

March Parent Newsletter 2018

*****This newsletter is in English and Spanish (Polish version is available on our website at <http://www.rhodesk12.il.us>)*****

Welcome to the March edition of the Rhodes Parent Newsletter!

Academics:

Our K-5 students and staff are nearing the end of year one working with the **Go Math** curriculum and we are seeing incredible results. Teachers in various grade levels are reporting that students are learning concepts in days when it used to take them weeks, and they are retaining the information as well. We are seeing improvements in our Math MAP scores as well, and can't wait to see how our students perform on the PARCC test this spring. Our **Lucy Calkins and Nancy Atwell** writing curriculums are in year three, which has allowed us to see amazing improvements in our students writing. They are more creative with their ideas and are writing more than they ever have. This skill translates over to every other subject and has helped them express their ideas and knowledge more thoroughly. Finally, our **Reading Curriculum Committee** is in the final stages of our research that will bring a new Reading series to Rhodes next year. Our committee members will be observing our final choices at local schools in the next few weeks, and we are excited to add a curriculum that challenges our students in new and aggressive ways. Just like we are seeing the positive impact from the Writing series, we know positive change is coming with how our students perform in Math and Reading.

Black History Month:

Rhodes School has celebrated Black History Month at each grade level. Kindergarten read many stories about some very influential people. They watched videos and learned some new vocabulary including boycott and segregation. First grade learned about Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks through a variety of books, websites and Scholastic News. Second grade students watched the movie and read the book, Ruby Bridges as well as observed how a person close to their age faced discrimination with bravery. Third grade watched several BrainPop Jr. videos that were biographies of famous African American men and women, like Ruby Bridges and Jackie Robinson as well as read biographies and also talked about the "great migration" of African Americans from the deep south.

In fourth grade, they read the story *My Brother Martin*, which is about how MLK grew up to become a man that helped end segregation and change the world. The fifth grade students created biography poster projects of influential African Americans as well as discussed the "great migration" of African Americans. In sixth 6th grade Language Arts, the students read articles about Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad as well as read poems from Hip Hop Speaks to Children. In 7th and 8th grade Language Arts, they featured a prominent African American figure each day by reading a snapshot biography and watching a short video. The students then synthesized this info into a summary while incorporating their content vocabulary words.

IGSA:

I just wanted to share some exciting news from Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day at Argonne. Our 8th Grader, Stephanie D., placed second in the competition! She successfully designed and created a car that won in a competition of over 150 other girls! How exciting! A big thank you to Mrs. Rupnick and Mr. Monacella for instilling such dynamic science and STEM skills in our students.



PARCC Testing:

Spring PARCC Testing will take place during the weeks of April 9th - April 13th and April 16th - April 20th. All students in 3rd - 8th grades will be tested in the areas of English/Language Arts and Math. During the testing sessions, please ensure your child eats a good breakfast, is well rested and is in attendance and on time during the testing dates. Makeup tests will be given to students that are absent. We feel confident that our teachers have prepared our students to the best of their abilities and that we will see our scores improve from last year.

Scholastic Bowl

Our students participated in a scholastic bowl tournament on March 8th at East Leyden HS. We are very proud of the time and effort all of the students put forth during this competitive, rigorous event! Our new coaches, Ms. Katelyn Weil and Mr. Aaron Dembowski, really enjoyed working with our students and they look forward to strengthening the program over the next few years.

SEL:

Our students continue to earn Rhodes Respect tickets for their positive behavior as we work to honor those students who follow our expectations and our model students academically and behaviorally. We now pull the names of 9 students every Friday who have earned Rhodes Respect tickets and announce their names over the intercom. They earn prizes and we put their name on the digital sign in front of our building. Each ticket earned leads to another ping pong ball being placed in the Rhodes Respect Ticket Tube. In the winter the students earned enough tickets to have a Pie in the Face day, where students were able to throw a pie in the face of their favorite teacher! They are currently very close to earning the next reward, which is to have select students attempt to “dunk” teachers of their choosing in the Dunk Tank.



We also reward all of the students who have less than 2 negative behavior referrals every quarter. At the end of 2nd quarter we showed a movie after school to all of those students who earned it, and on March 23rd we will have a dance party for those students. We are continuing to focus on rewarding those positive students, and we ask that you continue to reiterate to your children the importance of being respectful to others...not to earn a reward, but because it is the right thing to do!



Sports:

Our Girls Basketball teams are finishing up their seasons strong, and both the 7th and 8th grade teams participated in the conference tournament this week. Our 8th grade team earned a 3rd place finish in the tournament. Congratulations to both teams on successful seasons! Boys Volleyball and Girls Soccer are both right around the corner!