

October 22, 2009

Capitol Hill News

A Bi-Weekly Newsletter for the Students, Parents & Staff of Capitol Hill



Items of Interest

Monday, Nov. 2
PTO Meeting
6:30 p.m.
Room 1407

Wednesday, Nov. 4
Early Release Day
School ends at 12:35

Monday, Nov. 9
Site Council Mtg
5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Room 2414

Friday, Nov. 13
No School
Parent Teacher
Conferences

Monday, Nov. 16
Green & Healthy Kids Mtg
6:30 p.m. – Room TBA

Parent Coffees:

1st Grade Parent Coffee
Friday, Nov. 6 at 10:00 a.m.
Nina's Coffee Cafe

3rd Grade Parent Coffee
Monday, Nov. 16 at 8:15 a.m.
Nina's Coffee Cafe

Message from the Principal: SEM-R

One of the components of our literacy block at Capitol Hill is **Schoolwide Enrichment Model-Reading (SEM-R)**. A brief overview of SEM-R from the University of Connecticut website appears below. This overview will help you to understand the components of our SEM-R framework.

Mission Statement: The Schoolwide Enrichment Model-Reading (SEM-R) is an enrichment-based reading program that seeks to increase reading achievement for all students while also addressing the pressing needs of talented readers.

Our goals are 1) to increase student enjoyment of reading, 2) to encourage students to pursue independent reading at appropriately challenging levels, and 3) to improve reading fluency and comprehension for all students.

Project Overview: The Schoolwide Enrichment Model – Reading Framework (SEM-R) includes three general categories of reading instruction that are dynamic in nature and designed to enable some flexibility of implementation and content in response to both teachers' and students' needs. The SEM-R was developed to increase reading challenge and enjoyment for all students, but one important goal of this reading framework is to challenge talented readers. This approach is based on Renzulli's Enrichment Triad Model and includes three levels of enrichment: broad exposure to areas in which students might have interests, training and methods instruction, and opportunities to pursue self-selected topics of interest to students. The three distinct phases of the SEM-R are described in more depth below.

Phase I – Exposure: Teachers select literature to read aloud to students, interspersed with higher-order questioning and thinking skills instruction. These "book hook" sessions are initially 10 to 20 minutes in length, and teachers are encouraged to share high interest, challenging books with their students. A variety of genres can be selected for this phase including mysteries, poetry, historical and science fiction, biographies, autobiographies, and other non-fiction. The program emphasizes helping students to enjoy the process of reading; and selections are made based on student engagement with content and reactions to initial

selections. Teachers are provided with bookmarks that feature guiding questions involving higher order thinking skills to help them frame the class discussion for the read aloud.

Phase II – Training and Self-Selection: The development of students' capability to engage in a structured silent reading time of self-selected high interest books is emphasized in this phase. Students are supported with individualized, differentiated reading conferences, termed Supported Independent Reading (SIR). Teachers coach students to select books that are slightly above their current reading level and the appropriate match is continually assessed through regular conferences with each student two to three times each week. While all students read independently, the teacher provides one-on-one instruction in strategy use, including phonics and vocabulary, as well as a higher-level discussion of the students' choice of books.

Phase III – Interest and Choice Components: Students are encouraged to move from teacher directed opportunities to self-choice activities over the course of the school year. Activities include (but are not limited to) opportunities to

- explore new technology
- engage in discussion groups
- writing activities
- creativity training in language arts
- learning centers
- interest-based projects
- continuation of self-selected reading
- book chats.

The intent of these experiences is to provide time for developing and exploring student interest in reading. In addition, students engage in creative and critical thinking training and advanced training in the use of the Internet to find information about various literary genres, such as biographies and autobiographies. Options for independent study are also made available for students during this phase.

For More information go to:
<http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/SEMR/about/about.html>

If you need to contact me to set up a meeting or to have a phone conference please contact the office at 325-2500 or e-mail me at brenda.lewis@spps.org.



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For other PTO and Site Council information, visit the Capitol Hill website:
www.capitolhill.spps.org

Send Us Your News!

Capitol Hill News is published bi-weekly on **Thursdays**, with funding from the PTO. Send your news items – **with contact info** – by email to: capitolhillnews@gmail.com, or drop them in the **News Folder** in the school office. No phone submissions, please. The next deadline is **noon on Monday, Nov. 2**. We reserve the right to edit. Due to space limitations, not all items are published. *Capitol Hill News* editor is Michelle Brasure, 651-690-3420.

Communications Committee

The Capitol Hill Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) solicits news items, collects contributions and formats selected news items into this newsletter, *Capitol Hill News*. This year the PTO is hoping to make this process a bit more formal by developing a communications committee. The committee will work together to establish the current and future role and format of the newsletter. Parents, teachers, staff, or students interested in serving on this committee, please contact the newsletter editor, Michelle Brasure at capitolhillnews@gmail.com or 651-690-3420.

Do you like to ski?

CAPITOL HILL SKI and SNOWBOARD CLUB - is for everyone! 6th, 7th and 8th can go on the bus without adults. Younger kids can go with adult supervision on the slopes.

IN JAN, FEB and MARCH:

FRIDAY NIGHTS AT AFTON ALPS

6th, 7th, and 8th graders can ride the bus out to Afton Alps after school and ski until 8:30(pick up at school at 9:30). **Younger kids** with an adult can join the group, either on the bus or driving out on their own.

AND

FAMILY SKI DAYS at AFTON ALPS – on the days there is no school.

HELP!! Parent chaperones needed!

Volunteering can include riding the bus, monitoring the slopes, helping organize the outing, keeping lists, hanging out in the lodge and/or doing check in.

ANYONE INTERESTED in helping organize and plan the club, come to a **MEETING on Nov. 22 at 4:30 at Café Latte** (Victoria and Grand in St. Paul) or feel free to contact Rene Meyer-Grimberg - 651-298-9711 or rene.me@mac.com

Parent Connections

First and Third Grade parents have organized Parent Coffees. The first **Third Grade Parent Coffee** is scheduled for **Monday, November 16 at 8:15 a.m.**, at **Nina's Cafe**. For more information contact Ann Borgwardt at ann.borgwardt@usfamily.net or 651-489-8036. The second **1st Grade Parent Coffee** is scheduled for **Friday, November 6th at 10:00 a.m.** at **Nina's Coffee Café**. For questions please contact **Jana Pearson** at **651-917-8244** or Ddorf@comcast.net.

Green and Healthy Kids Team

The GHK team of parent volunteers had a very productive first meeting. GHK is preparing to bring the Capitol Hill community wonderful activities that focus on reducing waste and recycling. Activities include: classroom activities on recycling, reducing waste generated by how we pack lunch, reducing waste and toxins generated by garbage, Aveda bottle caps collection campaign, improving current recycling practices at school, educational booths at the Spring Science Fair, participation at the Doing Good Together Spring event, and information table at the teacher-parent conferences. Please come and chat about reducing waste and toxins. We can do it, one step at a time. Parents, join the growing GHK team. Any level of participation welcome. No prior knowledge required as we are learning together. Next meeting is **Monday November 16 at 6:30**.

To volunteer or for more information please contact Jose Brizard at josebrizard@msn.com or 651-695-1855.

Conference Days Meals for Teachers

Once again this year, we will be organizing meals for teachers on conference days. So as you mark your conference time in your calendar, you may want to make a note to bring a salad, casserole or gooey homemade dessert to show your support and appreciation for wonderful teachers and staff at Capitol Hill. Contact Ann Borgwardt at ann.borgwardt@usfamily.net or 651-489-8036 if you would like to help feed the teachers!