



CHAPLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Volume 6 Issue 1 Follow us on Twitter at Kevin Chavez@ChaplinElementa

September 2023

From the Principal...

K. Chavez

September 2023

Dear Parents and Guardians,

It's amazing how fast the year gets moving. We have been in school for roughly 5.5 weeks, and we have nearly completed the fall benchmark assessments with the students. Reports will be coming home soon for your review. Our K-3 students are participating in a different assessment this year as the CT State Dept of Education took some of the acceptable tests off the approved list. We have moved to aimsWeb+ assessments. These assessments are shorter and focus more deeply on skills and concepts for the primary aged learner. They also have a screening for dyslexia.

Our school psychologist resigned his position during the summer. Mrs. Fine will be joining us at the beginning of October as we have made a change to bring a full time Social Worker to CES as an integral part of our team working with children when they need something outside of the curriculum to help them better access the learning goals.

The staff is planning a number of Family Event Nights. We have our first virtual event coming up on November 2 from 6:30-8:30. As the date draws near, I will send a link for you to join us for a discussion on daily transition during the school day and establishing clear expectations and routines to support your child as a student and as a family member. This night will be coordinated and run by School Climate Consultants, a group we are partnering with this year to support the staff in professional learning. As other event dates are determined, we will send information out for you to mark your calendars.

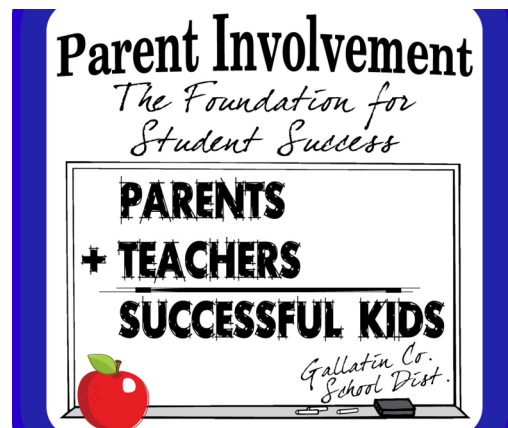
As has been a goal every year at CES, we want to build strong and effective partnerships with families in order to help the children of Chaplin thrive. We must work together to support and improve student learning, social development, and health of the children. This has to be seen as a "shared responsibility" if our children are to reach their fullest potential. This relationship is the most powerful strategy for sustainable long-term success.

K Chavez

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

- Oct 6 No School for students – staff professional learning day
- Oct 9 No school
- Oct 13 Early release for PK–staff professional learning
- Oct 31 PTO sponsored cultural event- Traditions of Chinese Acrobatics



Reading

The field of reading research has produced too many studies for most of us to read and know what each has to say. The question that they seek to answer is, "Why do some readers blossom while others struggle to learn to read well by the end of third grade?" and "Why do some readers read less and less each subsequent year?" or "Why do students struggle to comprehend what is being read?"

I would like to give attention to these questions and relate the answers to the home-school partnerships necessary to improve students' abilities and skills. If the time existed in our schedule, I would ask every teacher to give the students at least one hour of independent reading time each and every day. I wish we could have more time for students to share the books they read on their own, to explore and find the books, the genres, the authors that they connect with. Families can take part in this. We all need to show children how to embrace reading as a lifelong pursuit.

I had fallen away from reading in their first few years after graduating from college as "I was too busy with teaching." How ironic! That is until a high school friend and I met in passing one day, and he asked if I had read a specific book. When I answered that I hadn't, I decided I would never stop reading again. When my sons were born, I made sure there were books in almost every room of the house. Each of them had a bookcase in their rooms to collect the books they read. They later passed books down to their younger brother(s) and told them why they thought each other would enjoy the book. They found connections with books and with one another. Their friends would ask if they could borrow their books; of course the answer was yes and often, turned into a trade. They would hear my wife and me discuss the books we were reading. As they are older now, we still talk about the books each of us is reading and at times choose to read the same book at the same time. It may sound like it just came to them, but it didn't. It took time and planning to help them choose to continue to be readers.

As adults, we may understand that reading changes your life as it unlocks doors to escape from the confines of formal learning and allows each of us to pursue our own interests and pleasures. We have to know what each of our children is in terms of the type of readers each is. Some of our children are developing readers. Please don't think of this by age because there are children in the upper grades in every school who are developing. Unfortunately, many of these children do not think of themselves as capable readers. They may think reading will always be elusive and turn their attention to other things and only give time to reading while they are in school. Time is exactly what these readers need. They seldom apply what they have learned in the context of authentic and independent reading, so it will be difficult for them to improve their skills. Not

reading will lead to weaker skills and an ever-widening achievement gap. They are not fated to this path if we all do our part to get them to read regularly.

We all know the child who can be considered a dormant reader. This reader does what is needed to get by in school and do “good enough” on tests but never embraces reading. These readers need support in making time and their own choices in what they read. They need to be engaged with what they read; they need to connect with the characters and the plot of the story. They need to shape their reading-identity. Parents know who these children are because they get by in school without reading issues; they score in the average range on standardized tests, but you don’t see them reading on their own at home or talking about the books being read in school.

My sister was an “underground reader.” She read a novel a week. I remember her room full of Nancy Drew mysteries or Little House on the Prairie. She had a book in her lap at school to read when the teacher wasn’t looking. She needed the freedom to read what she wanted and was never given the time in school to read, so she would sneak read throughout the day.

How we help each of these readers is different.

The developing reader:

- ◆ Read with and to in order to model; offer praise and encouragement.
- ◆ Visit the town library regularly and choose books that he/she wants to read.
- ◆ Pick a longer book they would like read to them and talk about the book
- ◆ Be credible; they need to see that you value reading by reading in front of them.
- ◆ Advocate for reading because you enjoy and value it.

The dormant reader:

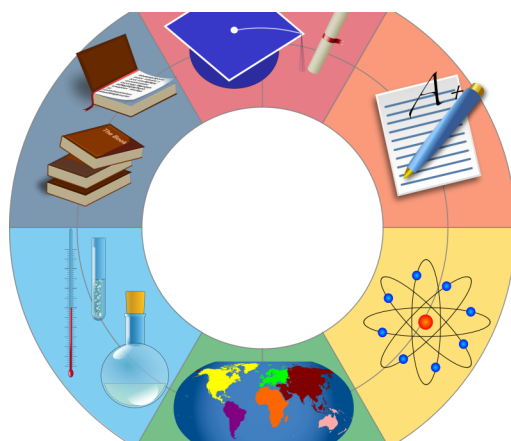
- ◆ You know your child’s interests and the movies that he/she enjoys.
- ◆ Know your child’s reading level by using one of the reports from testing that has come home or ask the teacher.
- ◆ Ask for recommendations from the teacher, librarian, or book specialist in a store.
- ◆ Ask them to give some recommendations.
- ◆ Offer books to your child. Leave them sitting in a place that you know they will be seen.
- ◆ As you see the books being read, read it yourself and ask what surprised them most or how they felt while reading.
- ◆ Connect with your child over a book.

The underground reader:

- ◆ Offer praise for the amount of reading he/she does.
- ◆ Read the same book.
- ◆ Talk about the book with your child. Let them get lost in a book but always be aware that social connections are a part of reading.

I love to get lost in a book. I used to tell my students there were really four friends in Harry Potter because I was by their side the entire time I read. I was with Jack Ryan in each of Tom Clancy’s books that put me on the edge of my seat. I plan to continue reading until the end of my time, and I hope I have been a motivating factor to the 100s of students I have had.

“Books are the plane, and the train, and the road. They are the destination and the journey. They are home.” (author unknown)



Smarter Balanced Assessment Review

Every spring, students in grades 3– 8 take part in standardized testing throughout Connecticut. All students are assessed for ELA and Mathematic skills, and students in grade 5 are assessed in Science. The CT State Dept. of Ed. sets goals for all students/schools in CT. Parents of students who took the assessments last year have received their individual reports. I would be happy to schedule time if any parent would like to discuss the report in any fashion (from understanding what the scores mean to any concerns they have).

The state uses what is referred to as a Performance Index. The state goal is for each school to achieve a score of 75 on this index. Although scores are calculated for each student for each assessment, they are not seen on the individual reports. The information families receive tells the student's scale score (a continuous measure of performance across the grades) and performance level. The index score allows us to describe student gain over time as it is more sensitive to change in student performance.

While our school average for the Performance Index does not reach the score of 75, CES, as a whole, scores above the state average. However, that does not mean that each grade scored above state average for either ELA or Math or both tests.

Our goal for all students is to score in the levels of 3 and 4 as these are the met or exceeded standards levels. Please refer to the table on the next page to see how the CES students performed by grade. The AVG VSS (Vertical Scale Score) is the score you saw on your child's report and has been averaged with all the students at CES in that particular grade. You will notice a score has been marked in red if CES was below the state average. You will also notice in some of these instances that, although CES had a lesser percentage of students reaching levels 3 or 4, CES had the greater AVG VSS. This is due to a number of students who missed scoring at level 3 by only a few points; instead their scores put them at the top of level 2. This kept our percentage down but helped to raise the AVG VSS.

District	Grade	Subject	2022-23		AVG VSS
			Total # Tested	Level 3 or 4 (%)	
State of Connecticut	3	ELA	35820	45.5	2417
Chaplin Elementary School	3	ELA	21	33.3	2402
State of Connecticut	3	Math	35742	49.8	2432
Chaplin Elementary School	3	Math	21	47.6	2446
State of Connecticut	4	ELA	35919	48.8	2464
Chaplin Elementary School	4	ELA	14	64.2	2500
State of Connecticut	4	Math	35859	48.3	2475
Chaplin Elementary School	4	Math	14	64.2	2507
State of Connecticut	5	ELA	36385	51.3	2501
Chaplin Elementary School	5	ELA	20	35	2467
State of Connecticut	5	Math	36300	41.8	2499
Chaplin Elementary School	5	Math	20	30	2505
State of Connecticut	6	ELA	36503	48	2520
Chaplin Elementary School	6	ELA	16	50	2534
State of Connecticut	6	Math	36356	39.6	2512
Chaplin Elementary School	6	Math	16	37.5	2544

The percentage of students reaching their expected growth based on previous data is also calculated. We are even with the state in terms of the percentage of students reaching expected growth in ELA and above the state average in math. However, when the percentage of the target achieved by each student is calculated as an average, CES fall short of the state average in ELA by 2.5 percentage points. CES was above the state average in Math by just shy of 13 percentage points.

Data can be confusing to take in especially when it is not the type of data you are used to looking at, but the data tells a story. The CES story tells that our students perform fairly well, but we are not at the top of the charts. We have areas that show achievement gaps, and we need to implement effective methods and strategies to move our students forward in order to reach the goals set. Our students will compete with students across the state for college placement and jobs when they graduate from high school. The portrait of a student leaving CES is one that depicts a student making progress each year in order to meet or exceed the expectations of a student entering middle school. The staff will continue to grow and adapt with our students in order to serve them.

As I have already stated in this issue, we need to work in partnerships. Student academic achievement is a result of what happens at home and at school. As my first article discussed, we need to motivate our students to read more. We need our students to see that we, the adults, engage with the skills they are learning and that there is fun to be had with skills and abilities. We must motivate them to invest in their learning for now and for the future.

A word from Mrs. Caron about Phys. Ed.

We have been very active in Physical Education class. Students have been using pedometers to track their steps during class, training for the mile run and P.A.C.E.R. fitness tests. We have also been focusing on other fitness assessments such as flexibility, abdominal strength and upper body strength. The students are all doing a great job setting and reaching fitness goals for themselves.

Students in Grade 5 will be starting the D.A.R.E. program with our Resident Town Trooper, Sean Tucker in October. The program follows a curriculum, focusing on topics such as personal safety, consequences of behavior, resisting peer pressure, building self-esteem, managing stress along with exposing the students to a positive interaction with law enforcement officials.

Music Notes from Mrs. Peck

We have begun to learn many things in music this year. Our primary grades are learning about different musical elements such as dynamics (loud/soft), tempo (fast/slow), and register (low/high). The upper grades are delving further into musical elements to learn the differences between a melody and rhythm, and dynamic and tempo markings. The third grade recorders are beginning to learn how to play the first three notes on their recorders and will be learning how to read pitches of the treble clef. Instrumentalists are learning how to assemble their instrument and are also learning the first notes.

Students who have displayed the core value of responsibility throughout the month have received the Responsibility Spirit Stick. Your teachers and I are so proud of you.

PK– Aiden C; G1- Courteny, Ivy, Morgan & Sadie; G2– Payton & Anna; G3– Braylee & Olivia; G4– Jack; G5– Ella, Amelia; G6 Megan

What's happening during Library Class with Mrs. Kauffman?

In the beginning months of the school year during library class, we have been learning about different categories and types of books, how libraries are organized, and how to locate books that are just right. This is useful information because most public libraries are organized in similar ways, so students can apply this knowledge not only here at CES, but also at Parish Hill or any college or public library that they may visit in the future.

I really encourage children and parents to pay a visit and support their local public libraries. Along with books you can also check out movies, music, book kits and discount day passes to museums and parks, attend free workshops, and have free use of their computers. You are not limited to your own town; your library card works at any library in Connecticut. There is no other public place that I can think of that allows you access to information and resources and lets you just visit with no expectation of something in return. All are welcome! so, visit and support our public libraries.

Notes from Nurse Shieber

Greetings from the Nurse's Office, where we're off to a very busy Fall!

We've had some cold days as well as wet and muddy days, all of which may call for extra clothing. While there are a few spare garments available in the Nurse's Office for urgent wardrobe needs, if you can possibly keep a change of clothes in your child's backpack, please do! Also, please try to write your child's name somewhere inside sweatshirts, water bottles, and other items that tend to be left behind. And if you have any outgrown sweatpants, leggings, socks, or sweatshirts -- especially sized for ages 8 through Adult -- we would love to add them to the Lending Locker!

What's going around: Fortunately, we are not seeing any one illness in epidemic proportions. We have had a few reported cases of Strep Throat, so if you or a family member has had a sore throat that just doesn't seem to be going away, it's best to make an appointment with your doctor or visit one of the walk-in clinics in the area. It's been a tough season of cold and allergy symptoms, even for folks who say they don't have allergies. Pollen and mold don't care that you're not allergic to anything!

Parents have asked when students may return to school after an illness. Here are a few guidelines from our Medical Advisor:

Cold or Flu: When symptoms are improving and manageable. If your child has a cough or runny nose they can't control, your Pediatrician may have some guidance.

Covid: After staying home for the five days following the day of the Positive test or onset of symptoms, your child may return to school wearing a mask for an additional five days, as long as symptoms are improving. Household members may continue without missing any school as long as they wear a mask in school for ten days and continue to test Negative on Day Two and Day Six. We have a limited number of new home test kits available on request.

Fever: After temperature has stayed at less than 100 degrees for 24 hours without using medicine containing ibuprofen, acetaminophen, naproxen, or aspirin (check ingredients).

Hand-Foot-Mouth Disease: After all blisters are scabbed and no longer draining.

"Stomach Flu" or GI Virus: 24 hours after final episode of vomiting or diarrhea, and back to eating normal food.

Strep Throat: After 24 hours of antibiotic treatment, and symptoms improving.

Please call the school or email me at mshieber@chaplinschool.org with any questions. May you and yours stay healthy and happy!

The following students have been chosen as a Soaring Eagle or Bucket Filler (kindergarten) during the month of September:

(1) Courtney, Ivy, Elliot, & Sadie (2) Anna, Alyvia, Ayden, Aayden, Caleb, Noah, & Kaiden (3) Braylee, Jackson, & Jade (4) Nora, Kylie, Lev, Rena, Isaiah, Vanessa, & Jack (5) Bentley, Amelia, Matthew, & Jace

Congratulations!