

FARMINGTON RIVER ELEMENTARY FAMILY NEWS

03/28/2024

Dear Farmington River Elementary Families,

I'm thrilled to announce that over the last couple of months, our students have demonstrated incredible compassion, empathy, and inclusivity, filling the dragon tube with eggs as we celebrated the theme of compassion! Our next challenge will focus on taking care of our environment in honor of Earth Day on April 22nd. We'll be encouraging students to demonstrate their commitment to reducing waste, conserving energy and water, reusing materials, recycling, and other eco-friendly practices. I have no doubt that our students will rise to this challenge with the same enthusiasm and dedication they have shown in the past.

As we approach the upcoming MCAS tests, our 3rd through 6th grade students might express concerns or questions about them. It's natural for students to feel nervous about tests, but we adults must help them maintain perspective. We consistently reassure our students that we believe in their abilities and they are well-prepared for the tests. We emphasize that it's normal to find some questions easy and others challenging, and all they need to do is their best. Students need to understand that these tests primarily serve as a tool to assess teaching methods and curriculum effectiveness, rather than judging individual intelligence. The results offer insights into what we teach and how we teach it. It's also important to remember that these tests only provide a snapshot of a student's performance on a particular day and don't capture their full range of abilities or qualities. They don't reflect a child's artistic talents, leadership skills, kindness, or the supportive environment our school provides. As you discuss the upcoming tests with your child, we encourage you to reinforce these messages. If you require further reassurance or support, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

MCAS Dates:	Gr. 3	Gr. 4	Gr. 5	Gr. 6
English/Language Arts	April 10 - 11	April 10 - 11	April 8 - 9	April 8 - 9
Mathematics	May 15 - 16	May 15 - 16	May 13 - 14	May 13 - 14
Science	-	-	May 20 - 21	-

Thank you for your continued support!

Sincerely,
Laurie Flower, *Principal*

"Believe you can and you're halfway there."

- THEODORE ROOSEVELT



UPCOMING EVENTS:

HALF DAY OF SCHOOL:

FRIDAY, MARCH 29

Dismissal at 11:45 AM

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING:

MON, APRIL 1

TIME: 7:00 PM

SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING:

THURS, APRIL 4

TIME: 4:00 PM

PK/EK/K

ENROLLMENT SCREENINGS:

PK & EK: THURS., APRIL 4th

K: FRI., APRIL 5th

TIME: 9:00 - 3:00

Screenings are required for newly enrolling students and are by appointment only.

MCAS ELA TESTING GRADES 3-6:

Grades 5 and 6: April 8 & 9

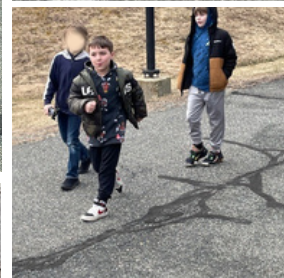
Grades 3 and 4: April 10 & 11



ALL SCHOOL WALK



What a blast we had during our all-school walk! The whole school was buzzing with energy and excitement as we hit the pavement for this awesome event. Everyone got into the spirit, decking themselves out in basketball gear, orange, and even college-themed clothing for March Madness. From jerseys to hats to college tees, our students and staff showed off their style and school pride in the coolest ways! As we strolled around the school grounds, laughter and chatter filled the air. This monthly event, organized by our amazing Wellness Committee, is always a highlight, bringing us all together for some exercise and good times. Big thanks to everyone who joined in the fun and made it such a memorable day!



WHATS GOING ON IN THE ART ROOM?

2nd- and 3rd-grade artists created paintings inspired by artist Henri Rousseau!



FRRSD PRESCHOOL/EK & KINDERGARTEN

2024-2025 ENROLLMENT

Farmington River Elementary is now enrolling eligible children who are residents of Otis or Sandisfield to enter our public Preschool, Early K, and Kindergarten programs in the Fall for the 2024-2025 school year. Neighboring communities are also invited to apply!

ELIGIBILITY:

PK: Must turn 3 by Sept. 1, 2024
EK: Must turn 4 by Sept. 1, 2024
K: Must turn 5 by Sept. 1, 2024

REGISTRATION & SCREENINGS:

PRESCHOOL/EK:
APRIL 4TH, 9-3PM

KINDERGARTEN:
APRIL 5TH, 9-3PM

A SCREENING IS REQUIRED FOR ALL NEWLY ENROLLING CHILDREN AND ARE 30 MIN. SLOTS BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

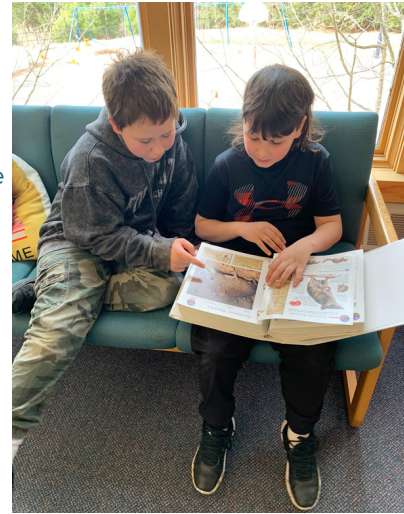
CALL/EMAIL US TODAY FOR MORE INFORMATION & TO ENROLL!



Students show off the new graphic novel spin-off from the Magic Tree House series! The series has recently been added to the Farmington River library collection and has been VERY popular!

DEAR TIME IN THE LIBRARY

During Library Time with Ms. Daley, students immersed themselves in the world of books through DEAR time, which stands for Drop Everything And Read. This initiative fosters a love for literature, promotes literacy skills, encourages everyone to explore various genres, authors, and perspectives, and enhances students' ability to concentrate and comprehend written material. Whether it's diving into a thrilling adventure, unraveling the mysteries of science fiction, or delving into the depths of historical accounts, DEAR time provides a valuable opportunity for intellectual enrichment and personal growth. Through this dedicated time, we hope to instill a lifelong love for reading and learning within our school community, enriching minds and expanding horizons one page at a time.



NO PLACE FOR HATE

No Place For Hate (NPFH) students just finished their second lesson schoolwide. The focus of the video was bullying and the 4 ways to handle if someone is being bullied or unkind. NPFH students were able to write the script for the video, research statistics, and then act it out. The students who did not participate in the video were behind the scenes. We were able to borrow equipment from CTSB to record, and then go there to edit what we needed.



PTA NEWS!

Take a break from screens this spring with the PTA! This year, the Farmington River PTA is stretching out our Screen Free Week programming to a Screen Free Spring, giving kids and families more chances to get together, get outside, and get creative! Details and invitations will be coming soon, so save the date for these exciting events and programs coming in April and May!

Stay tuned for details, invitations and registration for all events, coming soon! We can't wait to get together, get outside and get creative with you!

THURS 4/25:

Ready, Tech, Go! with National PTA! We live in a time when technology is part of our kids' daily lives. Kick off Screen Free Spring and learn tips for building healthy digital habits in your home from the start during the PTA Connected: Ready, Tech, Go!™ workshop supported by AT&T. Geared toward grown-ups of lower-grade students, we'll have pizza and activities for kids during the program.

THURS 5/2:

Join the PTA and the Otis Recreation Committee as we bring BINGO back for families and students of all ages!

TUES 5/7:

Kids of all ages can join the PTA after school to welcome spring by planting vegetables and flowers for our school community!



FRI 5/17:

Get your boots and your hats and saddle up for a Hoedown with FRES families as Cliff Brodeur joins us in the gym for an evening of Square Dancing!

FRI 5/10:

The PTA will be in the cafeteria after school with students from all grades for a CRAFTernoon of hands-on fun!



SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER: BUDGET NEWS!

Greetings to families and FRRSD Community Members! It's been a busy winter and early spring in the superintendent's office. Much of my work with the administration, the business office and the school committee over the past several months has been related to the budget for next school year. Here's a couple of quick budget facts:

- The fiscal year of the school district runs July 1 to June 30. The budget for next year is called the FY25 Approved* Budget. (*by School Committee on 3/25)
- The goal for next year was to create a level services budget, meaning that we run the school district with the same level of service, staff, and programming that we have this year.
- Most of our budget is made up of salaries and benefits for district staff. Next year will see about 3.5% salary increase for staff with an increase to benefits cost of about 7.5%. Transportation also makes up a big part of our budget as does tuition for Otis and Sandisfield students attending grades 7-12 in Lee or BHRSD.
- The total FY25 Operating Budget is set at \$5,006,870, up about 2.3% over FY24. After deducting required local contributions, transportation reimbursements and other offsets, the district assesses its member towns for the remaining operating costs. Our budget projects assessment increases for operating costs of 2.49% for Otis and 1.27% for Sandisfield.
- Capital costs are assessed through a slightly different method than operating costs considering equalized valuation as well as enrollment. We project \$50,000 in capital costs next year to continue some flooring replacement and to complete some work on our heating plant.
- Combining capital and operating costs results in total assessment increases of 3.63% for Otis and 2.15% for Sandisfield.

Compared to projected increases for other Berkshire school districts, I consider these increases to be modest. We worked hard during the budget process to maintain all of the services and programs and staffing levels that make FRRSD a great place for kids to learn and grow. To make this happen we applied a greater share of revolving fund balances and grants to cover some of our expenses.

The next steps for our budget are the Town Meetings: **Otis on May 21st** and **Sandisfield on May 18th**. Thank you for your support of quality public education in the Farmington River Regional School District.

I invite any questions or comments about our budget or anything else at tlee@frrsd.org.

Be well! - Timothy Lee, *FRRSD Superintendent*



KINDERGARTEN FIELD TRIP: ERIC CARLE MUSEUM

The kindergarten students enjoyed a day at The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art on Wednesday. The museum awarded the class a \$500 scholarship that funded a field trip. While at the museum, the students learned more about the author Eric Carle and his work. The museum's staff read stories to the students, explained how he created some of his illustrations, and provided resources for the students to create their very own pieces of art. The kindergarten students will continue to celebrate Eric Carle by listening and discussing even more stories.



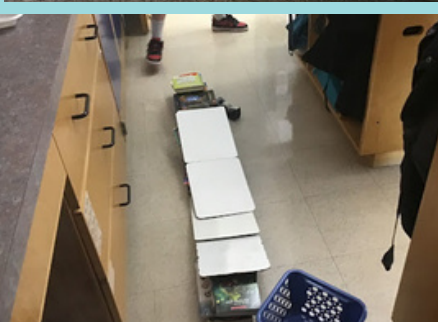
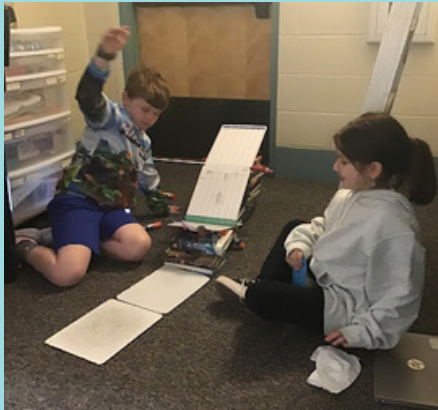
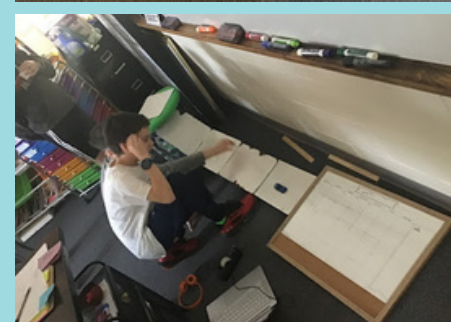
HOT SHOTS IN INTRAMURALS!

We wrapped up our intramural basketball session with a fun new game called Hot Shots. Students could choose a hoop and a spot to shoot from. If they made the shot, they could take the spot back to their team. Team with the most spots at the end of each round were crowned the winners!



4TH GRADE ENGINEERS AT WORK!

Fourth graders have been learning about different types of energy and putting their engineering knowledge to the test! They have learned about potential and kinetic energy and were challenged to create two different types of ramps. One ramp was supposed to make their car go the furthest while the other made it travel a shorter distance. As you can see in the photos, another layer of the challenge was that they could only use materials available to them in the room! They have done an incredible job applying their new learning to their ideas and talking about the value of trial and error as well as perseverance that exists within the engineering process!



LOCAL EVENTS

FREE SCIENCE & ART WORKSHIOP AT FLYING CLOUD FARM

Science-Technology-Engineering-Art-Math
for children in grades 1-6

SAT. APRIL 13 @ 9:30 - 12:30
at the Flying Cloud Farm in New Marlborough

PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.
Contact Jane at janesburke@gmail.com
or text 413-429-6103



FREE thanks to the Cultural Councils
of Monterey, New Marlborough,
Sandisfield, and Sheffield.



Otis Explore & Play

Otis Town Hall
Every Tuesday morning
10:00am-11:30am

***Join Anina every Tuesday for this caregiver/child playgroup. This fun program includes free play, crafts, stories and songs. A great time to meet up with friends and meet new friends! Best for ages birth to 5 years old.

*No registration is required. Drop in when you can!!
*This program is free and open to the community.



www.SouthBerkshireKids.org





FARMINGTON RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Otis & Sandisfield, MA



SCHOOL CHOICE

WELCOMING NEW STUDENTS FOR THE 2024 - 2025 SCHOOL YEAR!

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Rigorous core curriculum designed to challenge and inspire young minds that includes the arts, music, instructional technology, physical education and health.

EXPERIENCED FACULTY

Highly qualified, caring and experienced educators committed to student success averaging 11+ years dedicated specifically to Farmington River Elementary.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Priority on creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive school community to ensure the overall well-being of all students and staff.



SMALL CLASS SIZES

Personalized attention with small student-to-teacher ratios and individualized instruction to meet the unique needs of every child.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Opportunities to foster teamwork, leadership skills, and personal growth through participation in a wide range of after school clubs and activities.

ACTIVE PTA & COMMUNITY

Engaged and collaborative relationship with community partners working hand-in-hand with teachers and staff to provide student and family learning opportunities.

Photos courtesy of Michael Flower



**WE'RE CLOSER
THAN YOU THINK!**

- 18 min. from Lee
- 25 min. from Great Barrington
- 22 min. from Becket
- 18 min. from Blandford



**CONTACT US TO
SCHEDULE A TOUR!**

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🌐 www.frrsd.org