solver by including him in routine activities that involve math—for example, measuring, weighing, figuring costs and comparing prices of things he wants to buy.

To communicate mathematically means to use mathematical language, numbers, charts or symbols to explain things and to explain the reasoning for solving a problem in a certain way, rather than just giving the answer. It also means careful listening to understand others' ways of thinking and reasoning. You can help your child learn to communicate mathematically by asking her to explain what she must do to solve a math problem or how she arrived at her answer. You could ask your child to draw a picture or diagram to show how she arrived at the answer.

Mathematical reasoning ability means thinking logically, being able to see similarities and differences in objects or problems, making choices based on those differences and thinking about relationships among things. You can encourage your child's mathematical reasoning ability by talking frequently with him about these thought processes.

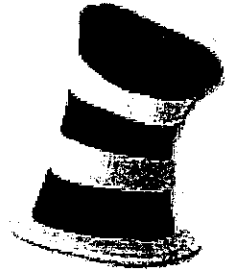
All of the above information is taken from the booklet, *Helping Your Children Learn Mathematics*, which can be ordered (for free) on-line at <http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/math/index.html> The school district has also purchased the license to *CapJaxMathFax™*, which you can access on the website www.capjax.com, click on **Active Schools**, then click on **Agawam Public Schools**; id = **aps**, password = **brownie**. I hope you find this information useful. Home and school working together can truly make a difference in the success of a student.

Sincerely,

Teresa A. Urbinati, Principal



Crazy Hat Day



Crazy Hat Day is Friday October 30th

Students must use 5 cool coupons in order to participate.

Students will redeem their coupons with their classroom teachers and will then be able to wear their hats for the day!



Lost & Found

The Lost and Found box is currently overflowing with items. The box is located in the cafeteria. If your child is missing something, please ask them to check the box. Thanks!

Nurses Corner

From the Nurse's Desk,

If your child has a cough from a cold, you may send in a note with cough drops for your child to take at school. The cough drops will be kept in the nurses office and you child may come down for one as needed.

Also if you child has an injury that they are wearing an ace, cast, splint, or using crutches or has stitches. Please I need a doctor's note of what are your child's restrictions as per gym and out door recess. Once the cast, splint, crutches, stitches are removed I also need a note from the doctor saying that they do not have any more restrictions.

Remember hand washing is the best defense for staying healthy and not spreading germs. Have a healthy and safe fall.

Thank you Mrs. Christian RN

MAGICAL NIGHT OF GIVING



Holyoke Mall November 22nd from 6:00pm-9:30pm

3 ½ hours of shopping when the Mall is usually closed!

Participating stores offer extra discounts on top of their SALE prices!!

Raffle!! Many prizes available GRAND PRIZE \$1,000 Mall Gift Certificate!

Tickets are only \$5.00 each. ALL proceeds benefit Phelps School.

Order form can be found on the Phelps School Website!



Phelps School Celebration Policy

The wellness policy for the Agawam Public Schools is as follows: (page 69 Section II B.)

- For any school-wide celebrations, only wrapped, store-bought foods, with ingredients listed on the labels may be sent in. Administrators, in collaboration with the school nurse, may make exceptions to the above, if an approved curriculum based food activity is taking place by the class.
- Staff members are expected to follow the same procedures for any food they bring in to share with their classes or allow other students to bring in and share.


The School Counsel and PTO support the wellness policy as set by the School Committee. No snack or candy may be sent into school for a celebration that has on the label "**may contain tree nuts or may have been processed in a factory that contains nuts**". Please be aware that any celebration will be held at the end of the school day, and any candy will be sent home with the student, as candy may not be consumed in school or on the bus.

The School Counsel and PTO would like to request that alternatives to candy be considered, such as : pencils, erasers, tattoos, stickers, book marks, home made items, etc. If a food item must be sent in, it is requires to be cleared by our school nurse prior to being handed out to the students.

Before any celebration, parents should contact the teacher to see if there are any allergies in that classroom.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

IV. Responsibility of Parent/Guardian:

- 
- Inform the school nurse of your child's allergies prior to the opening of school or immediately after a diagnosis.
 - Arrange for a meeting with the school nurse to develop an Allergy Action Plan/Health Care Plan for the student and provide for the nurse a signed letter from the child's physician/allergist verifying that the child has life-threatening allergies. Provide letter from child's physician listing the allergens that the child is allergic to and the course of treatment that is required in case of an allergic reaction. Medical orders from physician must be included.
 - Provide school nurse with enough up-to-date medications including Epi-Pens, if required.
 - Complete all required medication forms along with current emergency contact names and telephone numbers,
 - Provide a MEDIC-ALERT identification bracelet for your child.
 - Encourage your child to wash his/her hands before eating.
 - Teach your child to read ingredient labels (age appropriate).
 - Require your child to carry an Epi-Pen on his/her person (age appropriate).
 - Communicate immediately any symptoms of an allergic reaction.
 - Encourage your child NOT TO SHARE snacks, lunches, drinks, or utensils.
 - Notify school if child no longer has allergies. Again, a signed letter from the child's physician/allergist is required.
 - Provide your child with a bag lunch.
 - Provide your child with a safe snack for their consumption during classroom celebrations.
 - Support the Wellness Policy by promoting healthy food and snack choices brought to school.

V. Responsibility of Student as Communicated by Parent:

- Take responsibility for avoiding known allergens.
- Do not share snacks, lunches, beverages, or utensils.
- Wash hands before eating.
- Learn to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction.
- Communicate immediately when symptoms appear.
- Carry an Epi-Pen at all times (age appropriate).

A Month of Giving

Welcome to our annual tradition, the Month of Giving. This is an opportunity to teach our children that we give - not to expect anything in return, but to know we made a small difference in someone else's life. The Month of Giving will begin November 16th and end December 18th. Tables will be set up in the front hallway for your children to place their donations. We are looking forward to another successful Month of Giving, and thank you in advance for all your support. If you have any questions please feel free to Contact Lisa Grenier at 786-3629 or email lisa184@verizon.net or for a specific week contact the coordinator listed below.



Week 1
11/16 - 11/20

THOMAS J. O'CONNOR Animal Control & Adoption Center cares for nearly 4,000 stray, abandoned, abused and neglected animals each year and consists of about 50% dogs and 50% cats. TJ O'Connor also has an adoption program for unclaimed animals in their care looking for a second opportunity to find a "forever home."

In need of: old towels and blankets so the animals have a warm, soft place to sleep. Paper towels, toys and treats for the animals, gift cards to stores such as Dave's Soda, or just about anything you'd use at home.



Week 2
11/30 - 12/4

AGAWAM JUNIOR WOMEN'S CLUB is a community service organization committed to the betterment of our community through support of the arts, home life, education, conservation, public and international affairs.

In need of: Mashed Potatoes and Gravy. These items will be combined with additional items collected by other Agawam Schools to help create Holiday meals served to the people in our community.



Week 3
12/7 - 12/11

TOYS FOR TOTS is a mission of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program to collect new, unwrapped toys and distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to needy children in the community.

In need of: New and unwrapped toys

Coordinator: Stacy Weiners 786-5039 Stacyjaz@comcast.net



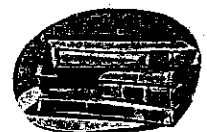
Week 4
12/14 - 12/18

OPEN PANTRY'S EMERGENCY FOOD PANTRY (EFP) provides non-perishable groceries for people in need. Both individuals and families in the Springfield area come to the EFP on an emergency basis. In 2008, EFP provided non-perishable food/groceries to over 27,000 people, half of whom were children.

In need of: Tuna, Rice, Pasta, Dried Beans, Macaroni & Cheese, Baby Formula, Shampoo and Toothpaste.

Coordinator: Kristy Consolini kconsolini@comcast.net

BOOK SALE SUCCESS



The Phelps School PTO 1st annual Book sale was a tremendous success. Over \$1,000 was raised!! Thanks to all the volunteers who helped and all who donated and purchased book! See you next year!

Phelps PTO News

PTO
BOARD
MEMBERS

President
Vice President
Treasurer
Secretary

Stacy Wieners
Kellee Morello
Tom Dobrowolski
Christine Patterson

PhelpsPTO@yahoo.com

Editor: *Jennifer Bonfiglio* Phelpsnewsletter@yahoo.com



2009-2010 PTO Meeting Schedule

November 12th
December 9th
January 13th
February 10th
March 10th
April 14th
May 12th
June 9th

All meetings are held in the school cafeteria at 7:00 PM

Important Information!!



Butter Braid Delivery Date is November 12 @ 6:30 PM in the Café before the PTO meeting!

Please remember you must pick up your order (or have it picked up) this evening or your order will be donated to a local food shelter.

ELECTION DAY BAKE SALE

DON'T FORGET TO BAKE!!!

- Drop off your donation Monday (11/2) afternoon or Tuesday (11/3) morning at school
- Email phelpspto@yahoo.com with questions or to volunteer your time
- On Election day, stop by to purchase a delicious treat!



November 13, 2009 is Waste Free Lunch Day

The Elementary School with the least amount of TRASH that day wins

Pack a home lunch on Waste Free Day! Use plastic containers, avoid pre-packaged snacks, bring a cloth napkin and even a thermos for your drink! Capri Sun Drinks and Milk Cartons are also great because they are recyclable. Please avoid anything that will have to be trashed!

Thank you for your support. Contact PhelpsPTO@yahoo.com to offer your help!

Benjamin Phelps School Vendor Night

December 14, 2009

6:00 – 8:00 pm

Set up begins at 5:00 pm

Dear Phelps School Parents and Faculty,

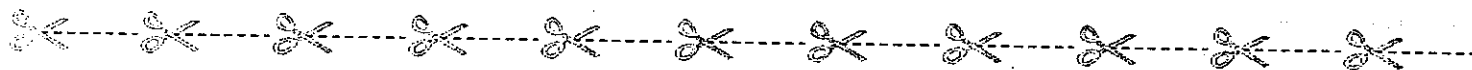
It's that time of year again and we are ramping up for our Vendor Night!

Vendors fill the auditorium with their goods and we open the opportunity to **our parents FIRST**. This is a chance for you to showcase your product or service to potential customers right in your neighborhood. Vendors fill the auditorium, carols fill the air and shoppers come from all over. Faculty, parents and friends; anyone is welcome to come and shop we encourage you to spread the word!

All reservations are on a first come first serve basis.* In an effort to have this a successful night for our vendors, we will not allow more than one vendor from the same *company*. The agreement is below and can also be downloaded from the school's website. Please return it as soon as possible if you are interested in participating. **Deadline for Parents of Phelps is October 31st** then vendors will be solicited to fill the auditorium.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call Stacy Wieners 786-5039 .

Thanks for your continued support!!



Benjamin Phelps School Vendor Night Vendor Agreement

Name: _____

Address: _____
(street, city, state and zip please)

Phone: _____ Cell: _____ E-mail: _____

Company / Product: _____

Need Table?? _____ (additional \$5) Other: _____



Fee of \$25.00* and a Raffle prize valued over \$20.00. Please make checks payable to *Phelps PTO*.

In an effort to have this a successful night for our vendors, we will not allow more than one vendor from the same *company*.

Cash and Carry is strongly encouraged especially because of the date!

Please provide your own table. Tables are available to rent for an additional \$5.00. Tables are limited and reserved as agreements are received. If electricity is needed please let me know.

Mail agreement to:
**Stacy Wieners
67 Debra Lane
Agawam, MA 01001**

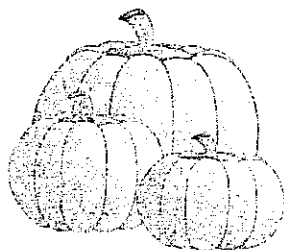
School Counseling Program Grant (PreK-6)

NEWS

Issue 2, October 2009, p.1

Happy October!

The school year is well underway and we have been busy meeting and working with students, staff, and families. We enjoyed being part of "Back to School Night," and seeing so many supportive families and dedicated staff. We would like to tell you a little bit about what each of us has been up to and our upcoming plans.



Contact Information

Kristie LaRochelle, School Counselor:
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726-8012

Merrie-Beth Maynard, School Counselor:
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726-8013

Joanne Morgan, School Psychologist
jmorgan@agawampublicschools.org
726-8011

Maura Ryczek, School Social Worker:
mryczek@agawampublicschools.org
726-8014

Katie Gray, Grant Coordinator
uniquepotential@comcast.net
508 259 0919

My first month in the Agawam schools has been terrific. Thanks to everyone in each building for helping me to feel welcome. At this point in time, I have begun to conduct **home visits** with some of the families in the district. My main purpose here has been to provide extra support and guidance regarding any particular challenges they might be facing. A part of my job that I am very excited about is trying to develop and/or implement some **programming for parents** throughout the district that will be helpful to them as they navigate the challenges of parenthood. I have started to get some great feedback regarding topics that may be of interest. The first project on my list is to kick off a family guide to complement the Second Step violence prevention curriculum that is utilized in grades pre-K through six. In addition, I have begun to reach out to community agencies in an effort to see what services they might be able to provide to students and families in town so that I can better **assist families access these services** should they need them. I have also been diligently working to **revise and update the community resource list** that is currently posted on our website—not an easy task! As things begin to get busier for me, my schedule will most likely be dictated by the needs of the students and families I am working with. The time I spend doing outreach work will also be increased. Therefore, the schedule that was developed at the start of the school year with me spending specific days at each building is likely to change.

-Maura Ryczek, Social Worker: PreK-6



I want to thank everyone for their warm welcomes and for helping me through the first month of school! The Grant Team and I have been **meeting with the building Principals and School Adjustment Counselors** to discuss my role within each individual school. At this point, I am beginning a number of projects throughout the district. I am introducing the Granger staff and students to the **"Bully Proofing" curriculum** through classroom lessons that I will deliver throughout the month of October. The Grant Team has collaborated to create **lessons that target Kindergarten bus behavior as well as third and fourth grade recess behavior**, and I will be delivering these lessons to Clark and Robinson students. At Agawam Middle School, I am currently putting together small **Study Skills groups** that will meet for six-week periods to work on time-management, organization, and preparing for tests. I also wanted to update everyone on some scheduling changes. I will continue to follow my original schedule while making time to attend monthly PBIS meetings at all four schools, which will periodically result in a change of schedule.

-Kristie LaRochelle, School Counselor: Clark, Granger, Robinson Park and Middle School

My first month at Agawam has been a wonderful experience! I would like to thank everyone for all of their support in helping me to get acquainted with the district. Now that we are well into the school year, I have begun to work on several projects. At the **Agawam Early Childhood Center**, I am **working with staff as they begin to implement PBIS**. Also, I am going to be **co-teaching the Second Step curriculum** in a few of the classrooms. At Phelps, I have been doing a lot of classroom observations around student behavior. As a result, I am going to be starting **small group work with children around social/emotional development**. Topics that we are going to focus on include: anger management techniques, learning about personal responsibility, how to wait patiently, and how to gain attention in a positive manner. I am also in the beginning stages of developing an **anti-bullying curriculum**, which will be implemented K-4 at Phelps. Additionally, Steve LaCroix, the School Adjustment Counselor at Phelps, and I have been working collaboratively on implementing two different **social skills groups** for children using the SkillStreaming curriculum. I will continue to follow my original schedule, except for team meetings at other schools.

-Merrie-Beth Maynard, School Counselor: ECC and Phelps

I have enjoyed meeting and getting to know staff, students, and families in all of the schools, and I appreciate how welcoming everyone has been so far! I've been busy learning the ropes at each of the schools I support, and am beginning to work directly with students and staff. I have joined the **Instructional Support Teams at each of the elementary schools and the middle school**, and am hoping to **support teachers with behavior planning for individual students** through my involvement on the ISTs. At the Early Childhood Center, I will be working with staff to organize a **Child Study Team**, a regular forum for staff to discuss and plan for individual students in their classrooms, and I plan to help transfer some of the practices I have seen at the other schools to the ECC. Finally, as we get to know the needs of students in each of the buildings, I will begin offering **small group support** to students around topics such as attention and focus, impulsivity, frustration tolerance, and social skills/friendship. As the school year started, my fixed schedule allowed me to meet staff and get a sense of the schedules and routines at each building. Now that I have begun working directly with teachers and staff, my schedule will be more flexible so that I am able to be in schools as needed. I will continue to work with counselors, administrators, and ISTs to identify students who need support, and would **welcome referrals from teachers and other staff around students who are having behavioral challenges**. The best way to reach me is through email, and I'm happy to meet before or after school or during prep periods.

-Joanne Morgan, School Psychologist; PreK-6

AGAWAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS COUNSELORS' MISSION STATEMENT

Counselors work together in partnership with the community to promote the development of each student's academic, social/emotional, and career potential. Through a comprehensive counseling program, counselors assist all students in realizing their abilities, interests, and goals as they transition through the educational process to become successful members of society and life-long learners.