



# THE HAPPY HOLLOW HOLLER

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## HAPPY HOLLOW SCHOOL & PTO NEWSLETTER February 15, 2018

*"Parent participation is the leading predictor that supports students' academic success, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, or cultural background." - Karen Mapp, Faculty Chair – Harvard Graduate School of Education.*

### PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

February, 2019  
Dear Friends,



No other time in life even remotely resembles an elementary school experience. Rarely will twenty or more people of a like peer group gather together for a nine month journey that ends and begins. And... when it ends, there will be no visible trace of the prior year's configuration. All visible signs remain in photos, videos and student information systems. For these few short years in one's life – usually no more than six - there are so many things that are special and completely unique to that time of life. – Not to say that all times in life are not unique and special. Most certainly, life's journey is exciting and rediscovered during every year of life. However, the elementary school time offers dramatically different norms and the experiences are the foundation for all that follows.

It's true. At any age beyond the elementary school time, try for example, walking around with your lost adult tooth hanging around your neck in a tooth-shaped case so you can put it under your pillow for the tooth fairy ~ knowing that a new one is on the way that isn't an expensive implant. The "magic" of losing a tooth, the fun in make believe play and the feeling that if one plays a sport, dances, creates, he/she can most certainly become rich and famous for his/her unbridled talent and skill. Everything is unique ~ the birthday parties, the playdates, the sleepovers, the first-time discoveries are amazing moments – suspended between reality, play and imagination. Everything *is* laced with possibility.

The willing suspension of disbelief is a gift that takes the young on journeys into make believe situations ~ with the hope that they might be dreams come true. A trip to Disney World or Land is always magic but never as exciting as through the eyes of one in the primary grades of school. Our learners are new people. Their special birthdays fall in the single digits until they are two years to the end of the elementary school years ~ never again will a zero birthday fall with single digits comprising the passing decade.

So when we gather for parent conferences, they truly are a phenomenon and should be treated as such. I have written about this before, but I believe the home-school partnership is even more important now than ever. The information network has made society complex, fast and somewhat impulsive. School and home are tied together more than they ever were, e.g., a sleepover event could become part of a school's bullying investigation. Working together to help students navigate a world that can be connected in a second and physically separated simultaneously is no easy feat. To help foster this partnership, the parent conference is *that* opportunity.

At no other time in one's life will people gather ~ for free ~ around a table for the sole purpose of discussing a person's strengths, weaknesses, talents, hopes and dreams ~ all of which have taken place over the course of two months prior to the first conference, and four or so between then and the second ~

Therefore, even when parent conference meetings are complicated and challenging, they are always filled with possibility. So much at this age is still developing, growing and finding new ways. If we all come to the many tables around the school that will host these events with this in mind, there is less of a chance that the focus will be on deficits and desires to push, mold and change a student. There will be more of a chance that we will gather as partners - as people dedicated to accepting a child where he/she is, looking at the data, the portfolios, the progress and discussing next steps that are reasonable and truly beneficial for the learner.

In an article written for the New York University Child Study Center (2013), Dr. Lydia Spinelli offered the following advice:

"Preparing for the conference can make the experience more rewarding. Ask your child if he has concerns or anything that he would like you to communicate to his teacher. Depending on the child's age, discuss whether or not family problems should be mentioned. If you are concerned about your child's work, keep copies of material that illustrate your concerns. If only one parent of a two-parent household can attend the conference, it is helpful to take notes... In order to gain information about your child's behavior and progress, you might prepare some questions. Here are some possible examples:

#### **Early Childhood**

- Does he share and take turns?
- Does he focus during large-group activities? Small-group activities?
- Is he self-directed in choosing activities during free time or does he need your help?
- What are his favorite activities?
- Is he willing to take risks?
- Is he able to settle conflicts verbally?
- Does he prefer working alone or with other children?
- Is he a leader or follower or combination?

#### **Elementary School**

- Should I help her with homework or do you prefer that it be totally her work?
- Is it better for her to leave blank what she doesn't understand or should I try to explain it?
- Should I correct her homework?
- Do you have a means of communicating with parents if she isn't doing her homework?
- Does she follow directions?
- Is there a time that you meet with children who need some extra help?
- Are there any indications of academic problems?
- Is she sensitive to the needs of others?
- Does her choice of friends interfere with her ability to focus on academic work?
- Do you see any social or emotional warning signs?



Most parents feel some degree of anxiety as they wait outside the classroom for their turn to hear how their child is doing in school. The degree of anxiety depends on several variables. If the child has an easy temperament and has previously been a successful student, the parent feels relatively confident. If the child has a more difficult temperament and has had some rocky school experiences, the parent is bound to feel more nervous. Parents can't help but feel that they are being judged as parents by the teacher. It is hard for parents not to measure their own success by their child's success. These feelings may be further complicated by the parent's own school experiences. If the parent was not a good student, approaching a teacher will stir up past experiences and feelings of inadequacy and arouse even more anxiety. Some years, the teacher-student match is better than others. Obviously, it is easier if the match is a good one. However, parents must remember that life will not be tailor-made for their child and it is helpful for the child to learn to deal with different personalities.

The fact is, though, that some children are harder to parent than others and some require much greater skill than others to support as a student. Parents should not feel responsible or defensive if their child is struggling. In recognizing that their child may be a challenging student, parents should approach the teacher in a collaborative manner and seek to work with him or her to support the child."

Another great resource for planning for a parent conference would be to visit the Global Family Research Project from Harvard's Graduate School of Education. They provide what they call the 5Rs – "reach out, raise up, reinforce, relate and reimagine" - for assisting parents and schools alike to strengthen and to maintain strong connections through parent conferences and by other means as well. [Parent-Teacher Conferences: Strategies for Principals, Teachers, and Parents, Oct., 2018.](#)

In the end what matters is that you leave the table with a plan and points to discuss with your child. One of the most important ways to make a parent conference time optimal is to have a discussion with your child/children when you go home. They too, need to be partners in the process and they will be curious ~ as any of us would be if we knew people were sitting around any table talking about all aspects of our job performance.

Children are full people at every age. They may not have the same experience and may experience things differently, but they nonetheless are fully competent and as curious as any other person at any other age. Making them partners in the process only makes for a more productive school year.

Some grade levels and individual staff at the Happy Hollow School ask students to join the conference. When done in the manner that I have observed and continue to observe, this is a powerful vehicle for hearing a child's reflections about her/his life, and you could create that opportunity at home after a conference that is not structured in that format.

Finally, use the conference information to support, not to create, a separate home program. Forcing children to do extra work, read above their current reading level and "pushing" them to achieve more before they are ready most always results in a young person feeling disenfranchised, nervous and with feelings of poor self-esteem. Children want to please the adults in their lives. Let them know you are pleased with their efforts. Develop a plan of how to help at home with the classroom teacher and stick to that agreed upon plan.

Teachers spend a great deal of time preparing for each individual conference. Know that they are coming to the table looking at your child with a growth mindset (one that believes there is no limit to what every child can learn). Every child is unique and different and finding the pathway toward productive learning requires an effective parent-teacher partnership.

Wishing you all a fantastic conference season!

All best always,

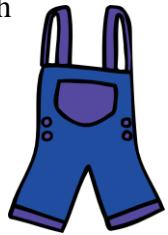


Jim Lee  
Principal



## This and That from the Principal's Office:

**A Winter Reminder ~ Dress for the Weather:** Please continue to check the weather each day to ensure that your child is dressed for the day's temperature. We have much fluctuation in the state of our playground as of late. The warm weather and rain have kept our grassy areas muddy and wet. Sending back-up clothing is a good idea while the mud lingers. Also, should it turn colder and should we have snow, please remember to send your child with snowpants, gloves and hats. The snow can be so much fun for recess play, but when students are not dressed for it, they must stay on the hot top areas and it greatly reduces their ability to fully enjoy their free time. Thanks in advance for your help.



**Remember to Check the Lost and Found:** We are doing great this year! Many items were claimed before the last break. February vacation week is a good time to take note of what is missing, so that when we return, a quick check for lost items can keep our collection of lost clothing small ~ or maybe even nonexistent!



### February and March at Happy Hollow

[https://whh.wayland.k12.ma.us/for\\_families](https://whh.wayland.k12.ma.us/for_families)

Week of February 18-24	<b>Winter Vacation</b>	
Monday February 25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Classes Resume</b>	
Monday February 25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Cultural Enrichment</b> The Tanglewood Marionettes	9:00am-10:00am (Grades 3-5) - 10:30am-11:30am (Grades K-2) HH Gym
Thursday March 7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Family Fun Math Night</b>	6:15pm-7:30pm LO
Monday, March 11 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Auditions for HH Talent Olympics</b>	After school in the HH Gym
Monday March 11 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Wayland Sings!</b>	7:30pm -8:30pm WHS
Tuesday March 12 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Band Fest</b>	7:30pm -8:30pm WHS
Wednesday, March 13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>String Jamboree</b>	7:30pm – 8:30pm WHS
Sunday March 24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>WPSF Annual Spelling Bee</b>	12:00pm to 4:30pm
Tuesday,March 26 <sup>th</sup> and Thursday, March 28 <sup>th</sup>	<b>HH Talent Olympics Rehearsal Times</b>	HH Gym
Friday March 29 <sup>th</sup>	<b>HH Talent Olympics Show</b>	6:30pm HH Gym

## CURRICULUM CORNER

### FROM TECHNOLOGY

I cannot believe we are heading into the February break. Many students have spent the beginning of 2019 working on their keyboarding skills, continuing to solve challenging programming puzzles in Code.org and starting new projects.

**Please click on the links below for specific details about grade level lessons which are on the [HH Technology website](#).**



### FROM INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

For 3-5 strings:

Happy Hollow String Players are hard at work preparing for their next concert, String Jamboree, on March 13th at 7:30 p.m. in the High School Field House. This concert will include all 465 string players in grades 3-12!

Other Performances:

Band Fest March 12

String Jamboree March 13



# HEALTHY HOLLER

We ask that parent(s) be vigilant in monitoring their child's health at home and keep your child home from school if they are not feeling well. This prevents the spread of illness at school.

Please remind your children at home as we do at school that the single most important thing you can do to prevent the spread of illness is proper hand washing.



We continue to see flu like illness. Please review Flu information (symptoms) from the CDC: [www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm)

## Parents please keep your children home:

- If your child has had a poor night of sleep.
- If your child has vomited due to illness; they should remain out of school for a minimum of 24 hours after vomiting has ceased.
- If your child has a fever of 100.4 degrees F or higher; they should remain out of school for 24 hours after the fever is gone without fever reducing medication.
- If your child has been treated with an antibiotic for a contagious infection; they need to be on an antibiotic for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
- **All families should have a backup plan in place if a parent is not readily available to pick up their children from school when sick. Children should be picked up within an hour of receiving a call from the school nurse. Please consider using other people in your neighborhood.**

## BMI for 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders:

- The school nurse will be measuring BMI for 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders during gym class in the next month. You may exempt your child by sending in a note. Results are not sent home, but data does get reported to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

## Clothing for Winter weather:

- Please send in an extra set of clothing with your child. Clothing does get wet/damp from playing outside, especially for the younger students. This can eliminate a call to parent(s) to bring in dry clothes.

## Snacks and water:

- Please be sure that your children eat a healthy, nourishing breakfast every morning. All students should have a morning snack sent to school with them. Students should be encouraged to drink plenty of water throughout the day to be well hydrated.

Have a Healthy, Relaxing, Fun Filled Vacation.

Please contact the health room with any questions and/or concerns.

Thank you

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## PTO News and Events



### Letter from PTO President

As my fifth grader says, “This year has been epic!” As we enter the second half of the school year, I want to thank the incredible PTO leadership team and all of the parent volunteers who filled the school year with activities and programs. And, as I shiver through this [hopefully] short stretch of New England winter, I get warm fuzzies thinking about all of the exciting activities we have coming up in the Spring.

This year started with one of the largest PTO leadership teams in recent history. Over 50 parents signed up to lead a committee, organize events, or serve as classroom parents – an incredible commitment of time, energy, and patience. We started the year with parents rallying to provide fans and ice water to keep our teachers and kids cool during that high-temperature first week. As we transitioned to fall, we hosted another successful Movie Night to support the Book Fair. (Who danced the macarena?) While the events have been fun, witnessing the community building and individual connections among parents has been the most touching. I hope that spirit continues to grow.

During last week’s PTO meeting, we discussed events planned for the remainder of the year. If you thought fall was engaging, and we are going to “light it up” this spring. The fifth grade alone has several major activities to culminate their time at Happy Hollow. In addition, we are planning our annual events such as the Spring Book Fair and Talent Olympics and introducing the Backpack Auction kick off. Last, but certainly not least, we will bid farewell to our amazing principal, Dr. James Lee. Jim has been an education leader in the Wayland community for many years. Join the PTO in celebrating his career and contributions to make Jim’s last year at Happy Hollow his best yet.

I’ll close by asking you to participate in our future events – either as a volunteer or as an attendee. If you haven’t had the opportunity to get involved, now is a great time.

Regards,

Sheetal Acharya

<http://waylandpto.org>

We appreciate your patience as we continue to update the website for 2016-2017