



SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

McAlister Intermediate School

April 2014

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260 Mountain Road | Suffield, CT 06078 | 860-668-3830 | <http://www.suffield.org>

UPCOMING EVENTS

McAlister's Principal Conversations

Tuesday, April 1st
8:15 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.

Main Office Conference Room

BOE Meeting

Tuesday, April 1st
6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
SMS Media Center

Autism Awareness - Wear Blue

Wednesday, April 2nd

Family Game Night - Brain Challenge

Friday, April 4th
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
McAlister Gym

Suffield Idol Rehearsal

Tuesday, April 8th
3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
SHS Auditorium

Partnering With Parents

Wednesday, April 9th
6:30 p.m.
Suffield High School

Suffield Idol

Friday, April 11th
Segment 1 4:30 p.m.
Segment 2 6:30 p.m.
SHS Auditorium

No School

April 14th - April 18th
April Vacation

BOE Meeting

Tuesday, April 22nd
6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
SHS Media Center

*"Today a reader,
tomorrow a leader."*
- Margaret Fuller



A Message From The Principal

It is hard to believe that spring has sprung and we are rolling right into the month of April! It seems like just yesterday we were welcoming our students to the first day of the 2013-2014 school year. Now we are in the midst of many activities during the school day as well as making plans for the remainder of the school year. We are fortunate that our collective hard work makes McAlister such a great place to learn, and we thank you all for being part of it!

Karen C. Carpenter, Ed.D.

Conferences and Class Placement

We recently held our very successful parent teacher conferences. We are grateful that our families came out for these very important meetings, as they are a time to discuss students' academic, social, and emotional development, as well as any concerns that teachers or parents may have. It is through these thoughtful conversations that we are able to work together to meet the needs of all students. At the March parent-teacher conferences, we often begin to look ahead to our students transitioning to the next grade level. To that end, we sent home a letter asking our families for their input regarding the class placement process for the 2014-2015 school year. The class placement process is one of the most thoughtful processes that we embark upon each year, and we both welcome and value our families' input. Please be sure to send in your confidential letters directly to the main office.

Smarter Balanced Field Tests

We are also in the middle of administering the Smarter Balanced Field Tests. We are administering these Field Tests in lieu of the Connecticut Mastery Tests, as they are aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Even with the initial, nation-wide delay in the start date for the testing, we will work to complete all testing by Friday, April 4. Please note that we are typically testing students between 9:00 A.M. and 10:00 A.M. each morning. We look forward to the Smarter Balanced Field Tests helping us reach our goal of college and career readiness for all students.





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Virtual Backpack



<http://www.suffield.org/misvb>

[2013-2014 School Calendar](#)

[2014 - 2015 District Calendar](#)

[School Lunch and Breakfast Menus](#)

[2013 2014 McAlister Family Handbook](#)

[Summer Camps and Recreational Activities for Children with Special Needs](#)

[2014-2015 Class Placement Process](#)

[Suffield Elementary PTO Calendar 2013-2014](#)

[Suffield PMC Kids Bike Ride - Jimmy Fund benefit](#)

[College for Kids at Westfield State University](#)

[Egg Hunt & Bunny Visit - Saturday, April 5th, 2014](#)

[Enfield Challenger Baseball - Starting Soon](#)

[Family Game Night BRAIN CHALLENGE! - Friday, April 4th](#)

[Girls' Basketball Camp for grades 4 - 8 at Suffield High School](#)

[March Curriculum Newsletter](#)

[Munsons Order Pick up](#)

[North Central Community Collaborative Support Groups](#)

[Park & Rec Spring Brochure](#)

[Partnering With Parents - 21st Century Skills - Wednesday, April 9, 2014](#)

[PTO Help Wanted 2014-2015](#)

Suffield Day at Springfield Falcons

Over 300 Spaulding and McAlister community members joined together for a night of hockey and fun at the recent "Suffield Day at the Springfield Falcons". It was a very spirited evening organized by Mrs. Baril and Mrs. Goldstein. Students were treated to a lively game, special recognition, a chance to win t-shirts, a free-skate afterwards, and many other memorable events. We are once again so grateful for our teachers and PTO in setting up this event, and to all of our families who attended. Events like these build our sense of community through a common experience that's both fun and engaging.



Extra-curricular Activities

As we turn to the spring months, we are again looking forward to many extra-curricular activities. Activities such as:

Family Game Night Brain Challenge



The PTO-sponsored Family Game Night Brain Challenge will be held on Friday, April 4. This fun-filled evening is for our Spaulding and McAlister families. Brain Challenge is a simulated "live" TV game show complete with show host. The show is a combination of age appropriate "Jeopardy", "College Bowl", and "Beat the Clock". Please note that there will be a LIVE AUCTION including Rides to School in a Police Car or Fire Truck and Lunch with the Principals. All proceeds go to our Suffield Elementary PTO.

Suffield Idol

Suffield Idol will be held on Friday, April 11. On this night we will have over 60 individual and group student acts that include our students singing, dancing, acting, and many other talents! We always look forward to this



evening as we are continually amazed by the hidden talents of our students. Please be sure to join us for this evening--and remember it will be held at the Suffield High School Performing Arts Center. The evening will be divided into two sessions--one starting at 4:30 P.M. and one starting at 6:30 P.M.

Third Grade Fitness Night

Third Grade Fitness Night on April 28. On this night, our physical education teachers bring both our third grade students and parents together in the McAlister gym for a night of active games and learning about healthy lifestyles. This is always a fun evening for both students and parents--be sure to wear athletic clothing for this event! We look forward to seeing our third grade students and families for this memorable evening.



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Principal Conversations

An opportunity for parents to :

- Meet with the principal, Karen Carpenter-Snow and assistant principal, Jack Ferraro
- Hear about the latest school and district initiatives
- Discuss important events
- Solidify the home-school connection that is so important to the success of our students.

Please join us for our next meeting:

Tuesday, April 1st
8:15 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.

McAlister Main
Office Conference
Room

April Theme:

**Open
Conversation:
Questions and
Answers**

Reading Workshop Model

In our community of learners at McAlister, we are all working to build our capacity. On March 28th, we will work with our teachers to continue building their capacity in implementing Reading Workshop model. For the remainder of this year and throughout next year, we will continue to learn more and more about the Reading Workshop model; as through its implementation, our students use a variety of authentic texts, receive strategic comprehension instruction, and learn how to deeply analyze a variety of both fiction and non-fiction texts.

McAlister is Gearing Up for Expanding Horizons

by Joseph Rapuano, Grade 5 Teacher

After a rather long, weary winter, McAlister Intermediate students are anticipating a new session of the Expanding Horizons program spearheaded by our own Mrs. Melanie Motter. Once again Mrs. Motter has rounded up a diverse and stimulating assortment of course offerings that should please many of our inquisitive students.

This popular, after-school program will run during March and April and is open to students in all grade levels. This year the program includes choices like the ever-popular Cartooning with Suffield resident cartoonist, Rick Stromoski, Active Games for those seeking a physical release, and Spring Crafts to delight the creative minds and hands of children.



But wait, it doesn't end here! There is Legomania for the architects and builders among us plus Chess & Checkers to fire up the neurons of those seeking a mental challenge.

And for the animal and nature lovers, this year includes an opportunity to join the new BAT Club to study the habits and life cycle of these leathery-winged wonders of the animal kingdom. If digital is more to your liking, our computer guru, Mr. Tim O'Shea, will once again be teaching kids how to create their own computer games. Imagine having your friends play a computer game that you designed yourself!

Expanding Horizons has become a vital mainstay at McAlister Intermediate School because it's an after-school program offered every Fall and Spring to provide fun, educational courses to our students. What a terrific way for children and adults to interact in a relaxed atmosphere. Also, Expanding Horizons gives children from each grade level a chance to work and play together under the expert guidance of McAlister staff and invited local community members at large.



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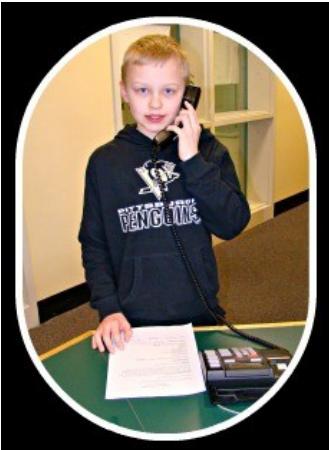
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Starting Off Each Day “The McAlister Way”

One of the tenets of “The McAlister Way” is for all of us to take “responsibility for our actions, our work, our property, and our mistakes.” We believe when we empower students to have an active voice and assume responsibility for their learning environment, they are naturally motivated and on a path toward independent, lifelong, purposeful learning.

One way we support students in taking ownership of their school is through our daily morning announcements. At approximately 8:40 a.m., our entire school community takes pause as students assume responsibility for the morning’s intercom announcements. With an active and celebratory voice, students communicate classroom, school-wide and district-wide activities, announce by name all students and staff members who are having a birthday, and celebrate students who have been recognized for showing “The McAlister Way” through their kind, caring and respectful words and actions. Announcements end with our student-led, school-wide pledge to the flag and our collective reflection on a symbolic “thought for the day,” reminding us that we are a community of learners united in our quests to learn.



Friendly Reminders

The **PTO Munson's Fundraiser** orders should be in and ready for pickup during the first week of April. Be sure to look for the reminder flyer coming home soon with all the details.

All items in our **Lost and Found** were displayed in the front hallway during the Parent Teacher Conferences. Please know that if the items are not picked up by April 7 they will be donated to a local charity.

Our **2014-2015 school calendar** has been released--we will be sending home copies of the calendar in June, but please know that it is available on our Virtual Backpack at mis.suffield.org.



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Mary Halzack | 3rd Grade Teacher | 30+ Years in Education



What motivates you to be in education?

I have been an educator for over thirty years, and I think the single most motivating thing about being a teacher is the ongoing feeling and hope that I can make a difference in a child's life. Finding that book that makes a child excited about reading, helping a reluctant writer find that story or poem that's inside him, seeing those "aha!" moments in math when a student solves a challenging problem, helping students to understand each other and build friendships...these are the things that keep me in education. These are the things that never get old.

What is your favorite part of the school day?

One of my favorite parts of the school day is morning meeting. I like the sense of community that grows out of morning meeting. It provides a place where we can get to know each other, discuss what we will be learning that day, and share ideas. It is a way to start each day on a positive note. In terms of academics, my favorite times of the day are reading and writing workshop. I love children's literature and the many opportunities it provides to teach reading strategies and to model good writing. I also really enjoy reading aloud to students and hearing them share their ideas about the characters or their predictions about what will happen next. Their thinking always amazes me!

What does The McAlister Way mean to you?

For me, the McAlister Way is building a sense of caring and community in the classroom and in our school. It means creating a positive climate for students so they feel safe and cared for. When students have this kind of positive environment, they look forward to coming to school and they are more willing to take risks as learners. I believe the McAlister Way represents a respectful way of interacting with each other...between students, between students and adults, and between adults. It is that feeling that our words and actions matter and that each of us contributes to a positive school environment.

Traditions

3rd Grade Zumba



5th Grade Nomads

