

May Newsletter

Dear Students, Parents and Community Members,

Let me be the first to comment on how quickly the 2009-2010 school year has gone by. I can still feel the excitement of the first day of school and now with warm weather and summer activities beginning I do feel the excitement that comes with summer time. Unlike our students, I do not count down the days to summer vacation. As an administrator there are too many things to get done before our students leave us to go their separate ways for the summer and when I hear how few days we have left I get a little nervous. The month of May is filled with activities: Blast Off to Junior High, track meets, awards programs, scheduling for the 2010-2011 school year, etc. It's a busy and exciting time for students and staff.

I am pleased to report that many of our students have made great gains throughout the school year. Our final MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) testing has been completed and the data proves that our students and teachers have been working hard all year long. We expect to receive our ISAT data the first weeks of June and I am hoping that we did as well on those standardized tests as we did on MAP. Along with academic progress our students have grown socially and emotionally. One of the pleasures of being a Principal is watching students enter in the fall and to see growth made throughout the school year. I am sure that you see this with your own child.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our end of year activities. I take tremendous pride in Unity Junior High School, its staff, students, and school community. I am looking forward to our future endeavors together. I hope that you enjoy some "down" time with your children this summer.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve your children,

Mary Hettinger

June 2, 2010 Awards Day

6th grade awards 9:00 a.m.

7th grade awards 9:45 a.m.

8th grade awards 10:30 a.m.

Parents, you will be notified by letter if your child will be receiving an academic award on June 2, 2010. The awards program will be held in the Rocket Center.

June 3, 2010 Teachers' Institute Day

June 4, 2010 Report Cards Distributed

Postcards from Your Summer Travels

Last summer I received 79 postcards from your summer travels and they were displayed in the cafeteria on a map of the United States. This was a great visual which gave students an opportunity to see the various places we traveled to and to talk about where they had gone and where they might like to go in the future. With your help I would like to see this activity continue.

Please send a postcard from your summer travels to:

Mary Hettinger

c/o Unity Junior High School

1121 County Road 800 N.

Tolono, IL 61880

I will chart all the fun places we had the opportunity to travel to during our summer vacation. Postcards from all of your favorite places will be displayed (it doesn't matter how far you travel, even the postcards from the shortest destinations will be charted.) Last summer we had postcards from local areas which were fun to chart. Thank you, I

love to receive your postcards during the summer months and we all enjoy them when the school year begins.

Notes from Nurse Causey

Reminder: Physical exams are required for all kindergarten, sixth and ninth grade students. This must be on the State of Illinois Certificate of Child Health Examination Form. Please make appointments now.

Summer is also a good time to schedule a sport physical. Any child participating in school sponsored sports is required to have a current physical on file. A physical on June 8, 2010 will be good until June 9, 2011. The physical is only good for one year from the date of the exam. The sixth and ninth grade exams will cover sports, but **a sport physical form is not acceptable as a sixth or ninth grade exam.**

If your child has medication at school, please have him/her pick it up on the last day of school. Medication that is not picked up will be disposed of after report card day.

New medication authorization forms are required for each new school year. Medication authorization forms and asthma inhaler forms are available at unitsevenschools.com under registration forms. Forms can be printed and taken to the doctor for completion and returned at registration or on the first day of school. Questions? Please contact me at 485-6735 or causeyj@unity.k12.il.us.

Mr. Striegel's Eighth Grade Social Studies Classes

We have just started working on our culminating project entitled "Guess Who is Coming to Dinner." Students will work with a partner to create a Photostory presentation that discusses ten figures from American and their contributions. The project is planned for three weeks and requires the students to be disciplined, on task, and cooperative. For more details please visit <http://www.ujhs.com/mediacenter/dinner/dinner.html> . The project web site has the timeline for the project, expectations, and grading rubric. Furthermore, the library will be open from 3-4 Monday - Thursday for students who would like to have extra time to work.

Mrs. Bates's Eighth Grade Science Classes

Wow! Time really does fly when you are having fun! What a great year we have had, and I cannot believe that we are winding down to the end!

May will be devoted to energy and energy resources. Today, it is more important than ever for our young people get educated in the opportunities and advantages of alternative energies and how to conserve the resources that we use. Students will be working on independent learning contracts throughout the month of May. Students are presented with a list of many activities dealing with energy, energy usage, energy conservation, and alternative energy sources. They will choose the activities they wish to complete, and will work in class to get them done. We

will begin working on this project on Tuesday, May 4 and all activities will be due on Thursday, May 27. Students who choose to build a solar cooker will also have a solar cookout on this day. At this time, students may cook hot dogs in Pringles cans or s'mores in pizza boxes outside!

Thank you for such a fun year, and have a WONDERFUL summer vacation!

Mrs. King's Language Arts Classes

We are currently working on some review grammar lessons. In a few days we will be starting our mystery unit. We will have a speaker from the state police crime lab in Springfield. We will also do a "mock" crime scene activity, and we will be reading Agatha Christie's novel *And Then There Were None*. We will finish up the last few weeks of the year with our poetry unit. As always, homework and grades are posted on STI. Please help your child finish the year well by ensuring they do all homework. Grades count until the last day of school.

Mrs. Gidcomb's Language Arts Classes

Hello Parents,

May finds my eighth grade classes reading the novel *And Then There Were None* by Agatha Christie. While reading the novel, we will continue to do mini-lessons on various reading skills, such as deduction and induction, connotation and denotation, context, and summarizing. Once we finish the novel, we will move into poetry, both reading and writing it. My advanced English class will continue with their vocabulary lessons through the end of May.

My seventh grade students will finish their novel *Jacob's Rescue* at the beginning of May. All through May, we will continue with the vocabulary units. We will do a letter writing unit, followed by poetry, mythology, and drama. Students will do some Reader's Theater as well as acting out a play or two. That will bring us to the end of the school year.

Mrs. Maxwell's Math Classes

The algebra class will be starting chapter eleven. In chapter eleven, students will add, subtract, multiply, and divide square roots. We will also study two popular formulas: the Pythagorean Theorem and the distance formula, which utilize square roots. Finally, we will finish up with similar triangles and some trig ratios. Hopefully the weather will be nice enough that we can go outside and use our trig ratios in a real life experiment. We will finish the year with a final exam over chapters six through eleven and fourteen on May 27 and 28.

The pre-algebra classes will finish drawing the floor plan of a house they design. The students will also complete a project where they create their own tessellation. In addition, they will be going to the computer lab to play My Mathematical Life, a game which simulates real life (having a job, paying bills, having children). Finally, we will work on chapter nine and learn about statistics. The students will collect data, make graphs, and analyze misleading graphs.

Please check your child's grades online and email me with any concerns or questions at maxwellv@unity.k12.il.us I usually update their grades each Friday.

Mrs. Phillips's Math Class

As the year is winding down, my math class is finishing some individual work. Each student is working on a set of specific skills they need to master before moving on to high school. As a fun end of the year project, the students will be using their measurement and following direction skills to create kites. It's really fun to see serious mature eighth graders' eyes light up when they get their kites up in the air! On a personal note, I will be taking a one year maternity leave for the 2010-2011 year. I will miss Unity Junior High but feel like the time with my family will be irreplaceable. Thank you for all your support!

Mrs. Ingram's Seventh Grade Language Arts Classes

Thank you to all the parents who chaperoned on the April 28 field trip. We certainly enjoyed our day at Wildlife Prairie Park.

With this school year drawing to a close, we have time for only a few more lessons and activities in language arts. Currently we are working on the poetry unit and will probably finish that up the first week of May. On Thursday, April 29, as part of Poem in Your Pocket Day, each student carried a poem in his or her pocket and recited the poem on demand. Next we will work on persuasive speeches (students could begin thinking of a possible topic), followed by a quick study of Greek mythology. We will try to include some readers' theatre as well and possibly a short writing project.

Thank you for your support this year. I have truly enjoyed working with your children. Best wishes for a relaxing and rejuvenating summer.

Mrs. McQueen's Seventh Grade Science Classes

Did you know that worms have 5 hearts? Students learned this and much more about the anatomy of the common earthworm. Our worm dissection unit is complete. Our current unit of study is the "grass frog" or "leopard frog". We are dissecting frogs in the science lab. Following that unit will be a test on identifying frog anatomy and a separate test over the vocab. terms/definitions as well as some general frog facts learned. Learning about the frog's systems helps us to learn about our own bodies, as well as encourages those budding nurses and doctors! (Right now would be a good time to remind your child that safety is "job one" in the science lab, as we do use sharp tools to dissect the frogs.)

Thank you to those of you who have donated panty hose or knee highs! It has been a great help. Keep those donations coming, because I have started stocking up for next year! We made a "Soil Sam" with the hosiery and are watching the grass grow as the "hair" for Sam, as we talk about soil, growing factors, variables, etc. We always need knee high or regular panty hose, any size, any color, and it can be used or new.

Mr. Miller's Seventh Grade Social Studies Classes

The Constitution test is nearly upon us. As of now the test is scheduled for May 18, but is suspect to change depending on the rate at which we cover the twenty-seven amendments. After the federal Constitution, we will be touching on the Illinois Constitution. This will not take very long as it is similar to the Federal Constitution. Your children will be given study guides for these particular tests to study. It is very important that they study, as they need pass this exam. If you have any questions about this please contact me. When I know the exact date, I will be sure to inform your students so you can be watching for the study guide.

After the Constitution we will quickly touch on the material prior to the Civil War. This material includes Westward Expansion, Manifest Destiny, and conflict with Native Americans, War of 1812, Mexican-American War, and Gold Rush. As I said, we will only be touching on these topics due to time restraints.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your patience and feedback. My experience here as a first year teacher has been incredible. Knowledge I have gained throughout the duration of this first year, will be unmatched. Again, I would like to thank all of you for your support, and I look forward to meeting a new group of students next year!

Mrs. Cain's Seventh Grade Math Classes

Math 7 is working on a unit on graphs and ways to display data. The assessment for this chapter will be a poster project. Next as an accumulative activity we will be working with a computer program that simulates the math aspects of everyday life called "My Mathematical Life." Students will need a calculator for these units please double check that your student has one.

Pre-algebra is studying a chapter similar to what an algebra class would use with equations and inequalities and functions and graphs. Lastly, they will also be working with the "My Mathematical Life" program.

After our current chapters are finished, all students will working the fourth quarter project – Math Alphabet Book, for this everyone will need a simple folder with prongs and colored pencils. The due date is May 24.

Ms. Labayen's Language Arts Classes

It has been an exciting year in Ms. Labayen's Language Arts classes. We have read many novels, short stories, poems, and plays. We read depressing and moving stories as well as comedic and dramatic stories. We studied grammar and did our best to perfect the eight parts of speech, along with their many intricacies. We expanded our vocabularies and improved our spelling. We studied Greek and Roman mythology, we learned the Greek alphabet, and we completed two book reports. We have utilized our creativity drawing and making comics based on novels. We wrote and acted out plays. We wrote many essays, extended responses, and journals. We really enjoyed meeting Ben Mikaelson, the author of *Touching Spirit Bear*. In May we read *Prince Caspian* in the sixth grade and *The Watsons go to Birmingham* in seventh. We are reading *Petey*, a Ben Mikaelson book, and *Schooled*, a Rebecca Caudill nominee. We will be finishing

the year reviewing all that we have learned. This review will culminate in the creation of a class magazine- showcasing our best work and sharing our class memories. I had an amazing first year at Unity Junior High School and hope my students will continue to grow, demonstrating their vast knowledge of the English language, literature, and writing.

Mrs. Black's Sixth Grade Math Classes

It is hard to believe that the school year is quickly coming to an end. We have worked diligently to plug the holes in the mathematical foundation to ensure that each student has the ability to be successful in their mathematical life. I also hope that they have come to enjoy math and not fear it. If I have accomplished anything – I hope each child feels that math is certainly something that they can do when they put their mind to it. Thanks for sharing your child with me this year.

Mrs. Nelson's Sixth Grade Science Classes

The school year is quickly coming to an end. We have just finished our Solar System project. Many worked hard and did a good job on their research and PowerPoint presentations. More practice is definitely needed in speaking in front of their classmates. We will end the year studying the ocean and if time a little on stars. Good luck to all next year.

Ms. Payne's Language Arts Classes

I can't believe that it is the end of the school year. The students have worked hard and made a lot of progress this year.

My sixth and seventh grade classes are going to finish up the year reading *Among the Impostors*. This is the second novel in a series by Margaret Peterson Haddix. They have all read the first novel *Among the Hidden* and enjoyed it. We will also be reviewing grammar concepts to finish out the year.

My eighth grade class will be finishing out the year by reading the novel *Blood on the River*. They will also be working on finishing up a chapter on how to do research. If time permits, they will each do speeches.

Remind your students to continue to read during the summer.

Mrs. Kohlenberg's Classes

Physical Education:

In Physical Education, we just finished our badminton doubles and singles tournaments. Many of the girls developed great game strategies that had their opponents running all over the court. We will finish out the school year with a softball unit.

Health:

We are currently learning about diseases, the causes of diseases, and how to prevent certain diseases. To end the year, we will learn about alcohol and tobacco, the dangers of these things, and how to resist the pressure to use these things.

Careers:

We just completed a very interesting "Envision Your Life" packet. Ask your child to share his/her packet with you. We are currently learning how to fill out college and job applications. We will end the school year with learning about the interviewing process and doing mock interviews. In addition, we are planning to have a few guest speakers come in to talk about their careers.

Mr. Kyle's PE Classes

Boys PE classes have finished their badminton unit and are now outside enjoying the nice spring weather. Currently we are playing softball for the next couple of weeks and will finish with a final round of fitness testing and a variety of other activities. Overall, the kids have worked hard and improved their fitness levels and enjoyed playing a variety of sports. Let's hope that they will find ways to stay active this summer and not spend all of their time behind the computer, video, or TV screen.