## **School Talk**

## **November 2, 2018**

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**FALL BACK!**

Don’t forget to set your clocks back an hour this **Sunday, November 4th** at 2AM as Daylight Savings Time comes to an end.

**PROGRAM NEWS**

**No school on Tuesday, November 6!** Remember that school is closed to students due to Election day polling and Teacher grade preparation day.

**REMINDER: 4th Grade Montessori Swimming** The 4th grade Montessori students will begin their swimming program at Wakefield on November 5th through the 13th. (No swimming on November 6th and 12th). The schedule for swimming is as follows:

* 9:30AM - 10:30AM, Lopatkiewicz and Pirro
* 10:30AM - 11:30AM, Hernandez and Ross

Students will need to bring a swimsuit and towel every day of the swim program. Permission slips will be going home soon. Volunteers to be in the locker rooms to assist students are also needed so please mark your availability on the forms when they go home.

**TEACHERS CORNER**

This month is the month for giving thanks! That means that many of our teachers will be hosting Thanksgiving celebrations in their classrooms. Here are the celebrations already on the calendar. If your teacher isn’t listed, check with them (or your room parent) and see if there is a plan in the works and please ask how you can help.

* **November 16:** Ms. Lopatkiewicz, Ms. Mendolia.
* **November 20:** Ms. Alcorn, Ms. Hernandez, Ms. Lawot, Ms. Ross, Ms. Stork, Ms. Yamashita.

**LIBRARIAN’S CORNER**

Due to circumstances, the Bedford Falls Book Fair is being postponed. A new date will be announced in the future.

**PTA NEWS**

The **Reflections** competition has closed and no more entries will be accepted. We will announce our program’s winners soon and announce who will be moving on to the County Reflections competition. Thank you to all who entered.

**Save the Date:**

* **Saturday, November 17th**: ALL DAY fundraiser at the **Lost Dog Café** on Columbia Pike. **11AM to 10PM**. Eat in or call ahead and carry out! ACMPTA gets **20%** of the proceeds! You can skip cooking lunch AND dinner that day!
* **Saturday, December 2nd**: **ACMPTA Movie Matinee** featuring the film **Home Alone**! Bring your blankets and snacks and watch this timeless 1990’s classic. **Doors open at 2PM**. The PTA will provide cookies and juice. Clarendon United Methodist Church.

**UPCOMING DATES:**

* Monday, November 5-13th: 4th Grade Swimming
* Tuesday, November 6th: Teacher work day, NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS
* Monday, November 12th: Veterans’ Day Holiday, NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS
* Wednesday, November 14th: PTA General Meeting feat. Va529 Plan Info. 7PM at Patrick Henry ES.
* Saturday, November 17th: Lost Dog Café fundraiser, Columbia Pike location, 11AM to 10PM

**LINKS**

* Arlington Montessori Program on APS: <https://drew.apsva.us/the-montessori-program/>
* Principal Genove on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CSGenove>
* Engage with APS https://www.apsva.us/engage/
* Lunch Menus: https://apsva.nutrislice.com/menus-eula-splash
* Arlington Montessori PTA: <https://acmpta.com/>.

**A MONTESSORI MOMENT**

**Except for those new to APS Montessori, you should by now be familiar with our “report card”, actually called “progress reports”. There are no A, B, Cs but instead 1s and 2s and Ps and Ms. This week’s article explains why Montessori does not use the typical letter grading system and gives guidance on how to read and better understand our progress reports.**

**How Progress Reports Work in the Montessori Classroom**

*Michele Irinyi, North American Montessori Center (NAMC)*

I know I’m not alone when I say that one of my least favorite tasks is writing progress reports. Montessori teachers take extra time to personalize each child’s progress report. If we are following the child, our progress reports must reflect the individual child’s progress. Many parents and teachers alike are unsure of how progress reports actually work in the Montessori learning environment.

Why write a progress report? How does the Montessori progress report differ from a traditional school's report card? NAMC has compiled some helpful information for the Montessori parents and teachers who want to know more about  progress reports in the classroom.

**Purpose of a Progress Report**

Progress reports record and assess each student’s academic and social development, as well as clarify goals.

**Types of Progress Reports**

There are two basic types of Montessori progress reports: the checklist format and the narrative-style report. The checklist format is a checklist of important work, skills, and lessons that the child could receive. The curriculum is broken down into specific areas, which are assessed by an evaluative key. These keys vary, but convey the sense that the material has been 1) presented, 2) practiced, and eventually 3) mastered. For the parent, a checklist seems to focus the attention on the key or “grade”, rather than on the child’s personal qualities and development. These record sheets are important for the Montessori teacher as she is able to record her observations and follow the progress of each child.

The narrative progress report is the most demanding for teachers, but as parents have shared with me time and time again, it’s the most rewarding for parents as they really gain a true feeling as to what their child is learning. The narrative progress report recognizes that each child is unique and whose development cannot fully be understood or assisted by using a checklist approach. It gives a more detailed description of the child’s work and choices of work. For both the parent and child, a narrative report assures them that “My teacher really understands and cares about me/my child.”

The narrative progress report also allows the Montessori teacher to address character development, something which is nearly impossible to do with a checklist. The development of independence, initiative, responsibility, confidence, social awareness, cooperation, concentration, helpfulness, and commitment to work is a crucial element of Dr. Montessori’s curriculum and ones that need the well-thought out use of words to convey.

**The Language of Progress Reports: Keeping it Positive**

Begin the report with positive comments. It is important for teachers to reflect upon and remember that each child, no matter how challenging, has good qualities. These qualities need to be brought to the forefront of the progress report. Parents are always happy to know that you think well of their child and it also helps “soften the blow” if there are some difficult situations to be addressed.

The language of progress reports should also model the language we use in our Montessori classrooms. Instead of saying “Don’t run!”, Montessori teachers say “Please use walking feet.” The same is true in progress reports. Instead of saying “Magda talks to her friends all the time”, we say “Magda is very social”. Instead of saying “Kevin consistently interrupts during lessons”, we say “Kevin is learning to focus his attention and listen during lessons”.

As a new Montessori teacher, this was the most difficult part of writing progress reports. Over time, it became second nature, but there are still times when I will ask a fellow Montessori teacher to help me re-phrase a delicate statement. I’ve put together some useful phrases to help you when it comes time to write your own progress reports.

As each progress report becomes part of the student’s formal school record, and will be read by parents and future teachers, it is important for the teacher to treat progress reports as important documents. The most effective progress report is thorough and has a friendly feel to it. It discusses the student’s progress and personality in a way that only someone who truly knows and understand the student could convey.

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| **Instead of Saying... Montessori teachers use...** |
| Wanders from task to task/wastes time | Is learning to occupy his time more constructively |
| Short attention span | Is becoming more dependable during work periods |
| Not working to full potential | Has great potential and is working toward achieving it |
| Doesn’t follow directions | Is learning to listen to directions more carefully |
| Doesn’t maintain a clean workspace/materials | Is learning to take care of her workspace and classroom materials |
| Clingy/needy | Is continuing to grow in independence |
| Is easily distracted | Is learning to concentrate on her work |
| Irresponsible | Is developing his sense of responsibility |
| Doesn’t play fair | Is learning to be more cooperative, careful, and fair |