Dear Parents and Caregivers,

A great deal of our work at Mary T. Murphy School consists of creating classrooms that are nurturing, respectful, and full of learning. It is our goal to create classroom climates that enhance academic learning and allow students to reach their fullest potential. Our approach to classroom management and discipline is much more than simply reacting to problems when they occur. Our discipline strategy begins with a proactive approach to rules and a logical approach to what happens when rules are broken. Teaching discipline requires two fundamental elements, empathy and structure. Empathy shows faith in the student's ability to improve, and reaffirms that the teacher likes the student although they might not like the behavior. Structure allows us to set guidelines and limits. Effective, caring discipline requires both empathy and structure.

Our goals are to:
- Help students to recognize, fix, and learn from their mistakes.
- Help students to internalize the rules so that they develop self-control.
- Maintain safe orderly classrooms.
- Help students make reparations and maintain relationships when they hurt each other emotionally.

The school year begins with establishing, modeling, and practicing rules and holding a daily Morning Meeting. Each morning, first thing, the teacher gathers his/her class together and has children form a circle with their chairs or sit on the rug. In circle, everyone can see and hear everyone else. To start, children greet each other by name. Sometimes, children get up and greet each other across the circle with a handshake and a “Good Morning!” Every morning your child starts each day with a friendly and cheerful greeting from a classmate. When children are greeted they feel valued and important. Likewise, when children share, they feel their ideas are valued and their classmates are interested in them. Morning Meeting lets children know every day that school is a safe place where everyone’s feelings and ideas are important.

Although these proactive measures prevent many behavioral problems from occurring, they don’t entirely eliminate all inappropriate behaviors. When students make poor choices, as they sometimes do, we teach them to recognize the effects of their behavior and guide them to make better choices in the future. Making mistakes is unavoidable and in most cases is less important than what happens after the mistakes occur. As Mark Twain put it, “Good judgment comes from experience, and a lotta that comes from bad judgment.”

Anthony Buono

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<tr>
<th>November</th>
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<td>November 23 – Early Release Day</td>
<td>December 14 – Early Release Day</td>
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<td>November 24-25 – No School – Thanksgiving Recess</td>
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<td>January 16 - No School – Martin Luther King Day</td>
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Please visit the website at [www.branford.k12.ct.us](http://www.branford.k12.ct.us) to view our newsletter in full color!
NEWS FROM THE BOOKFAIR

The students enjoyed a week of Book Fair.
I hope everyone enjoys their new books.

Thank you to Miss Proto for the use of the library.

Our Parent volunteers are much appreciated!
I would like to thank Pam Fusco, Linda Torrey, Jennifer Katz, Renee Arenas, Maria Mele, Judy Selkoff, Nicole Cosgrove, Bridget Altieri and Laura Jansen for all their help!

*** We will have a used book sale in the spring.***
*** We will be collecting books for the sale in a couple of months.***

Thank You to All,
Ann Solomine, Book Fair Chairperson

Pre-K students at Murphy School are currently involved with many great learning experiences. This season, students explored some aspects of nature and completed a number of leaf rubbings on templates as well as real leaves. Students are comfortable with sorting items by color, shape, and size, and have begun to sort by characteristic and function. One week in October was designated “Texture Week” and students provided samples of items that are bumpy, smooth, rough, soft, and squishy. It was a great adventure to feel the interesting samples!

Pre-K students now sing and move to the lyrics of 6-7 songs, and they had much fun performing 2 of their songs for visitors during National Education Week. Students are also deeply focused on recognizing and learning upper and lower case letters.

In summary, learning abounds and progress is plentiful in the Murphy School Pre-K classroom this month!
Notes from the Music Room ♫♫♫

Hello again from music!

On Veterans Day, Murphy school invited Veterans from our community to come in so that we could thank them with our applause, our words, and especially our music. The third and fourth grade classes sang some wonderful patriotic songs and they did a fantastic job of it! We had been working hard in class for weeks to memorize the songs, and it really paid off. The third grade also added a wonderful poem about what it means to be an American hero. Mrs. Ryan's class gave us a little history lesson with some facts about why we have Veteran’s Day and where it came from. Most importantly, it was a chance for all of our students to realize the importance of thanking those men and women who serve for us so that we can enjoy the freedoms we have. It was a beautiful presentation and everyone worked very hard! Thanks again to all those that made it possible.

Mr. Keith Traver
ktraver@branford.k12.ct.us

***The music room is in need of tissue boxes. If you would like to donate, please send your child with a box. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Keith Traver

WIS Cantare Director
http://ical.me.com/keithtraver/Cantare

Falling into November In Physical Education

Fourth graders have recently completed the four components of the Connecticut State Physical Fitness Test. Students will be given their results to be taken home and shared with their families. Mrs. Poundstone and I are proud of the effort and enthusiasm the fourth graders showed during practices and actual testing sessions. These students worked extremely hard to set their goals and do their best on the tests.

During November, all students will be engaging in soccer skills in fun individual, partner and small group stations. Soccer is a great way to improve foot-eye coordination skills in our students!!!

As we fall into November, we want to encourage students to get outside, and enjoy the fresh air!! They should play, learn, and move with a smile on their face and laughter in their voice!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Keep moving everyday to become a healthy YOU!!!!

Ms. Amodio and Mrs Poundstone
Check It Out!

From the Library Shelves of Lori Proto

Walking around the library, it is beginning to feel a little like winter! Our holiday and winter book selections are on display, and the students are anxious to read our new fiction book series.

When the students walk into the library the first question I hear is “who is sitting in the chair today?” The students are very excited about our new library chair located in the library. Every week a different student gets to sit in our plush comfy chair during the lesson.

The two nonfiction learning stations this month are rocks and weather. The students may visit these stations and do interactive activities which include: reading themed books, completing some kind of game, and learning new information about the topic. The genre station features Mystery fiction and the author of the month station features Kevin Henkes – [www.Kevinhenkes.com](http://www.Kevinhenkes.com).

In Kindergarten, we are learning how to orally respond to literature and reviewing the characters and setting of a book.

In First Grade, we are working on how fiction books are placed on the shelves in the library, alphabetical order by the first letter, and how to create great predictions before they read a book. We have also explored picture and chapter books and how to locate them in the library. We have also reviewed the Caldecott medal.

In Second Grade, we are working on folktales, alphabetical order to the second letter, reading the spine label of a book, and how to locate the different fiction sections in the library. We are learning about nonfiction books and how to use the table of contents and index of a book.

In third Grade, we are working on using the reference section of the library and all of its sources to locate and use information. The third graders are also exploring the biography section and will use a biography book and other resources from the reference section to research a famous person.

In fourth Grade, we are reviewing reference sources and are working on locating information for research reports. They are working on location and access of information, as well as how to use the information when they find it. Fourth graders are also learning about how nonfiction books are arranged in the library and how to locate them using their call number. The fourth graders will have an introduction to how to use our new online computer system DESTINY – which can also be accessed from home!

We are really trying to get students to be more responsible and to return their books on time. We would also like them to get in the habit of renewing a book if they want to take it out for a longer time. Every grade/class has a graph posted inside the library and the classes that have 100% return rate will get a square colored in on their graph by grade level. The first class to receive five squares will be the winner for that grade. Please help your child to remember their library day and return their book on time!

Wishing everyone a happy, healthy, and joyous holiday season and new year ahead!

Miss Proto ☺

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From the Palette of Mrs. Riehl’s Art Room

Kindergarteners are learning about Claude Monet and his impressionistic style of painting. Our project is inspired by his painting “Water Lilies”.

First Graders are learning about the many different ways to draw a line. As I have told them, if I took every brick in Murphy School and drew a different line in each brick, I’d run out of bricks before I ran out of lines. Lines are not just straight!

Second Graders are now ‘worry free’. We have just put on the finishing touches on Guatemalan ‘Worry Dolls’. Every night before they go to bed they can tell their worry dolls their worries and the dolls will do the worrying for them while they sleep.

Third Graders are learning the art of weaving. I have challenged them this year by having the students’ set weaving goals before each class. We have only just begun and they are all very excited to be learning how to weave.

Fourth Graders will be glazing their castles - they look awesome! Once they are fired I will be displaying them in the showcases outside of my room. Please feel free to stop by and take a look at them.

In the art room, we always welcome unwanted treasures from home such as buttons, beads, and dried flowers.

If you are interested in volunteering in the art room, please let me know. You can email me at riehl@branford.k12.ct.us. I always welcome volunteers.

Thank you and here’s to a wonderful and Arts-ie school year...

Mrs. Riehl
In November students studied Pilgrim life in the 1620’s. Students studied the difference between life today and back then. This unit of study culminated with many activities including writing about what they are thankful for.

In literacy, kindergartners are learning about rhyming, beginning sounds and stretching out words to hear the letter sounds. They are also learning that all words, including their names are made up of syllables or parts. They are becoming syllable experts.

In math, kindergartners finished a unit on measurement, comparing numbers and ordering numbers up to 10. We are beginning our unit on patterns. The children are noticing that there are patterns all around us. If your child would like to share some objects with patterns, please send them in to share.

Have your kindergartners continue to practice their sight word cards that were sent home at conference time.

First Grade News

November has been exciting for first graders. First Graders have been very busy practicing at their literacy work board icons and becoming independent learners. Their literacy work board practice reflects materials taught in class during prior weeks. First graders are reading and making books, reading and drawing pictures for poems, practicing proper letter formation, exploring science topics: buoyancy, gourds, leaves, as well as shared writing experiences, practicing math games, reading poems and charts around the room, listening to books on tape or CD, and practicing high frequency words. The first grade teachers have begun to meet with small groups of children who will be reading books for guided practice. These books will be going home to be shared with our first grade families.

Reminder:

Don’t forget to call the office if your child will be out sick.

203-483-1832
In reading, the second graders have been talking about non-fiction books and text features such as titles, headings, photos, captions, labels, and tables of contents. Children at this age love to read non-fiction. They are being introduced to and shown how these text features enhance understanding of the text.

It is important to have non-fiction text in your library at home and include it during reading time. Talk with your child about what they see in the photos and how the captions and labels add information. Point out that non-fiction text is read with an explaining voice.

In math we are exploring geometric shapes and symmetry. We will soon return to problem solving with equations. It is important that you continue to work on addition facts to 20. At this time, the children should be fluent with these facts. In January, we will be working on subtraction facts.

The third grade has just finished a science unit on rocks and minerals. Students in all the classes had the opportunity to rotate through the different classrooms and participate in hands-on experiences that gave them a deeper understanding of the unit. In their own classrooms, they read non-fiction texts and folktales about rocks and minerals.

As a culminating activity, the students went on a field trip. The students had a special tour of the Tilcon quarry where they learned about the huge lava flow that once flowed through Branford and left the black basalt rock that we now use for our roads and driveways. They also visited three locations in Guilford to collect igneous, metamorphic and sedimentary rocks. These rocks were then categorized and labeled to create their own collections.

Even though our unit on rocks has ended, we hope that students will continue to be curious about rocks and think about rich geological history of Branford.
ONE BOOK ONE SCHOOL

MTM is providing students with another opportunity for student discourse. The reading teachers Anne Adinolfi, Deb Fisher and Maureen Haggans formed a committee with teachers to choose four books that all students will have the opportunity to participate in an interactive read aloud. All students will have conversations with their peers through turning and talking about the book. They will also have opportunities through discussion and small group activities to extend their thinking about the text. The committee members Toni Rivera, Teresa Ringer, Libby Vandermaelen, Mary Provini, Ashley Brown, Patrick Heenan, Nancy, Ryan, Anne Adinolfi, Deb Fisher, and Maureen Haggans, chose four books for One Book - One School.

The first book Antarctica by Helen Cowcher was read in October. The next book Dancing in the Wings by Debbie Allen will be read in December. The next interactive read aloud, Charlie Anderson, by Barbara Abercrombie, will be read in February.

The last interactive read aloud, Saturday and Teacakes, by Lester L. Laminack, will be read in April. Please take the opportunity and time to discuss these books your children.

One Book - One School Committee

If Assistance Is Needed!

We are fortunate each year in December to have organizations offer assistance to families who are struggling to provide winter clothing and gifts for children. This assistance is open to all families and is not limited to those who celebrate Christmas.

If you are in need of such assistance this year, please contact Tricia White (school social worker) or Sarah Bertolini (school psychologist).

You may call us at Murphy or send an e-mail to TRWhite@branford.k12.ct.us or Sbertolini@branford.k12.ct.us
Mrs. Brown’s (formerly Miss Steele’s) class is entering the fall with such energy! We have had a great first few months together getting to know each other and our classroom routines. Now, we’re really into the swing of learning.

In Reading, we are working hard to envision and predict what is happening in our stories. When we envision, we are making a mental movie of what is going on in our story. This helps us understand characters. When we predict, we are taking what we know about characters, adding in our own experiences, and figuring out what they’ll do next and how they’ll do it.

In Writing, we are officially published 4th grade authors! We completed and typed up our first Personal Narratives. Now, we’re working on our next pieces. We are brainstorming pieces to write by thinking about the first time we did something or saw someone, the last time we did something or saw someone, or a time when we realized something about ourselves or someone else. We are also thinking about times when we felt really strong emotions, like anger or hope, and writing pieces about those times.

In Math, we have been busy comparing and analyzing data and probability. We’ve created surveys and collected data. We’ve played several games (Cubes in a Bag and Horse Race) that taught us about probability. And in each of those instances, we have graphed our results. Check out our bulletin board to see all the different kinds of graphs we’ve created.

Social Studies have begun, and we’ve been working hard to understand the culture of the Northeast Native Americans. We have found many similarities between their culture and ours today. We took a trip back in October to Bushy Hill Nature Center, and we’re using a lot of what we learned there to help our understanding. We have figured out that the environment was really important to them!

In Mrs. Ryan’s Class, “hands on” science, social studies projects and extraordinary reading and writing have taken students to new heights. Through the Nature of Science, the class has learned the scientific process with hot air balloons, erosion, and ecosystems in a study of Interdependence: how plants and animals live together in the environment. Pairs of students constructed ecosystems to simulate the real world. Plants were grown to support an environment for live crickets, isopods, fish and snails. Geography projects were remarkable! Technology skills have evolved through learning many new programs to graph data, organize research and publish stories. Writing will advance toward essays using a graphic organizer this month. Math has taken us to a unit in graphing data and probability. Our trip to Bushy hill nature Center was very educational. Watching “Noodle” start a fire in a wigwam from bark, sticks and twigs was amazing. How resourceful the Native Americans were! We were inspired to learn about many tribes who inhabited North America. At this time of the year we are thankful for our wonderful families and all that they do to help us learn!

Students in Mr. Agress’ class have really stepped up the intensity of their work. In reading, we have been forming opinions about characters and reading with an eye toward behaviors that define them in wise and sophisticated ways. We have been synthesizing information as we read, and growing our opinions by learning to think flexibly about text. As writers, we are using strategies we notice within some of our favorite books and incorporating those into our writing; strategies such as telling a story from an internal point of view and skipping time backwards and forwards. We have also been studying punctuation and thinking about how writers use it to sharpen their message. Finally, in math we just finished a unit on data collection, and are revisiting multiplication while adding on strategies to tackle division problems. Great thinking!!!
English as a Second Language (ESL) at the Murphy School

You are invited to the
Reading Together Breakfast

Enjoy coffee, juice and muffins!

Come with your children and learn how you can help them read at home!

Wednesday, December 7, 2011
8:45-9:30 AM
Murphy School Library

Return to your child’s teacher by Wednesday, November 30th. Thank you!

Name: ___________________ Teacher: ___________________

YES! I will attend: _____ Number Attending: _____

NO, I cannot attend: _____

LIBRARY REMINDERS

*Students in grades K-4 are allowed to take out one book per week unless they are working on a special project.

*Students may renew or return a book on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday morning from 9:00-9:15. So if they finish a book early, were out sick on their library day or want to renew it for another week they may come in during this time.

*If your child loses a book, or it gets ruined – you can replace the same title of the book, or pay the cost of the book by cash or a check made out to the P.T.A.

*We are in need of tissues – if you would like to donate a box we would really appreciate it!

For the safety of our students, staff and parents… please note there is no double parking allowed in the parking lot.

Thank You
On Monday, October 17, the students from Mr. Heenan’s class went on a field trip to Bushy Hill Nature Center in Ivoryton, CT. The students learned about Native Americans and their way of life. Mr. Heenan’s class had this to say about the many things they learned:

● On the field trip I learned that making tools or a fishing net could take more than 24 hours! Just making a fishing net could take 40 hours! I’m glad I never had to do all this work.—Marissa
● I had a lot of fun exploring the woods and learning what it was like to live as a Native American. They showed us how dogbane was used to make a tomahawk, a type of tool. That was interesting to me.—Alec S.
● The Bushy Hill field trip was awesome! One reason it was awesome is because Noodle showed us all of the Indian tools and how to use them.—Cameron
● The Bushy Hill Ctr is a place to learn about Native Americans and their lives, how they hunt and build things.—Sam
● My favorite things about our field trip to Bushy Hill is when we got to learn the fox walk through the forest. When we took turns with the bow and arrows and shot the arrows on the target.—Spencer
● I learned how the Indians made fire out of wood.—Matt
● When I got there I felt like it was hundreds of years ago. We did archery, learned how to fox walk, went in a wigwam and made a fire.—Adrienne
● At the Bushy Hill field trip there was a lot of cool stuff. First we went to see inside a tee pee. (I always wondered what it looks like inside those).—Marcel
● I liked when we got to shoot bows and arrows.—Brooke
● We got to learn about teepees and got to learn about buffalo bladder and what they use it for. They use it for holding water.—Rocco
● My favorite part of Bushy Hill was the wigwam and the tee pee. Each wigwam was tight and cozy. I liked the size and fire that burned inside. I do not want to live in a wigwam but I found it interesting to learn that Native Americans did.—Max
● They showed us weapons (spears and bows for example) and important plants, like dogbane for string and tulip trees for handles.—Tony
● Some of the things I learned were when Indians needed clothes and materials, they had to hunt by fox walking and they shot bows and arrows at the animals to have clothing.—Deja
● I learned that you have to strip almost 50 plants to make a fishing net! I learned a lot more than I expected on that field trip.—Kara
● My favorite part was when we shot bows and arrows. I had a lot of fun and found out that I was a very skilled archer.—Eric
● The most part I liked the best is the fox walk because it was really fun to do but it’s hard.—Maya
● I learned at the woodlands that they did fox walk to hunt. When they did the fox hunt they could catch animals for them to eat.—Maribel
From the desk of the school nurse

During this month of Thanksgiving, I would like to familiarize you with two great programs available very close by in Branford. The Community Dining Room and Clothing Bank located near the Branford Town Green on Harrison Avenue. They serve the Branford community and many MTM families.

THE COMMUNITY DINING ROOM

Executive Director, Patricia Kral, welcomes you all to their beautiful dining facility on 30 Harrison Avenue. The Community Dining Room is open for lunch Sun-Fri 12:00 noon to 1:00. “FOOD ‘n’ FUN TUESDAYS” is family night from 5:30 to 6:30pm. Breakfast is served Saturday’s from 9:00-10:00 am.

Volunteers serve a nutritious hot lunch Sun-Fri. at noon, throughout the year. Tuesday Family nights have included story time, crafts and books for the children to take home. Most recently Barbara Naclerio, Health Educator at East Shore District Health Dept has been leading creative cooking and exercise classes. Plan on joining them often…sharing time and company with them. There is never a charge. Ask them about their Special Holiday Dinners—all are Welcome. To volunteer, please call 203-488-9750.

CLOTHING BANK

The Clothing Bank is also located in the Volunteer Services Center at 30 Harrison Avenue; 203-483-2643. Anyone in need of assistance, especially parents, can shop for their children 18 years old or younger. For all school age children, K-12, (a parent must show report card). There are no eligibility requirements. Once a member—depending on clothing size availability—you are allowed seven pieces of clothing per person per month, this includes a coat, 1 pair of shoes, suits, and dressy dress. Sheets, towels and blankets are allowed once every three months; if available. Only Clothing Bank members may shop. Items are for personal use only—not for resale. Shopping hours are: Monday-Thursday 9:30 am-12:00 pm and 1:00-2:00 pm; Friday 9:30 am-1:00 pm and Saturdays 11:00am-1:00 pm. For those interested in donating slightly used items can drop-off items during hours of operation.

Please keep this information handy for your reference----they are great services for our Mary T Murphy Community to utilize and support. Additional information is available at the Town of Branford Website—A Resource Guide to Social Services.

Nurse Kathy

School number: 203-483-1832 • Nurses line: 203-315-3561 • fax number: 203-483-5189