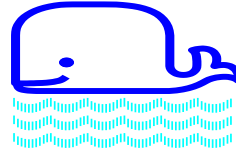


“THE WHITNEY WHALE WATCH”



May 7, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

It's hard to believe that May has arrived as we continue to maintain many of our traditional activities. We closely follow CDC and district guidelines and appreciate everyone's patience and understanding as we plan (and sometimes revise plans) in an effort to keep safety as our first priority. At the last meeting of the Board of Education it was decided that Wednesdays will be early dismissal days at the elementary level for the remainder of this school year.



Teacher Appreciation Week:

We are celebrating our teachers this week and thanking them for everything they do for our children and families. As we know, this past year teachers have really stepped up to maintain high quality instruction. We have been working closely with the P.T.S.A. to make this week a very special one for our dedicated teachers.



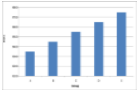
PTSA:

There has been overwhelming support from Eli Whitney families to show their love and support for our wonderful teachers and staff at Eli Whitney. We can't thank all the families enough for all your support! Additionally, we thank Mrs. Gramling who organized the donations. If you ordered a pizza and/or cookie kit, the pick-up will be in the back parking lot tomorrow from 1-3:00 p.m. All volunteers will wear masks and gloves. If you have any questions, please contact Sarah Rodrigues at eliptsa@gmail.com. P.T.S.A. elections will be held at the May meeting which will be May 12 at 7:30 p.m. This will be the final P.T.S.A. meeting of the school year. We will be voting on officers for the 2021-22 school year and voting to approve an update to our bylaws. If you are a member and would like to review the 18-page bylaws prior to the meeting, reach out to Liz Gramling at elimembership@gmail.com. We will review the updates and changes, as provided by the CT PTA, at the meeting before voting. If you have any questions, please email eliptsa@gmail.com



Concerts:

Our students and teachers remain steadfast in their preparation for our Spring Concerts. During the week of May 17th, virtual concerts will be shared with everyone. Although they are not in our traditional setting, this model allows for a greater audience. Regardless of the setting, however, we are proud of all our musicians as we enjoy their gift of music. During the past year and two months I have come to increase my appreciation for music.



“Waste” Loss Competition:

As you know, Earth Day is April 22nd. Since this day took place during our remote week of learning, it was decided to celebrate Earth Week at Eli Whitney during the week of April 26th. We conducted a ‘WASTE’ Loss Competition” to bring awareness to the amount of garbage created in our school in one week. The garbage in each classroom was weighed and graphed for the week. This data was displayed in a prominent area of the school so that all classrooms knew their status. The goal of this competition was to be the classroom with the least amount of garbage. The total classroom range for the week was 3 lbs. 4 oz. to 32 lbs. 7 oz. We had many classrooms that were very conscientious. As a result, it was decided to have two categories: kindergarten to third grade and fourth to sixth grade. Mr. Henning’s classroom was the winner of the latter category. His sixth graders had only 3 lbs. 4 oz. of garbage for the week. Meanwhile, there was a tie in the other category. Ms. Puskar and Mrs. Pasmeg’s classroom each had 4 lbs. 3 oz. of garbage which was the least amount for the week. We thank Pria Cerrone, Tali Cerrone, Anna Martino, Scout Passaro and Dayanara Ruellemele-Stirbus who assisted in this effort. Everyone in our school community developed a greater respect for our Earth during this project. As with all learning, it is important to incorporate this learning into our daily activities moving forward.



Recycling Clothing:

The Town and Stratford Public Schools are partnering with Bay State Textiles to recycle clothing. This program benefits both the environment and the school system. Clothing bins are located at each school and other locations across the town. Eli Whitney receives the funds that are collected from our bin which is located at the back of our building near the garbage dumpsters.



Ceiling Tiles:

Our sixth graders sold ceiling tiles as a fund-raiser. During our week of remote learning (April 19th – April 23rd) we started installing our artistic ceiling tiles. At this time we have approximately 60 works of art decorating the building. They are located in hallways for everyone to admire. Each one is unique and beautiful. We truly appreciate everyone’s talent and generosity as these tiles definitely brighten up our building.



Operation Poppy:

In 1915 Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae wrote the poem “In Flanders Fields.” In 1920, the National American Legion adopted the poppy as its official symbol of remembrance. In conjunction with Memorial Day, Operation Poppy is one of Eli Whitney’s long standing traditions. Eli Whitney is proud to honor the men and women who sacrificed their lives protecting our freedom. Many people in our community visit our field of poppies during the Memorial Day weekend. Some take pictures while others express their appreciation. This is one of my favorite Eli Whitney traditions. As in years past, Mrs. Wilcoxson is taking the lead on this initiative. Planting is scheduled to begin on Wednesday, May 26th. All CDC guidelines will be in place to maintain the safety of everyone.



Learning Garden:

Over April break Susan Rich and other P.T.S.A. Board Members began installation of a memorial garden in memory of Mrs. Kelley Patterson, who passed away this year. Mrs. Eigo organized a staff collection to fund the garden and P.T.S.A. members are helping with installation. We thank Burns Construction Company who supplied the aggregate stone and Happy Grass Landscaping who donated soil, mulch and labor. We know it will be a beautiful tribute to Mrs. Patterson.



Student Achievement:

The final round of assessment is beginning. In addition to another reading benchmark assessment, all students will complete their final i-Ready test in math. Parents are encouraged to reach out to their children's teachers who will gladly share these results. Our students have grown a great deal this year.



COVID Reminders:

We need to keep everyone safe as the end of the school year comes to an end. If anyone in your household is sick or not feeling well, please keep everyone home and do not send your child to school. If you are unsure, please call or email Mrs. Ciuci, our school nurse, at 203.385.4198 or ciucit@stratk12.org. If anyone in your household is going to get a COVID test, please keep everyone home and do NOT send your child to school until you receive a negative test result. Please call or email Mrs. Ciuci to let her know. Please remember to send your child to school with a full water bottle every day. At arrival and dismissal we have designated doors to enter and leave the building. If you are taking your children out of state, it is important that the school knows and that your family follows the school's guidance for traveling out of state.



Parent Goal:

Schools regularly survey families in order to best meet the needs of the students. Our parent goal was derived from our spring 2019 Parent Survey. It states that, "Eli Whitney students will feel a sense of belonging in their school and learning environment." If you have ideas that would support this effort, please feel free to reach out to your child's teacher, Mr. Veteri or me.



Pop Up Art Show:

Our wonderful art teacher, Mrs. Booska, is organizing a Pop Up Art Show that showcases our students' artistic talents. Students created works of art on recycled pizza boxes. The art will be on our back field for students to view and appreciate. Mrs. Booska plans to send this very special art event out virtually for families to enjoy.



The JiJi Challenge:

The JiJi Challenge continues to grow. This initiative recognizes students for their accomplishments in ST Math and is based on the number of completed puzzles in this math program. K-1 students should complete between 30 - 60 puzzles weekly, while students in grades 2-6 are expected to solve between 45 - 90 puzzles in a week. Currently, we have 149 students who completed 1000 puzzles. 1500 puzzles were completed by 63 students while 27 students completed 2000 puzzles. 16 students completed 2500 puzzles. Lastly, 3000 puzzles were completed by nine students. Our end of the year totals will be shared in the final edition of the Whale Watch in June.



Sixth Grade:

Our sixth grade students and teachers already proudly wear their t-shirts. A picnic in our backyard is planned for Thursday, June 10th. Yearbooks are being printed and lawn signs are being delivered. An Awards Ceremony is tentatively being planned for the final week of school. Although these students will be greatly missed, we wish them all the best as they prepare for this important milestone.



Principal's High Five:

We continue to celebrate students who consistently display our five behavior expectations: Being Responsible, Respectful, Honest, Safe and Kind. Our April students include the following: Eliyanah Cevere, Charlotte Belezny, Avery James, Gustavo Martinez-Garcia, Aiden Touch, Aiden Britto, Brandon May, Myles Ready, Afenity Ortiz, Channing Jacobs, Arianna Harilall, Bisan Sedda, Ayden Guzman-Trinidad, Chase Trindade, Amya Coreano, Anna Martino, Violet Varner, Victoria Erdos, Nathan Touch, Michael Basciano, Dominick Jarvis, Maylani Quintana, Ryan Salthouse and Eva Bucknor.



2021-2022 School Year:

We are starting to plan for the next school year. Teachers are organizing class lists for the 2021-2022 school year. At this point, we are planning for three kindergartens, two first grades, three second grades, four third grades, four fourth grades, three fifth grades and three sixth grades. In addition, there may be a few teachers changing grade levels.



No Food Policy:

One of the purposes of the district's "Food Allergy Management" policy is the prevention of severe allergic food reactions. *"Administrators and teachers will encourage non-food related alternatives to celebrate developmental milestones and student accomplishments."*



Safety Reminders:

As the weather warms up, new safety concerns also arise. If students want to ride their bikes to and from school, permission slips **MUST** be completed. Everyone needs to wear a helmet when biking. Bikes should not be ridden on school grounds during the school day. Bikes need to be locked in the bike rack. We also need to remain cautious while walking on school grounds. Adults also need to be careful when driving children to and from school. Please remember **NOT** to park in the four handicapped parking spaces in the front parking lot. We need to reserve these spaces for their intended use. The only people who should be accessing this parking lot are those drivers who are using their handicap markers. The south front parking is for staff only. If you are driving your children to school, it is important to use the back parking lot. As we know, Huntington Road is a very busy street and we need to keep everyone safe. Additional patience is needed in the back parking lot at both arrival and dismissal. If you experience a problem during arrival or dismissal, please reach out to any of our staff members who are located around the building. Students should be arriving at school just before 8:30 when supervision begins. Finally, kindergartners need to have a responsible adult waiting at the bus stop.



Upcoming Events:

Tomorrow is the pick-up day for the P.T.S.A. Mom's Night Out from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. in our back parking lot. Our final P.T.S.A. meeting is next Wednesday, May 12th at 7:30 p.m. through Zoom. There is no school on Monday, May 31st in observance of Memorial Day. Tuesday, June 15th, Wednesday, June 16th and Thursday, June 17th are early dismissal days. The last day of school is scheduled for Thursday, June 17th.

This is an exciting time of year in the school calendar. Our students have grown in so many ways. Our learning community remains strong as we continue to work together to support our children. I look forward to seeing you – even if virtually – as we celebrate many of these accomplishments.

Kindly,

Victoria K. Florek

Victoria K. Florek

Principal