

CHAPLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 4 follow us on Twitter at [KChavez@ChaplinElementa](https://twitter.com/KChavez@ChaplinElementa)

September 2019

From the Principal...

K. Chavez, Principal:

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

What a terrific start to the new school year! I have had the chance to visit the classrooms on many occasions; the students are demonstrating such wonderful and positive attitudes towards learning! The classrooms are all abuzz with rich dialogue and deep thinking as they face the challenges of their new grade.

Your teachers are off to a great start as we collectively work to build productive learning environments that focus on the skills that allow us to utilize critical thinking to move beyond mere repetition. Their work is so vital to assisting the children in developing habits of mind that allow them to persist when they reach sticking points.

Your teachers are also working with the children to grow their social skills and develop empathy. This core value will help the children to understand their peers during times of struggle. We will focus on more core values throughout the year that will help to guide the children in decision making and habits of mind!

Please be sure to contact me if you feel the need at any time!



School Store opens Friday, October 4 for Pre-K—Grade 3. The store will be open on a rotating schedule. The next Friday, October 18, the store will be open for Grades 4-6. From then on, it will rotate by the week for the remainder of the year. It will be marked on the monthly calendar.

At Chaplin School, we strive to cultivate a strong, collaborative school climate and culture that is focused on high academic development and achievement for all students. – High standards for curriculum implementation and student learning.

Important Dates

- Wednesday, October 2– PTO meeting @ 6:00 PM
- Wednesday, October 9– Board of Education meeting @ 6:30 PM
- Friday, October 11– No School– Teacher Professional Development Day
- NWEA and SBAC scoring interpretations for parents (Date to be determined for mid-October)
- Thursday, October 10- Fire Prevention and Fire Truck visit



Finding the right pattern of Habits

Whole School Focus

Over the past few years, Chaplin Elementary School has greatly improved in the area of Mathematics. Your children are scoring much higher on the Mathematics than they were just a few years ago. In 2015-16, only 26.3% of the students were scoring at the level of Meets or Exceeds Expectations on the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC). That number continues to climb; rather than being roughly 20% behind the state average, we are now approximately 15% above the average. We have climbed from only 43% of the students reaching their targets to a high of 81.6%.

During this time, our Reading scores have remained consistent. However, we want to see the same growth in our students' abilities to use key ideas and details in both fiction and nonfiction literature, to use language and structure to comprehend and apply critical thinking, and improve vocabulary acquisition and usage. CES scores hover right around the state average, but we know that we can realize the same growth in ELA as we have experienced through dedicated work in Mathematics. To this end, we have some new focus points this year.

Our grades 1 & 2 classrooms are giving more attention to phonics. The overarching goal of phonics instruction is to improve decoding skills (sounding words out) which is a critical element for beginning readers. Rather than focusing on context clues, fluent readers must have a working repertoire of strategies to draw upon. Solid Phonics instruction teaches sound-spelling relationships. Decoding and understanding word patterns will aid in the development of word recognition. As fluency improves, students will be able to concentrate more on understanding a text because the struggle to decode has diminished. In order to help grow our school, we have a team of teachers involved in CT ReadConn this year!

Our Kindergarteners focus on Phonemic awareness. Rather than focusing on relationships between sounds and **written** symbols, students focus on sounds in **spoken** words. By gaining an understanding of word parts—beginning, middle, and end, students learn about the discrete sounds that words are made of. They are better able to blend sounds and recognize new sounds (th, sh...). This insight is extremely important if the students are to apply this knowledge in reading and writing as they move forward.

While the other grades will touch upon phonics as needed, they have a vocabulary focus. However, this will not be the typical vocabulary lists that are memorized tested, and forgotten. The students are involved in the WordMasters Challenge. Students are being taught to think analytically and metaphorically about words through analogies. Explicit instruction will help the students to gain ground in comprehension as they focus on verbal reasoning.

Please feel free to ask your teacher or the principal for more information if you would like to learn more.

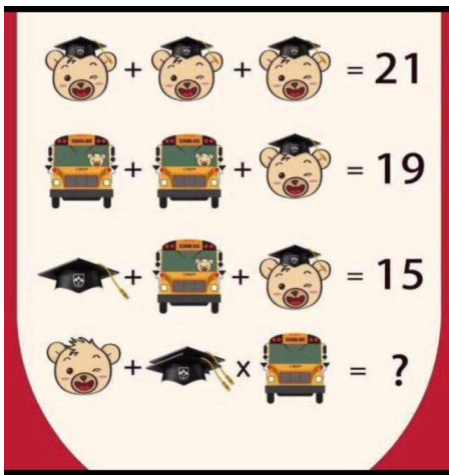
Academic Support Class (ASC)

Not all children progress at the same rate, and learning gaps may appear for some students. A learning gap is the difference between what a student has learned and what the student is expected to learn by year end.

The best way to close an achievement gap is to provide additional **explicit** instruction to strengthen existing strategies or to introduce new strategies. A reader will not catch up just reading independently. Unless the student is afforded more time to read while receiving instruction, the gap may grow wider or take more years to close. The overall goal is to close the gaps by the end of grade 3; however, as more complex skills and critical thinking are required each year, we have to double our efforts for many of our students. If we work diligently to help our students have greater than one year's worth of growth for one year of schooling, we can help them to reach success by the time they are leave CES.

We are approaching Reading and Math intervention differently this year in order to serve the students with a gap (Tier 3) more appropriately. Grades 1-6 have a period each day commonly referred to as ASC. This is a daily, scheduled time for the interventionists to deliver additional instruction in Reading or Math without the students missing Tier 1 instruction (regular daily instruction). No new learning will take place in the classroom at this time. Tier 1 students may be involved in an enrichment activity. On many days, the teacher will be working with small groups of students, Tier 2, in the classroom on skills that are only slightly lacking. This may occur in small flexible groups or in a 1-to1 setting.

The teachers and interventionists meet on a weekly basis to review student data collected from assessments such as the NWEA and district/classroom assessments. This approach will allow all students and teachers to increase their efforts in areas of concern or areas that we can challenge the students through a problem solving method. Your child's teacher and the interventionists will let you know when a student is in need of intervention.

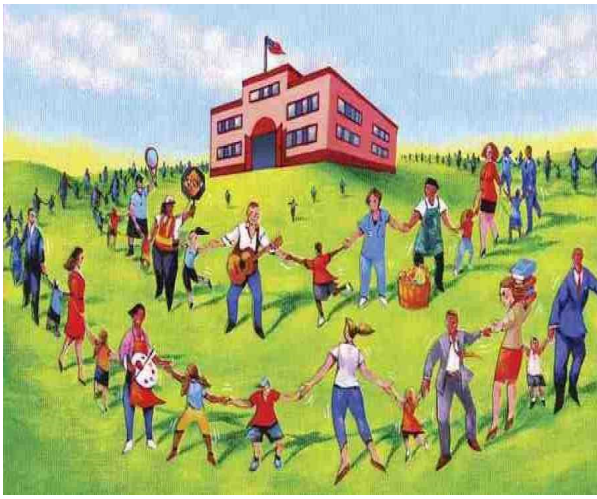


Try to solve this puzzle with your child. Do not worry about using traditional math. Have your child try different strategies to determine the value of each object.

Reading Instruction

The teachers have to be the leaders to drive change when we find that our practices are no longer resulting in the improvements that we seek. As we move through the school year, there will be a greater focus on flexible grouping in most areas in the classroom. The focus for this article is on reading. There are core skills and concepts that all students should master by grade end. These skills and concepts will have a focus during whole class instruction at the beginning of the reading lesson. These core skills and concepts (the Connecticut Core Standards) are vital to the success of the students. These are the areas that you will find on the grade specific report cards. However, not all children progress at the same rate, so we need to make sure that we are instructing students at their levels.

Flexible grouping allows this to occur. Unlike the old reading groups that students very rarely move out of, flexible groups invite movement based on student needs. Each group will read a text at their instructional level (with some challenge). The teacher will focus instruction on the needs of the group while maintaining attention on the core skills of the reading unit at hand. Groups will meet throughout the week, but all groups will not meet the same number of times within a week. Conferencing with students will still occur, but it will be slightly different from the past.



Parent Involvement

Family and community engagement in the local school are proven to have positive and long lasting effects on student success. CES will be seeking parent involvement throughout the school year in order to improve the educational process. Interacting with your child and his/her teachers on a regular basis in order to participate in school activities and discuss concerns brings all parties together to work collaboratively and solve issues in a timely fashion. Partnerships expand opportunities for shared responsibility between and the families and the school.

C.E.S. PTO News

Welcome back to Chaplin Elementary! For those of you who are new to this school, we warmly welcome you to join this big family.

Congratulations! - Parents, Legal Guardians and CES Staff -you are automatic members of our Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), which is set up to bridge between home and school. We hope that our partnership will pool a wealth of knowledge, talents, skills, and educate our youngsters. Your involvement really does make a difference in "your" child's education.

Every year, our PTO helps to oversee the needs and development of the school. We help raising funds to provide a wide range of educational enrichment programs to our students. The money we raise helps to fund class trips, books, classroom supplies, and a lot more.

As the **new school year** begins, we would once again ask for your support, so we can continue making resource and learning opportunities available to our children. While dues are not required for membership, the PTO depends on your annual voluntary involvement and donations to keep all sorts of wonderful things happening for the children. We appreciate your involvement and your time contributed to support our school. **Please fill out the membership form** being sent home and return it to school with your child. This will help us keep in touch when seeking volunteers and organizing events.

The PTO **welcomes you** to join our meetings to raise your concerns, contribute your ideas and talents to better our school. Our meetings are generally held on the **first Wednesday** of each month at **6:00pm** in the school **library**.

We would like to **thank you** in advance for your support and generous donations. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at chaplinpto@gmail.com we also have a mailbox located in the office. May you have a wonderful school year and we look forward to seeing you at our next **PTO meeting, October 2, 2019 at 6:00pm**.



Evacuation Drill

CES conducted a fire drill on Wednesday, September 11. The school evacuated the building within 1 minute. The children were very cooperative during the drill. We also conducted a "Secure School/Stay Put" drill on Wednesday, September 25. All the classes acted promptly. Each drill helps us to realize what we do well and the places that are in need of improvement.

COMING UP NEXT!

- ◆ MCM Fundraiser
 - ◇ Start Sept 20, 2019
 - ◇ Lyman Orchard Pies
 - ◇ Otis Spunkmeyer Cook-iedough
 - ◇ End Oct 11, 2019
 - ◇ Expected in before Thanksgiving
- ◆ Meeting October 2, 2019
 - ◇ 6:00 pm in CES library
 - ◇ Bring your IDEAS!
- ◆ Cherrydale Fundraiser
 - ◇ Start Oct 10, 2019
 - ◇ Catalog
 - ◇ End Oct 23, 2019