



News from South School's Starfish

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Principal's Corner

Responsive Classroom Approach to Discipline

Dear South School Friends and Families,

It is my sincere hope that you have enjoyed the beautiful fall weather as much as we have here at South School. As I promised last school year, I would like to continue to use this space to inform you about a variety of different programs we employ and how you might extend our practices into your interactions with the kids. In our efforts to teach the "whole child", social and emotional Learning (SEL) has started to take center stage at South School. This means that, in addition to academic subjects like reading and math, we have begun to teach pro-social skills and emotional regulation skills to help our student better interact with each other and staff. We view SEL as equally important as academics. More specifically, South

Schoolers are receiving instruction from a program called Second Step and you should all have received a leaflet, sent home in backpacks, with some more in-depth information. If you would like to know more please feel free to call the school and we can fill you in.

We continue to be a Responsive Classroom school and our most recent teacher training addressed one aspect of how teacher communicate with students called "giving high-quality feedback". Essentially, high-quality feedback is specific feedback that addresses precisely what we see as opposed to a blanket, non-specific, comment like "good job". "Good job" or "great work" or "well done" are fine things to say but students don't actually know what that means. We are

trying to be more pointed by saying "I see you sitting quietly and using your good listening skills". This kind of feedback lets students know exactly what we expect of them and what it is they are doing well. From the program:

"Children need to know their strengths in order to know what to stand on as they reach for the next higher rung. They need our words to help them do this".

I hope this has been informative and, as always, feel free to reach out with questions. Until next time!

Sincerely,
Justin Bennett
South School Principal

RSU 13
South School

September Newsletter

Upcoming Events

- ☺ Oct. 6 – No School; Teacher Workshop
- ☺ Oct. 9 – No school; Columbus Day
- ☺ Oct. 11 – Fire safety assembly for grades 1-5
- ☺ Oct. 12 – PTF Meeting 6 – 7PM
- ☺ Oct. 13 – Fire safety assembly for Kindergarten
- ☺ Oct. 18 – Early Dismissal
- ☺ Oct. 19 – Mrs. Joki & Miss Wood's fieldtrip
- ☺ Oct. 20 – Mrs. Linscott & Mrs. Eudy's fieldtrip
- ☺ Oct. 20 – PTF Halloween Dance 6 – 8 PM
- ☺ Oct. 25 – Lifetouch re-take day
- ☺ Oct. 27 – End of month assembly
- ☺ Oct. 31 – Halloween Parade at 1:15 (football field)
- ☺ Nov. 8 – Early dismissal & Parent Teacher Conferences



Teacher's Wish List— ss.rsu13.org

Open House Success



our Books in Every Nook program that is organized by our Title I teacher, Mrs. West.



Thank you to all the families who attended South School's open house held in September. We had a fantastic turn out! Our teachers were very excited for the opportunity to meet and chat with parents and students were excited to show their families their classrooms!

Families enjoyed ice cream sundays with all the fixings, served in the cafeteria.

To help promote the importance of families reading together, a representative from the Rockland Public Library was present so that students could sign up for a free library card. Additionally, our Scholastic Book Fair took place during the open house giving parents an opportunity to purchase new reading materials for their child. South School receives a portion of book fair sales – you helped us to raise \$889!! Thank you and happy reading to you all!!

We'd like to thank the student helpers from OHS & OMS for assisting with our event!



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Peace Day Celebration



In an effort to promote school peace and as an early kickoff to our annual Kindness Challenge, we celebrated International Peace Day on September 21st. The day provided a powerful and inspiring opportunity for students to engage in activities related to peace and unity. This event set the tone of respect and unity for this academic year.

Students and families worked at home making peace posters about anti-bullying, kindness and friendship that students proudly displayed during the day.

In the afternoon we had a peace march around the football field during which time families were invited to join us. After the march, staff and stu-

dents made a concentric circle in the center of the field to sing songs of peace such as *I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing*, *I've Got Peace Like a River* and *The Kind-Hearted Hand Song*.

This day was an awesome event for both staff and students – it just may be a new South School tradition!!



Attendance & School Expectations



We realize that getting back into a school routine can be a bit daunting for families but now is the time to set the tone for the year. Please discuss with your child, not only your expectations, but the school's expectations as well. Our expectations are to:

- **come to school every day (unless they are sick)**
- **arrive to school every day on time**
- **be rested and ready to learn**
- **remain in school for the duration of the day**
- **respect themselves, respect others and to respect their environment.**

To help children meet school expecta-

tions, it is important for families to develop routines at home such as:

- **having a set time for doing homework each evening**
- **having a set bedtime routine and a set time to start that routine**
- **having a set time to wake up, leaving enough time to not feel rushed**

Unfinished homework and too little sleep are common reasons why children drag their feet getting to school in the morning or *pretend* to be sick! It's a fact that students who attend school regularly learn more and are more successful in school than students who do

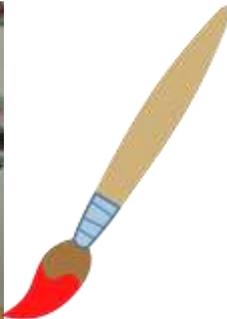
not. Also, many parents don't realize that schools are mandated reporters and thus we are required to report attendance matters to the state.

If your family struggles getting to school on time, we suggest that children ride the morning bus as we find this helps to eliminate tardiness. If your child does not already ride the bus but you wish them to do so, please call the transportation department at 593-9066 to add them to the bus route.

Thank you for helping your child learn the value of being a reliable and responsible person!

A Foundational Field Trip

Mrs. Curtis' fourth grade students enjoyed their visit to the Farnsworth Art Museum for their Foundational Field Trip. This field trip kicked-off the students' STORIES program, which is a year-long program in partnership with the Farnsworth Art Museum. Students had the opportunity to engage in gallery and studio activities with museum educators and professional artists.





To join South School's PTF email:
southschoolptf@gmail.com

Bike Safety

Please remember that if your child rides his/her bike to school, they must wear a helmet—it's the law. We are not permitted to let children leave school grounds on their bikes afterschool unless they are wearing a helmet. Thanks for your understanding!



Star Student of the Week—Tradition Continues!



Here at South School we recognize and celebrate our students who demonstrate good behavior—for this reason, the tradition of Star Student of the Week will continue!

Each week, a classroom teacher chooses one student to be Star Student of the Week. Every Monday, after the morning flag salute, we announce the star student names and those students get to come to the office to receive an award and an award certificate. If your child brings home a certificate—congratulate them for a job well done!



South School
Where all Student
are Stars!



VISITORS/PARENTS

**For safety reasons,
please get a visitor pass from the office prior
to proceeding down the hall.**