



FARMINGTON RIVER ELEMENTARY FAMILY NEWS

12/05/2024

Dear Farmington River Elementary Families,

As we enter the busy and exciting holiday season, I want to take a moment to emphasize the importance of staying focused on academics and completing homework during this time. While the festivities bring joy and togetherness, maintaining consistent routines and study habits is essential for your child's continued success. Setting aside time each day for reading, practicing math facts, or completing assignments can help students stay on track and feel confident as we move into the second half of the school year.

You recently received your child's standards-based report card, and I'd like to take a moment to explain why we chose this approach over traditional letter grades. Standards-based report cards focus on specific skills and learning objectives aligned to state and national standards, providing a clearer picture of your child's strengths and areas for growth. Unlike traditional grades, which can sometimes be influenced by factors like participation or extra credit, standards-based grades reflect your child's progress toward mastering each standard. If a standard has not been fully met yet, it doesn't mean your child isn't doing well—it simply indicates that they are still developing that particular skill, which is normal at this stage of learning.

When reviewing the report card, focus on the specific areas marked as "progressing" or "meeting" the standards. This gives you a better understanding of where to support your child at home. If you have questions, your child's teacher is always available to help clarify and provide guidance.

As we celebrate the holidays, let's also celebrate the acts of kindness and community spirit that make our school so special. I want to highlight the incredible response to our Thanksgiving food drive. Seeing students, families, and staff come together to help others reminds me of how much we can accomplish as a school community when we work together.

Wishing you and your family a joyful holiday season filled with quality time together.

Sincerely,
Laurie Flower, *Principal*

**"Success is nothing more than a few simple disciplines,
practiced every day." – Jim Rohn (Author & Entrepreneur)**

UPCOMING EVENTS:

PTA MEETING

THURS., DEC. 5 @ 7:00 PM

SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING

THURS., DEC. 6 @ 3:15 PM

DENTAL CLINIC

MON., DEC. 9

PTA HOLIDAY SHOP

THURS. DEC. 12 - FRI., DEC. 13

WINTER CONCERT

THURS., DEC. 19 @ 6:00 PM

(PTA Baked Potato Dinner will begin at 5:00 PM)

1/2 DAY OF SCHOOL

FRI., DEC. 20

WINTER BREAK

DEC. 23 - JAN. 1

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

ALL SCHOOL WALK

Our second All-School Walk of the year was a great success, with students, teachers, and staff coming together to enjoy a fun and active walk. It was a wonderful opportunity to strengthen our school community, promote healthy habits, and appreciate the outdoors.



LAUNCHING THE ACCELERATED READER PROGRAM

We are excited to introduce Accelerated Reader to our students at Farmington River! Students can read an AR book, take the online quiz at school, and earn points!! Students will earn certificates when they reach certain point milestones:

- 5 : DRAGON AWARD
- 15 : SPIRIT AWARD
- 30 : HYDRA
- 75 : FIRE
- 150 : DRACO
- 225 : BEAST
- 300 : MONSTER
- 375 : SERPENT
- 450 : DRAGONET
- 525 : MYTHICAL "NAME"
- 600 : WYVERN
- 675 : FIRE Drake



Students can also earn a reward by participating in this program. The first reward will be time in the library to build with legos and play board games for students who earn enough points by **January 17th!** We want to kick off this program and get students excited about reading! To begin, students in K need to earn 1 point; 1st graders earn 2 points; 2nd graders earn 3 points; 3rd graders earn 4 points; and 4th-6th graders earn 5 points.

GRADE 3 IS ALL SHAKEN UP!

In third grade we shared a modest Thanksgiving snack of bread and butter to show thanks for our classroom and our friendships that have been created in our warm and cozy school. We learned all the steps to make butter from scratch and created this delicious treat together. This was a wonderful hands on science and social studies lesson that left us with thankful hearts and full tummies.



LEARNING ABOUT THE STATUE OF LIBERTY & COPPER!

In third grade we have been reading and learning about the Statue of Liberty in our new HMH reading curriculum. After learning all about the statue, we did a science experiment with



copper pennies in order to mimic the process of how Lady Liberty turned green over time. The 3rd graders learned that the green hue that is on copper that has been weathered is called patina. This was an engaging and meaningful activity that incorporated both our reading and science curriculum.



PROTECTING KIDS ONLINE: ROBLOX & TIKTOK SAFETY



Recent reports highlight online risks in popular apps like Roblox and TikTok. Roblox, a favorite among elementary age kids, faces criticism for insufficient protections against harmful content and inappropriate behavior. Parents are encouraged to monitor their child's activity, use parental controls, and discuss online safety.

Similarly, TikTok's engaging content may expose kids to inappropriate material or privacy concerns. Utilize its Family Pairing feature and regularly review privacy settings. Open dialogue with your child about digital boundaries ensures safer and more positive online experiences.

Schools and families play a large role in fostering digital literacy. Encourage children to recognize and report suspicious activity, avoid sharing personal information, and develop a healthy balance between screen time and offline activities. Building these habits early helps children navigate the digital world responsibly and securely.

The full articles provide more detail and offer suggestions of things you can implement to help keep your kids safe.

<https://kotaku.com/roblox-hindenburg-report-pedophile-hellscape-for-kids-1851668649>
<https://www.parents.com/kids/safety/internet/is-tiktok-safe-for-kids>

GIRLS ON THE RUN 5K!

This weekend at Westfield State University, the Girls on the Run team wrapped up their season by completing a 5K!! Mrs. Martin and Ms. Daley are so proud of these young ladies for giving it their best and having a wonderful season!! "Girls on the Run, so much fun!!" Below are photos from their practice 5K before the big event!



KINDERGARTEN READING & WRITING CENTERS!

Kindergarten students spend the majority of the morning on ELA. Kindergarten students develop foundational skills that are essential for learning how to read, and setting the stage for future literacy success. These skills include phonemic awareness, which involves recognizing and manipulating the sounds in spoken words, and letter recognition, where students learn to identify letters and their corresponding sounds. Vocabulary building is another critical area, as exposure to a wide range of words enhances comprehension and communication.

Additionally, students practice fine motor skills necessary for writing, such as holding a pencil correctly, and develop listening and attention skills that help them follow instructions and engage with stories. Social skills, such as taking turns and collaborating with peers, also contribute to their ability to participate in group reading activities, fostering a supportive environment for literacy development. The students practice their literacy skills daily in centers weekly which include a Listening, ABC, Poetry, Writing, and Reading center. Each center is designed to meet the learner at their individual level so they are successful and challenged!



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ART CLASS?



Before Thanksgiving, PreK, EK, and K students practiced sculpture skills by creating turkeys with modeling clay!

All students in all grades were invited to paint ornaments for Otis Town Tree Lighting Ceremony on Saturday, December 7th. Their ornaments will be on display on the Town Hall's Tree through the holidays. Everyone is invited to attend the tree lighting ceremony on Saturday at 4 pm.



In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, students in grades 4 and 5 created a giant Talevera Tile using puzzle pieces and papel picados (hanging paper banners). 3rd Grade celebrated by making alebrijes (spirit animal guides).



REMINDER:

APPROPRIATE RECESS ATTIRE

Students will have outdoor recess if temperatures feel like 15 degrees or above.

Please ensure they arrive at school dressed appropriately with coats, hats, and gloves.

Younger students (grades PK-3) eager to explore the snow beyond the cleared blacktop will need snow boots and pants.

Boots and snow pants are recommended for students in **grades 4-6**; however, we trust our older students to make responsible choices, ensuring they stay warm and dry while enjoying their time outside.



FARMINGTON RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
DECEMBER 19, 2024 @ 6:00 PM
OPEN TO FAMILIES & COMMUNITY MEMBERS
PK/EK/K IN-SCHOOL PERFORMANCE @ 9:00 AM

PK/EK/K IN-SCHOOL PERFORMANCE:

PreK, EarlyK, and Kindergarten will also have an in-school morning performance at 9:00 AM that day if you would like to attend. This should take no longer than 15 minutes from beginning to end. PK/EK and Kindergarten will also be on the program to perform at the 6:00 PM program. We encourage you to return for the all-school evening concert with your little ones but understand if their bedtimes keep you at home.

PARKING: We want to ensure safe parking so we have made the following arrangements:

- We will have a parking attendant who will direct families to available spaces.
- Families may park on the left-hand side of the circular driveway, but the right-hand side must be left open for emergency vehicles per the order of the police department.
- The Otis DPW has kindly offered their parking lot for overflow and we will be running shuttle vans back and forth from the school to the Otis DPW located at 1 N Main Rd, Otis, MA 01253.
- There is no parking on Route 8 near the school.
- Staff parking will be on the back playground so it will be closed for the evening.

PTA BAKED POTATO DINNER:

Join the PTA for a Baked Potato Dinner before the Winter Concert! From 5:00 - 6:00 PM, families and community members will enjoy loaded baked potatoes, drinks, and dessert in the FRES Cafeteria.

Dinners are \$5 each, or 3 for \$10 (with additional dinners priced at \$3 each) and are first, come first served.

Joining us? [Click here to reserve your potato!](#)



GRADE 6: THANSGING BASKETS & WIND EROSION!



Sixth graders are pictured here sorting food for our school's food basket drive. It is a long standing tradition that sixth graders collect all of the donations from classrooms, and sort the foods in the cafeteria. With the help of Mrs. Bush, the students were able to organize foods for twenty different FRRSD families.



Sixth graders are pictured here conducting an experiment demonstrating wind erosion using our KnowAtom science curriculum. They will use their data to determine if sand dunes with plants erode faster with wind, compared to regular sand dunes. Student partnerships designed their own experiments and will present their data in a formal lab writeup.



Otis Ridge Ski Program Update - Registration for the Otis Ridge Ski and Snowboard program is still open **with 15 spots left!** Less than a dozen ski lesson spots are still open, so click here to register your student today to secure their spot! Email PTA@frrsd.org with questions.



Holiday Shop is Next Week! - Next Thursday and Friday, students will have the opportunity to purchase gifts for family & friends in the PTA Holiday Shop. Watch for more information and a helpful shopping form in backpacks. Interested in volunteering to help? SIGN UP LINK: <https://signup.com/go/khqtAbE>

LOCAL EVENTS

MAKE AND DECORATE GINGERBREAD HOUSES!

Sunday December 15, 2024
11 am - 1 pm

FREE FOR ALL AGES

Otis Town Hall 1 N Main Rd Otis, MA

No Drop-Ins - Registration Required

To register: send email to townofotisrec@gmail.com with number of houses and number of participants by December 1, 2024.

2nd Annual Community Tree Lighting Event

SAT., DECEMBER 7th
4:00 PM

Otis Town Hall

Bring the entire family!

Hot Chocolate Station, Holiday Caroling, and a visit from Santa!

Annual Holiday Fair!

Co-Sponsored by the Sandisfield Historical Society & Recreation Committee

12/07/2024 10AM-2PM

SANTA ARRIVES AT 11AM

- OVER 40 VENDORS
- HOLIDAY CRAFTING
- VISIT FROM SANTA
- PENNY AUCTION

Join the fun!

Fire Station #2 Rt #57
207 Sandisfield Rd
Sandisfield MA

sandisfeldevents@recreationcommittee.info

Saturday Youth Archery League

Lee Sportsman's Association
565 Fairview Street, Lee, MA 01238

Lee & Otis Join the Saturday Youth Archery Program. If you're 6 years old, you're ready

Youth are taught the fundamentals from target shooting to 3D archery in the indoor range at Lee Sportsman's Association. The 10 week program is led by certified USA Archery instructors who have been COBI checked and all share a love for the sport.

Jan 4th-Mar 8th
Session 1 9-10am,
Session 2 10:30-11:30am,
Session 3 12:30-1:30pm

Age: Ages 6-16

Registration: Cost is \$40 per participant. Registration required on Saturday, December 14th, 2024, 10am-2pm & Sunday, December 15, 2024, 2-5pm. Youth borrowing USA equipment must attend in person. For forms and additional information leesportsmans.com/youth

Includes: Archery range use, bows, arrows, targets, and t-shirts for new students

Coch: Head Coach Charles Minkoff, USA Archery Level 2 Instructor

Location: Lee Sportsman's Association Clubhouse
565 Fairview Street, Lee, MA 01238

Questions? Please contact LSA Youth Programs Co-Chair Stephanie DuPont at youth@leesportsmans.com or call/text (215) 668-7808 with any further questions or concerns.

Otis Library StoryWalk

Snow by Cynthia Rylant
Illustrated by Lauren Stringer

A book about a young girl, her friend, and her grandmother who enjoy the sights and feelings of a snowy day. Through lyrical writing and beautiful art this book will inspire you to enjoy a snowy day with loved ones.

WHEN: Throughout the month of December

WHERE: Behind St. Mary's of the Lake, 48 N. Main St. Otis.

South Berkshire Kids
CFCE Grant
December 2024
Program Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Babies & Books @ Lee Library, 10:30am-11:30am. Drop in. *No program 12/23 & 12/30	OTis Explore & Play @ Otis Town Hall, 10:00am-11:30am. Drop in. *No program 12/24 & 12/31	Lenox Play @ Lenox Community Center, 10am-11am. Drop in. *No program 12/25	Brain Builders @ Lee Library, 10:30am-11:30am. Registration required. *No program 12/26	Lee Gym @ Crossways Gym, 10am-11am. Drop in. *No program 12/27
	Sing & Dance @ Bushnell-Sage Library, 10:00am-11:00am. Drop in. *No program 12/24 & 12/31	New Marlborough Storytime @ New Marlborough Library, 10:00am-11:00am. Drop in. *No program 12/25 & 12/31	Richmond Reads @ Richmond Library, 10:30am-11:30am. Drop in. *No program 12/26	

*All programs are free & open to the community!

- Babies & Books** with Jess @ Lee Library, 100 Main St/Lee. Mondays 10:30am-11:30am. This program is for infants, ages birth to 12 months. Join us as we sing, play and chat about the joys & challenges of being a parent/caregiver. Drop in.
- OTis Explore & Play** with Aniso @ Otis Town Hall, 1 North Main Road/Otis. Tuesdays 10am-11:30am. This weekly playgroup will include play, songs, stories, and crafts. Drop in.
- Sing & Dance** with Michelle @ Bushnell-Sage Library, 48 Main Street/Sheffield. Tuesdays 10:30am-11:30am. This program will include music, movement, and dance. Drop in.
- Lenox Play** with Michelle @ Lenox Community Center, 65 Walker Street/Lenox. Wednesdays 10am-11am. Join us for this center-based playgroup with tabletop activities, free play, crafts & more. Great for toddlers & preschoolers. Drop in.
- New Marlborough Storytime** with Jess @ New Marlborough Library, 1 Mill River GB Road. Wednesdays 10am-11am. This program includes a circle time with stories and songs, followed by a craft. Drop in.
- Brain Builders** with Michelle @ Lee Library, 100 Main St/Lee. Thursdays 10:30. This program is for ages 3-5. Registration required by emailing Jess at southberkshirkids@gmail.com
- Richmond Reads** with Jess @ Richmond Library (located in the new town building), 1751 State Rd/Richmond. Thursdays 10:30am-11:30am. Join us for a storytime and craft. Drop in.
- Lee Gym** @ Crossways Gym, 21 Crossways Street/Lee. Fridays 10am-11am. Join us for this gym time playgroup with balls, blocks, books and more! Drop in.

Visit us online for additional resources & information:
www.SouthBerkshiresKids.org www.Mas211.org