

DR. HIGDON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER September 2009



Message from the Principal

Dear Parents,
As we begin a new school year, it is such a thrill to watch how excited the children are to show off new book bags, clothes, etc. Their enthusiasm abounds and they enter the bright, shiny classrooms full of anticipation for what the year will bring. Thank you all for reinforcing the importance of their education and letting us have them each day. It is our pledge to educate them, help them to become productive members of society and to be able to know where to find new information during an age where information can change so rapidly.

We have several plans for the year with our wonderful PTA's help. We have had one in-school field trip already and will have the second of five total on October 9 which is called Physics is Fun. The PTA supports these educational performances through their fundraising efforts and we are very grateful. We hope you will join the PTA and help with their many wonderful activities this year. Look for the Harvest Festival that is scheduled for the end of October. We will send more information later.

Once again we ask for your help with attendance. Each year we must meet state requirements. Each year

we barely make 94%.
We are shooting for at



least 95% this year. We ask that you schedule vacations for days when we are closed and to make sure the children are only staying home for being sick. Thank you for helping us as this is very important, not only for the state requirements, but without your child, the classroom does not operate in the same way.

We look forward to a wonderful year. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please call.

Sincerely,

Peggy E. Mertes

Donations for Higdon

Donations from Target:
Visit
www.target.com/tcoe or
call 1-800-316-6142.

Every time you use your
target red-card, 1% of
your purchase is donated
to Dr. Higdon.

Donations from
Safeway: Visit
www.escrip.com Group
Name: Dr. Higdon
Elementary-Group
ID#6595113. When you
sign up a percentage will
be donated to Dr.
Higdon.

Science News

Welcome back to
another great school
year! Mrs. Cross has
returned as the full time
science teacher and will
be teaching grades 2-5.
We will begin our year
reviewing some basic
measuring concepts and
learning about matter in
all grade levels.

Our science fair will
take place this winter so
start thinking about
some project ideas! This
year, the students who
are entering the fair will
be completing a journal

along with their project.
Mrs. Cross will be
giving out more
information about the
journal in class. The
date of the science fair is
**Wednesday February
3rd, 2010.**

We will be starting a
Robotics Program with
some of our 5th grade
students this year. It is a
brand new program to
our school and we will
be getting more
information in the near
future. As soon as we
know more, the
information will be
passed along to
students!

If you have any
questions about science,
please feel free to
contact Mrs. Cross!

PE PAGE

1st Quarter
Hello and
welcome to the PE
PAGE of the newsletter.
I am Ms. Jill Jowdy, the
PE teacher and will try
to keep you updated
about what is happening
in PE classes at Dr.
Higdon.

Please be sure
that your child has their
tennis shoes on PE day.
I cannot let students
participate without
tennis shoes!

**Have your children
been doing any
exercises during TV
commercials? I
hope so!! I have
given them an
assignment to do
what we call
"Commercial
Crunches" to stay
in shape when
commercials come
on TV instead of
just sitting and
watching TV the
whole time. So look
for sit-ups, push-
ups, and hamstring
stretches during
commercials. I'll be
checking on them!
Hey, Moms and
Dad's - give those
crunches a try, too!
You'll be glad you
did!**

We've also
begun our Run For Your
Life extra-credit running
program in grades 1-5.
Students can choose to
run extra credit after
they have completed
their regular running in
PE class. Each time
they complete 6 laps of
extra-credit (1 mile),
they will receive a foot
token that can be worn
on the shoelaces or
necklace or a bracelet to
show how hard they
have worked. So, look
for those feet! Also,
with their first foot, they
will get a necklace to

put the feet on! They are very excited about this.

Grades 3, 4, and 5 have been working on the Fitnessgram physical fitness test this first quarter. This test is being done countywide. I will also post-test in April and May to see what progress your children have made. They're doing well and working hard. Those results will be sent home in report card envelopes.

Also, if your child completed the summer fitness calendar that was created on Field Day last year, please have them bring it to school so I can see all of the great activities they have worked on over the summer.

Until next time.....Ms. Jowdy

To: Parents/Guardians
From: Gwen Springer,
Technology Facilitator
Computer Lab, 2009-
2010



We welcome students from Kindergarten to 5th

grade in the computer lab this year.

Kindergarten will receive two ½ hour sessions and all other grades will receive 1 hour sessions.

The computer lab will be using the Md. Technology Literacy Standards for students to reinforce the teaching of the Charles County Public Schools Essential Curriculum at each grade level.

We are still collecting Internet Contracts from some students. These were included in the Code of Student Conduct books that were sent home with all students. I am in the process of sending home second notices this week. Please discuss Internet safety with your students, sign and return these to school. For your students safety on the internet we have an internet start page for each grade level. When they come to the computer lab they go to sites that have been selected for a specific lesson or review. This is coordinated with what they are doing in their classrooms.

Kindergarten has visited

<http://www.starfall.com>,
<http://www.pbskids.com>
to learn about each letter and the sounds they make. They also visited <http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/bll/reggie/index.htm>

and worked on rhyming words. They also visited our Riverdeep software program and reviewed numbers to 5.

1st Grade is also reviewing letters and sounds in <http://www.starfall.com> and

<http://www.abcya.com> .

They created a document in Kidspiration matching pictures and the letters they start with. They visited the Riverdeep program and worked on number recognition and adding numbers to 10. They will also be using a program called dancemat typing, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing/> to help them learn the keyboard and correct finger placement.

2nd Grade will also be using dancemat typing <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing/> to learn correct finger placement and typing skills. We visited the Riverdeep program and worked on

adding numbers to 20. Students visited <http://www.starfall.com>, <http://pbskids.org/lions/games/stacker.html> , and <http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/picturematch/> and worked on short vowels. They also visited <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/wordsandpictures/clusters/index.shtml> to review consonant clusters.

3rd -5th grade students are all doing Ultra-key keyboarding this year. Ultra-key teaches them what fingers to use on what keys and also calculates speed and accuracy. Each student works on his or her level. This program also provides progress reports as they go. **4th and 5th** graders will also be receiving an extra ½ hour a week in keyboarding at the end of the day. We will be using a program called Type to Learn.

Grades 3-5 are beginning their year with file management. Students have created a folder on the student drive to save their work in this year. They have all tried out their Riverdeep program going to appropriate

levels in place value. To celebrate Constitution Day they will visit <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/3-5/index.html> and <http://cfbstaff.cfbisd.edu/davidj/Special%20Events/Constitution20%20Day/constitutionday.htm> to learn about how the Constitution was formed, sing the preamble and do the preamble scramble puzzle. This is a great resource.

4th grade is learning about the Woodland Indians of Maryland <http://mdroots.thinkport.org/interactives/indvillage/intro.asp> to prepare them for their trip to St. Mary's City in October.

5th grade has been viewing digital videos on Jamestown in United Streaming. They will be creating a powerpoint with the information they receive. They will also be taking a virtual tour of Mt. Vernon to prepare them for their upcoming field trip.

We look forward to a great year in technology.

GREETINGS and SALUTATIONS to all parents and guardians of students at Dr. Higdon from Mrs. Quesada and Ms. Higdon in the Library Media Center! As we begin a new school year, we would like to ask you once again to help your children keep track of their library books and return them to the library in a timely manner. We believe that one of the best ways to do this is to encourage your children to keep their library books in their backpacks/book bags (or in their desk at school) – whenever they are not looking at or reading their books with you or by themselves. In this way your child will always know where his/her library book is and have it with them when they come to school, to read, to return to the library or to use for some other activity. Students will still have their library books close at hand if in fact they want to take it home again and again. Our library is accessible to students from 9:10 A.M. until 3:40 P.M. Students make use of our "Open Library Program" for a wide

Library Media Center

variety of purposes including: Information Literacy classes, book exchange, reading, research, small group work, special classroom projects and the computer mini-lab, etc. During the first quarter we will be focusing on the different sections of the library and we will be helping students to find books on a wide variety of topics that they can read on their own level, or books that can be read to them as they continue to improve their reading skills. We will encourage the students to select books that they can read for enjoyment as well as for information on topics of particular interest to them. There are over 13,000 books from which they can choose. We invite you, parents and guardians, to call or send in a note if you have any questions. We will be glad to set up a meeting time before or after-school if there is some way in which we can be of help to you and your children. Once again WELCOME BACK to an exciting new school year and Happy Reading!!!

Art News from Mrs. A.M. Cowan

We are off to great start in the art room. Fifth graders are making life-sized people with cut paper, in each team. The fourth graders are creating interesting castles with black marker and later, will have the choice of adding color with watercolors. Third graders are drawing line pictures without including any shapes. These pictures will be interesting when they are completed. The second graders are learning how to use lines in a drawing with a piece of yarn and markers. First graders are creating "Wild Line Lions." After learning how important lines are in art, we will move on to shapes, color, texture, and pattern projects.

Next month, third and fourth graders will be participating in an annual art contest sponsored by the County First Bank. This is always a fun contest with a different theme each year.

Don't forget to go to

the "School Building" with the school bus over the door when you go the Charles County Fair. Dr. Higdon has lots of winners this year for art and there will be other winners for the academic entries.



Music News

I am Mrs. Diane Merki, the new music teacher at Dr. Thomas Higdon! I so enjoyed meeting many parents at Open House Thursday evening. We have started off the year really great! The Kindergartners are learning to sing and dance to rhythm and beats and are very vigorous and full of energy! First graders are learning to sing and learn how to count beats as well. They love to clap the rhythms and beats and move with the

beat. They love to make up verses to songs. Second and Third graders and moving right along with learning music theory at their levels. They will probably soon know what all of the dynamic markings are and the third graders were helping sing "God Bless America" this morning in the assembly!! I am so proud! Fourth and Fifth graders are probably being challenged the most right now, especially fifth graders who have to have many academic music ideas learned before they head over to Piccowaxen. In the meantime they still make time for singing as I mentioned above. They are great counters. The fourth graders are loving the instruments and ask me all the time to use them. But then all of my

classes do. We love our instruments. Can't wait for you to hear out Holiday concert!! Letters will coming soon about that! Keep an eye open and ask your student if he/she brings one home. I am waiting on one band teacher to confirm the date with me. Happy days and thanks for giving me great kids to work with!

Mrs. Diane Merki
General Music
Director

Reading Resources from ILT

The Dr. Higdon Instructional Leadership Team consists of Christine Kernozek, Instructional Specialist, Mary Kate Long, Reading Resource Teacher, and Karen Dempsey, Gifted Education Resource Teacher. Our role in the school is to provide instructional support to teachers and students through staff development, modeling

and co-teaching, assessing and diagnosing, and working with small groups of students. We would like to extend a warm "Welcome Back" to our students and their families as we begin the 2009-2010 school year. We are already underway, working with groups of students in reading, math, and enrichment. We look forward to a wonderful year of working together with the staff and students of Dr. Higdon.

Guidance News
Fall 2009

School is off to a smooth start. So far it has been a busy year. Although some things have changed, the basics are still in place. And the bottom line is - Dr. Higdon is a good place to be.

We look forward to another year of growth. Students grow smarter and taller. They make new friends and keep the old. Some students move away. New students move in. As parents, we love watching our kids grow up, but we also realize

we will have to let them go someday.

Changes. There are always changes. Most of us don't like it when things change. Even when the change is something good, we can get a little off-balance. Family support is the important thing through all the changes of growing up and getting ready for each new stage of growth.

As you know, Dr. Higdon is an I-Care school. We have the nicest bunch of children here. But sometimes we have to work on it. We have to work on being a friend or work on getting school work completed and turned in. Here are some of the ways I work with our students to help each of them to be their best:

BE YOUR BEST: A character education program heard daily on morning announcements with I-Care Cat. Each month there is a new character quality. September is Caring.

Bully Spot: A weekly talk on morning announcements about bullying- what it is and how to deal with it.

This is what we teach:
Talk – Walk – Squawk.
Tell the bully to stop -
Walk away – Tell an adult.

Classroom Guidance: Students learn about getting along and doing and being their best. Some of the topics include: feelings and how to communicate feelings appropriately to get needs met. responsibilities at home and at school; setting goals, specifically, a career goal; decision-making and making healthy choices and the consequences of our choices -both short-term and long-term consequences; and, fifth graders look forward to middle school and the changes in that new season of life. There are lessons on the transition to middle school and getting a plan to cope with the changes and freedom balanced with responsibilities.

Counseling: working with individuals and small groups to settle differences and work through problems.

Remember what I-Care Cat teaches, “Do good and Be good everywhere you.”

Linda Petersen
Guidance Counselor

Message from the Health Room:

We all play an important role to help contain & control the spread of infection, in order to protect ourselves & our community.

Did you know: *The H1N1 virus is not an airborne virus except in droplet form.

***Transmission is through direct contact & most likely passed by hands.**

*According to the CDC, young people have no immunity to this virus. To date the most affected age groups are 5-24 yrs. old.

*Individuals over 60 yrs are most likely to have immunity built up for this virus.

***The H1N1 virus can survive for 2 to 8 hours on surfaces.**

*The H1N1 virus is transferred when an individual contacts the virus & then touches their eyes, nose, or

mouth before washing hands.

***An individual is considered contagious from 1 day before symptoms are exhibited to 7 days after becoming ill.**

*The CDC recommends individuals stay home for 7 days after onset of illness or 24 hours after symptoms are gone (without the benefit of Tylenol or Ibuprofen)

Each one of us is our own best defense against the flu if we utilize the tools at hand:

Get the flu vaccine and have your family vaccinated.

***Frequent hand washing** is key

*Frequent use of hand sanitizers when a sink is not available

***Keep your hands away from your face**

***Use cough etiquette**
(Elbow cough)

***Clean commonly touches surfaces often**
(Light switches, door knobs, TV remotes Etc.)

***Avoid crowds or try to keep a safe distance from others (3-6 feet)**

***Stay at home if you are experiencing flu symptoms (fatigue, fever, nausea) & remain home until you are symptom free for 24 hours without the benefit of Tylenol or Ibuprofen- Fever of less than 100 degrees)**

*Get plenty of sleep & exercise to keep the immune system strong.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the school nurse.

Debbie Heim
School Nurse

