

Walden Spirit – October 1, 2010

Dear Parents, Grandparents, and Community Friends,

Walden School is such a special place! We have had a great start to the school year. We are excited to share with you some highlights of the first six weeks of school

Brandon's Bread Oven is off and running. We have already baked in it. Beautiful flowers and a lovely bench (a past eighth grader's Capstone) create a scene pleasing to the eye. We have plans to plant a small orchard on the bank and even have some grape vines and cranberry bushes!

Parent and community volunteers have made it possible to keep our mentoring program going for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders.

I am honored to be representing the incredible staff and students of Walden School in Washington, D.C. in October as the Elementary Principal of the Year for the State of Vermont. This is a wonderful tribute to the team effort that makes excellence in education at Walden possible!

We are in the process of updating and "jazzing up" the Walden School website. Keep track of the changes as the year goes along.

One of my main goals remains strengthening school-community connections. I welcome your ideas and suggestions at any time!

We hope you enjoy this first publication of the Walden Spirit. We look forward to many exciting learning successes this year.

In the Walden spirit,
Dr. Martha Dubuque, Principal

WALDEN SCHOOL'S VISUAL ARTS SPIRIT

How wonderful it is to see all the children back at Walden School for Art classes; as I begin my third year teaching Visual Arts.

All grades started off the year with a graphic project. Which consisted of designing their names in a large format; including three goals they wish to accomplish during the year. Goals could be written or illustrated. Personal, learning, and an artistic goal are reflected on the posters. Students used two art mediums, crayon and markers.

Fall scenes created on colored paper with pastels is our most recent project. Don't miss our vibrant display at open house coming right up.

Lastly, the new Art after school program started on September 24th, 2010 and will continue through Friday, October 15th, 2010. This program is presently open for students in grades 1-4. We are studying a unit on landscape design. The classes are on Friday's from 3-4. Sign up, and come and join the fun. There is no charge for the classes. The next session will run for four weeks starting October 29th through November 19th. This session is open to grades 5-8. We will also study the art of landscapes. There will always be time to "free draw"; as there are many students who enjoy this type of drawing activity.

Have a wonderful, colorful, autumn season.
Jayne Donahue Visual Arts Teacher

NOTES FROM THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT

It seems like the school year has kicked off very well and is now running smoothly ahead. Students have been moving around in many different ways in P.E. through the variety of activities that have been provided to them so far over this exciting year. Students have completed a section in Lawn Games, partook in a session of square dancing and were able to utilize the new Traverse Climbing Wall that we were fortunate enough to receive in a special grant.

The younger students have done the same as the older grades, except they played tag and ball striking games rather than the lawn games. At this time, both my older and younger grades are about to wrap up things in their Soccer/kicking skill unit. The older students are focusing more on the actual fundamentals of the game, rules and strategies; where the students in grades kindergarten through second have been focusing more on kicking, trapping and foot work patterns with both dominate and non dominate feet.

Older students will be participating in both Cricket and Golf units that will follow within the next few weeks. During this time, the younger students will be working on certain loco-motor skills, as well as using pieces of equipment like the parachute and the omnikin ball to work on team building skills.

In Health, all grades from Kindergarten to sixth grade are working on and about to finish units in skill builders. The skill builders, which are geared appropriately towards each grade cluster, focus on many different life long skills such as, self-esteem, decision-making, communication skills, goal setting and stress management. Soon all grades will be jumping into units that are related to physical activity and the many benefits of it.

The middle school group is working on a similar unit that is mainly focusing on friend skills, communication, positive influence, feelings and getting help with them. Grades fifth through eighth are also starting a new assignment where they will keep track of their physical activity outside of school in their own personal journals. These students are expected to start out by completing a couple of entries of all their daily activities per week and will eventually increase upon them throughout the school year.

It is great to be back in the swing of things working with familiar and friendly faces again after the long summer break. Please remind your children to stay active, eat healthy, get plenty of rest and of course to keep it fun!

Standards mostly viewed

Personal Writing 1.12

Speaking 1.15

Taking Risks 2.8

Persevering 2.9

Goal Setting 3.1

Respect 3.3

Teamwork 3.10

Interactions 3.11

FIRST AND SECOND GRADE WRITING

W1.1-2 Students use prewriting and drafting to produce written products.

The first and second graders went on the nature trail on September 9th in connection with the articles they had read in National Geographic for Kids. Some of the students read about finding shapes in nature. The others read about fungus. We went in search of shapes and mushrooms. We took pictures while we were out there. The next day we looked at the pictures and brainstormed together about what we saw on our walk. Here are some pieces of individual writing created by our primary students.

The mushroom looked like a pancake and another looked like applesauce and honey. One was red and one was yellow. Then one was little and one was big. There was some leaves that you can eat and it is shaped as a heart. It was spicy. There was a cicle on a plant. It was a bug home. We opened the plant and a bug was in it. A leaf was shaped as a circle. A piece of mushroom fell off. A flower looked like a star. At home I saw a mushroom. It looked like a cookie.

By Kate VoganSchneider

When I was helping people get across the tree (fallen on a bridge) I was looking at a yellow mushroom.

By Carson Tilden.

The nature trail is cool.

By Tyler Harvey

I saw a brown mushroom and I saw a black mushroom. I saw a red mushroom. I saw a worm in a house, two worms.

By Brandon Halverson

Some mushrooms are red and yellow and black. But some are big and some are small. Trees have big bumps on them. Some mushrooms ar blackish, brownish and crunchy or hard or smooshy. Some are white too.

By Macy VoganSchneider

The blue tree is a triangle. I saw a flower shaped like a star.

By Katty Carr

We saw mushrooms on the trail and they were different colors.

By Sara Bell

Yesterday we went on the nature trail. We saw lots of mushrooms, mushrooms that are red, mushrooms that are tan, and mushrooms that are yellow. No lizards. We saw bridges and hills too. There was a path for us to walk on. We saw berries. The nature trail was funner that recess.

By Kasey Rice

A mushroom looked like a pancake. A mushroom looked like pizza.

By Ryder VoganSchneider

My group studied mushrooms and the other group studied shapes. We found a few shapes and a few mushrooms. I like nature now.

By Miranda Degreenia

We saw a mushroom and we saw some flowers and we saw some berries. We saw some trees. We saw some bridges. I like the slippery bridge.

By Luke Morris

The roots are lifting the tree.

By Cullen Clifford

The sap of the mushroom is sometimes poisonous.

By Zack Lacey

My school and me we all stoped and we all saw a mushroom. We all stopped again. We all saw a mushy mushroom. We all stopped again. Then we all saw a red mushroom. We saw lots of stuff.

By Sawyer Castle

I was walking on the bridge. I like the nature trail.

By Brighton Marsh

There is a bridge with a log on top.
By Alex Anair

The nature trail is great to us.
By Wyatt Shedd

THIRD and FOURTH GRADE WRITING

Grade Expectations: W3:3 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of conventional English spelling by...

- Correctly spelling common homophones (there, they're, their)

Grade Expectations: W3&4:12 Expressive Writing: Narratives: Students demonstrate use of narrative strategies by...

- Using relevant and descriptive details
- Using dialogue to advance action

We have been working on correctly using the words there, they're, and their in sentences. We have also been finding spicier words to use in dialogue in place of the word "said." We wanted to share some of our most interesting sentences!

Hailey Foster: "They're eating my doughnut over there," mumbled Molly.

Katelyn Molleur: I have a fat, lazy cat. It is there on the chair.

Ryan Allen: Mom screeched, "There is a mouse!"

Tabitha Lawrence: "There's a black cat," screamed Iris. "No, it's a little turkey!" yelled Rachel. "No, it's a big dog!" "Oh, yeah," muttered everybody.

Walker Willey: Can I please go over there to see my Dad? He has a broken, swollen, pink and blue leg.

Rachel Bellavance: There is a grouchy dog over there on their black rock.

Dustin Lacey: "Shut up Dragon!" I screamed in rage. I was brushing my teeth at their house when a fury grabbed me and dragged me down the hall mumbling ancient Greek curses!

Fabian Reyes: "They're getting huge plastic faces!" cackled Bob.

William Hutchinson: "I don't want it, Shadow! Get this thing off!" repeated Chance.

Jayson Foster, Johnny Hill, Jaden Willey, Will Huntoon, and Iris Reyes created these two sentences as a small group.

They're dressed up as a bear in a restaurant. "Oh no! They're real!"

"You tricky fly!" yelled the exterminator. "Now he's over there! How annoying!"

FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADE WRITING

The fifth and sixth graders have already begun producing some great writing. We have worked on using sensory details to explode a moment. Students are also describing characters by using their words to show rather than tell. The goal is that the reader gets a clear idea of a character's physical appearance as well as his or her personality. Below are some examples of group writing and individual writing. (Grade Expectation W 12)

Explode the Moment ~ Spewing with the Little Man Inside Me

“Woo Hoo!” Chug,Chug,Chug. The ride lurched forward with a gut wrenching screech. The sweaty foam safety bars pressed into me. The metallic click rang in my ears as fear bloomed in my chest. The thick smell of dusk faded as we crawled slowly upward. The taste of cotton candy fumes conquered, even obliterated, my overjoyed mouth. It seemed like I could feel the water of the clouds on my face. The sweet taste in my mouth began to disappear. The adrenaline rush paralyzed me. My heartbeat sped up as I heard the kids screaming in front of me. The nervous little man inside me pushed against the outer walls of my stomach, throwing my insides out. This morning's fried dough was slimily spewing, spurting, and squirting. The smell of sour milk lingered slowly and heavily over my whole cart. “Aaaaaaa!” The hot sticky air pushed up on my face. The fifty feet of terror now felt like an 800-foot drop. The rest of the ride was a confusing, cloudy, catastrophic blur. As the ride came to a stop, my hands were clenched into bone-shattering fists. “Ugh! Let's do that again!”

Explode the Moment ~ Skiing

Standing atop the massive mountain, my eyes scanned the distant lands and then they scrolled down to the drop off in front of my hot pink boots. My hands gripped my frigid poles. I took a long, deep breath of icy air. My heart felt like it was ready to...no...going to burst. The frostbiting wind numbed my toes and froze my face. I took a long, deep breath of wintry air and pushed off with my slender poles. The bottom of the hill looked like a million miles away.

Tiny flakes of melting snow fell gracefully onto my frozen tongue. Heaven help me, I'm on my way.

Character Description Excerpts

He looked at me with a blank stare and his black eyes looked like a tunnel you could never escape. I felt like I was in that tunnel.

He had a suspiciously sneaky look about him. He had a black mask on and he was bald. The smiled a gruesome smile, flashing yellow teeth at me.

His face had even wrinkles in the pink leather that seemed to be skin stretched across his bony face.

Then a laugh so scratchy and petrifying, I almost fell to the damp concrete floor below. I turned and ran, not stopping or looking back. I heard the echo of his black covered boots.

NEWS FROM GRADE SEVEN

Hello and greetings from the 7th grade class. I am thrilled to be covering for Melissa Piscitelli while she's out with her baby girl, Daisy Jane, who joins her sister Ginger. My time here at Walden School has been wonderful and I have truly enjoyed getting to know each of the students and the community as a whole.

There are so many things that I could report on, however I will only mention a few of the highlights. We are currently working on preparing for the NECAP test, which the students will begin taking the first week in October. In addition to this preparation we are also exploring the theme of Westward Expansion. The students are working on increasing their knowledge of the Oregon Trail and its many challenges and successes. They will then use this knowledge to examine how this movement affected the country and the people within it. One of the activities the students have greatly enjoyed is reading diary entries of a young girl who embarked on the trip with her family across the Oregon Trail.

In Advisory the students are using Ed Gerety's Combinations, to discover and develop leadership principles. After completing our exploration of gratitude we jumped into our current theme of goals. Each student is working on their dream board, where they will display images and words which accurately represent their goals, both long term and short. The students are also working on examining how achieving smaller goals may lead to reaching larger ones, and how success can feed motivation and determination. Please ask a middle school student what his or her goal is and how they believe they might achieve it!

The middle school has recently visited the Vermont Corn Maze, where Advisory groups used their team building skills to help them navigate through the maze. After two hours of hiking through the corn, we all made it out! This was a great opportunity for the students to examine successes and challenges while working with others. When asked to reflect on the trip and identify his/her role in the group, a success and a challenge, one student wrote:

"My role would probably be observer. I looked for trails and gave suggestions for which trails (to choose). Some trails worked, which was a success, but some trails led us nowhere and we were lost, which was a challenge."

Vermont Standards:

R7 Uses comprehension strategies while reading or listening to literary and informational text

R15 Generates a personal response to what is read aloud or read independently, citing evidence

W1 Students use prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and critiquing to produce final drafts of written pieces

W5 In response to literary or information text, students make and support analytical judgments about text

EIGHTH GRADE FALL MATH AND SCIENCE

This year the Walden Eighth grade is a wonderful group of eight energetic students. These students are role models in our school. They have started the year as Four Winds leaders, thank you Arec, Kristi and Maya. They also began fundraising for their end of the year field trip with a potato harvesting trip to Bill Half's Harvest Hill Farm. They are headed to Six Flags in Massachusetts. Their technology goal is to master Google Apps to meet technology grade expectations.

In math we have started the year reviewing all that we learned last year, focusing on geometry and algebra grade expectations. We are continuing the online algebra program this year. This program helps us to meet the algebra standards including absolute value, exponents and solving for variables. In geometry we have learned another grade expectation, the Triangle Inequality Theorem.

Science this year focuses on learning about the world around us and energy types. We are piloting a "Project Based Inquiry Science" Program this year that has students working together to uncover knowledge about science, then use the knowledge to design a Rube Goldberg machine to showcase their knowledge. Students have also been investigating why the seasons change, why the weather changes, why the leaves change color and more ideas and questions they have about the world around them.

GE's: S7-8:1-8

S7-8:21 Force and motion

S7-8: 23 Heat Energy, S7-8:24 Electrical Energy,

S7-8:28, Light Energy, S7-8:49 Natural Resources

A quote from the eighth graders about the start of the year:

"I liked watching the ball of clay go smooosh! When we were learning about Kinetic Energy in science." ~Kristi Hannett

"Last night I finished my first Rube Goldberg Machine sketch. It was a hard task but I got it done." ~Jay Tilden

"I just started online algebra and I think it is awesome because it is different and I am learning more." ~Caleb Millington

"This year is going to be a great year to end my time in Walden School." ~Dakota Holbrook

"In social studies we are studying Ancient Egypt and I can't wait to finish my DI challenge which is to paint everyone's name in hieroglyphics." ~KaitLynn Lakus

"I am learning a lot of math this year, like how products and multiples are related." ~Seth Norman

"Math is hard but fun because I am learning how to take notes and use them." ~Arec Cole

"Teaching Four Winds has been a fun and exciting opportunity to interact with little kids." ~Maya Gershun-Half