



Newsletter

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You may also connect with us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/#!/NPSDistrict>

Ms. Alles's website: <https://sites.google.com/northampton-k12.us/mindfulnessatjss>

JSS Office 587-1510

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June 8, 2018

If you wish to have a copy of this letter written in Spanish, French or Arabic, please contact the school department at 587-1315. Si le gustaria esta carta en Espanol, es possible. Llama 413-587-1315. Si vous voulez une copie de cette lettre en Français, veuillez contacter le Département de l'École 587-1315. في 587-1315. هذه رسالة لوصحاحك في بغيرت تنك اذا.

MESSAGE FROM MS. AGNA

NEXT FRIDAY will be our last newsletter for the year! Please submit articles to be published on 6/15/18 by THURSDAY AM, 6/14/18!

TODAY

FRIDAY, JUNE 8, I will be walking on the Walking School Bus on the Bike Path, behind Stop & Shop starting at 8:10AM. Please join me – and Mr. Strouse too!

FIELD DAY

TODAY – don't forget to send a towel and one-piece swim suit with your child if they want to get wet, sandals with backs on them (NOT flip flops!), and screened up with sun block and bug spray, if that's what your family does! Can't wait!

ASSEMBLY TIME CHANGE

Our final assembly – Fine Fine School – will be on Thursday, June 14 at 9:15AM (Not 10AM) – please join us if you can/want!!

LOCKDOWN DRILL HAS BEEN CANCELED

Please refer to my robo call message – we will not be doing the drill on Monday, June 11.

LAST CHANCE – THE PJTM EXPRESS!

The annual summer food collection for the Northampton Survival Center's Summer Food Program continues, ending on Friday, June 15! Please send in donations of peanut butter, jelly/jam, tuna and mac & cheese with your child(ren). This is one of our most important projects – please help us support the Survival Center's efforts to provide food to families during the summer months.

WELCOME TO NEW STAFF

- **Ms. Millie Lopez**, ESP, will join our staff as an addition to our ESP team. Ms. Lopez is transferring from an ESP position at Bridge St. School. She has many years of experience working in Northampton and in Amherst schools, in programs for behaviorally challenged students. Some of you may know her as a teacher in our afterschool program, HOLA. We're so happy to have you join the team, Ms. Lopez!
- **Ms. Talia Cossin**, 2nd grade teacher: Talia is looking forward to joining the 2nd grade team at Jackson Street in the fall. After studying at UMass, she spent many years living and teaching in Latin America. Since returning to the United States, she has been teaching at a bilingual school outside of Boston. She is excited to return to the Pioneer Valley with her husband to be closer to her family. In her free time, Talia enjoys running, baking, reading and spending time outdoors.

ARTICLE

In case you haven't seen it, I thought you'd like to know the most recent thinking on the importance of social skill building in kindergartens! We are fortunate to have such fine fine kindergartens and teachers! I have included the following article at the end of this newsletter:

"Your child's social skills in kindergarten are more important than their academics" by Amanda Morgan

AND

Don't forget to join us for our good-bye potluck for Ms. Mary Bates – NEXT WEDNESDAY, June 13, 5:30-7:30PM!! Bring a dish to share (marked if it has nuts in it!) – water and paper goods will be provided.

Have a good weekend!

With great respect and affection,

Gwen Agna
Gwen Agna

FIELD DAY TODAY!!

There is still time to become a Magnificent Volunteer ~ Come be part of one of the best days of the year, Field Day!! We hope you will be able to join us for the morning or afternoon. Thank you! Please email Vanessa Keillor at vkeillor@gmail.com to sign up or just show up!!

NEF SHOWCASE ON FRIDAY, JUNE 8

Join the Northampton Education Foundation (NEF) on Arts Night Out Northampton on Friday, June 9 from 6:00 to 7:30 pm at the Northampton Center for the Arts (33 Hawley St.) for an amazing showcase of some of the incredible projects funded through our Endowment Fund and Small Grants! Join us for some light snacks and meet people making a difference in our Northampton Public Schools!

VARIETY SHOW LAST FRIDAY - WOW, WHAT AN AMAZING NIGHT!

Thank you to everyone who came out for the JSS Variety Show last Friday. What creative, talented, brave, amazing students we have - thank you for sharing all your gifts with us, in your performances and artwork.

Many thanks to all the families who supported and volunteered, and to our entire JSS staff, with a special shout-out to Ms. Agna, Ms. Totty and our custodians Carol, Terence and Mark.

Special thanks to Lindsay Sabadosa, who stepped up in a huge way to direct the show, our stellar MC Mosie Senn-McNally, the incredibly hardworking Chris Dole, Josh Cohen, Melissa Power-Greene, Jordan Abbott, Ira Curtis, Deborah Junnila, Andrea Starkoski and Megan Murphy Wolf. And huge thanks to Ryan Brown (son of teacher Ellen Brown, and overall stage whiz), who helped us enormously with music, lighting and everything technical.

A team of 4th grade parents, led by Andrea Doehne, Marisha Marks, Pallavi Belur, Catherine Ames and Lena Entin, ran an amazing food table, earning more than \$500 for Nature's Classroom!

If we've forgotten anyone, please let us know - we know it takes many hands to create a great show like this and we want to thank you!

END-OF-SCHOOL-YEAR

COFFEE & TEA SALE

We are coming up on our last monthly coffee and tea order of the school year. Orders are due this coming Monday, June 11.

That also means it is time for our June sale - buy 4 bags of coffee or tea and get one free!

This is a great chance to stock up for the summer (enough caffeine to last you until mid-September!).

It also makes a good gift to bring when you visit family and friends this summer, and it is great both hot and iced.

The order form for this special sale is attached to the newsletter, in English and Spanish.

Thank you so much for supporting JSS!

CAR WASH ON SUNDAY, JUNE 17 - TO BENEFIT NATURE'S CLASSROOM!

Thanks to some amazing parents, we have a great Nature's Classroom fundraiser planned for Sunday, Jun. 17 - a Father's Day Car Wash. From 11:30 to 4:00 that day, we'll be offering car washes for \$5 each in the parking lot at King & Cushman (right on the corner of King St. and Finn St. - great visibility for cars going by!)

4th grade parents and kids - and friends! - Please let us know if you can volunteer for an hour or two. We need LOTS of volunteers on June 17 to hold signs, wash cars, sell baked goods, and handle money.

And please come get your car washed! Get all that winter grime and pollen off your vehicle and support kids at the same time (and if you have a Dad to celebrate on Father's Day, how about giving him the gift of a clean car?...).

- Liz Horn, elhorn@mindspring.com 646-234-8805

IN THE NEWS

- 3rd grader, Ursula Grant's essay on "A Walk in the Forest" was published in the Daily Hampshire Gazette!

COMMUNITY NEWS

A very important workshop!

Northampton Area Pediatrics, LLP

Understanding Transgender Children
Presenter: Jennifer Nesteby, MSN, FNP

Sunday, June 24th
4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
193 Locust St., Northampton

RSVP by calling 413-517-2226 or email contactus@napeds.com

Parenting workshops are open to the community and free of charge.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR -

We're always adding new dates so keep checking. PLEASE check the Northampton Public Schools website for district calendar updates.

Parents Hour in the Family Center every other Wed. from 9-10AM, beginning Wed. Sept. 6.

Walking School Bus – Ms. Agna alternates on Fridays around 8:10AM between the bike path (starting behind Stop and Shop) and Hampshire Heights, starting at the bottom of the hill near the CVS plaza.

TODAY!! Fri. June 8 FIELD DAY (rain date on Friday, June 15)

TONIGHT!! NEF SHOWCASE 6-7:30PM at the Center for the Arts on Hawley St.

Wed. June 13 GARDEN RETIREMENT POTLUCK for Ms. Bates!! 5:30-7:30PM in the JSS School Garden

Thurs. June 14 – all school assembly “FINE FINE SCHOOL” led by Ms. Agna at 9:15AM

Mon. June 20 JSS Council meeting 3:30-5PM

Tues. June 19 5th GRADE GRADUATION 1:30PM

Wed. June 20 LAST DAY OF SCHOOL! It's a half-day – dismissal at 12:20PM and bag lunches will be available

FIELD TRIPS

Here are the remaining dates are the dates for the remaining field trips!!

JUNE

June 13th 5th Grds. Ames/Chang/Slattery Skinner Mountain 10am-2:15pm

June 14th Kdgs JReed/MEReed Smith College Art Museum 10:10-1:35pm

June 15th 5th Gr. Ames Look Park 10:00-2:30

Parents of young children tend to worry a lot about whether or not their kids are making adequate gains as they launch into their academic careers.

Your child's social skills in kindergarten are more important than their academics, by Amanda Morgan

“Can Johnny read the list of 100 high-frequency words?”

“Does Betty know how to count to 500?”

“Is Tom doing quantum physics yet?”

While early education creates an important foundation for academic skills, many parents would be surprised to know that social skills are actually far more predictive of outcomes into adulthood than early academics.

For example, a study published in 2015 showed that even while controlling for family demographics and early academic ability, the social skills observed in kindergarten showed significant correlation with well-being at age 25.

That's a lot of staying power!

Regardless of how advanced of a reader they were or how much money their parents made, kindergarteners who demonstrated social competence were more likely to graduate from high school, go to college, get a job, and stay out of jail than those who showed a lower level of social competence.

So while many parents and schools may be feeling the pressure to cut back on play and social interaction in order to get more “hard skill” instruction time in, it's actually those “soft skills” that are most predictive of long-term success.

Here are five important social competencies you can foster in your child.

1. How to play well with others

Play is a powerful catalyst for development in the early years. By playing with others, children learn to negotiate, problem solve, take turns, share and experiment. You can help your child build these skills by making time for free play with other children.

While dance class, soccer practice and choreographed play dates may have their own value, children need plenty of time engaging in unstructured play with other children, where they may be supervised—but not instructed—by the adults around them.

2. How to problem-solve

It is tempting to swoop in at the first disgruntled squawk and make everything right again. We confiscate the object of the argument, set timers, or send children to play in different areas. We're good at problem-solving because we get SO MUCH practice as parents! And while some of this may be necessary for survival, our kids need some of that practice too.

So the next time your child has a problem, invite them to take part in that problem-solving process. Ask your child to describe what's going on, brainstorm solutions and try one out. You're still an active player, supporting your child through the process, but rather than doing all the solving yourself, let your child own the problem by asking, “What do you think you could do about that?”

Teaching a child to be a problem solver also means that we teach them how to fail and try again, which is another critical “soft skill.” When we ask children how their solution is working out, we give them an opportunity to evaluate their experience and make improvements when necessary. We're teaching them that mistakes help us learn and move forward.

3. How to label and recognize feelings

Children who are perceptive to the emotions around them are also better able to get along well with others. You can foster this skill by calling attention to emotional cues and naming emotions. You can do this not only in your home (“I'm looking at your brother's face right now, and I don't think he's having fun.” “You looked so happy when you won, your smile was like a laser beam!”) but by also talking about the emotions in stories as well. (“How do you think he felt when that happened?”)

Storybooks are FULL of conflict and emotion—it's often what drives the plot. These conversations about observed emotions are often easier because your child isn't tied up in the turbulent emotions themselves. From this comfortable vantage point, they're able to be more thoughtful about the emotions on the page and then apply their understanding in real life.

Another thing to keep in mind is that research has shown that excessive screen use may interfere with a child's ability to recognize emotions in others. So make sure that your kids get plenty of time playing and interacting face to face with other humans, rather than with pixels and lights on a screen.

4. How to be helpful

Being helpful to others requires children to look beyond themselves and recognize the needs of others. By noticing and complimenting

your child when you notice helpful behaviors, you encourage them to continue.

Give your child simple opportunities to help within your family—putting away groceries, getting the baby’s fresh diaper ready, or helping a sibling to get dressed—and then be generous with your gratitude afterward.

Point out the helpers around you and show gratitude together to instill a value of service. This may be as simple as thanking the bagger at the grocery store or taking cookies to the fire station. It can also take a fanciful twist. For my own superhero-obsessed boys, I found that equating heroes to helpers made them feel like Batman just by helping with simple tasks around our home.

5. How to control their impulses

Impulse control is a part of the executive functions directed by the prefrontal cortex of the brain. This area doesn’t completely develop until well into early adulthood, but some of the most rapid development happens in the early childhood years. That’s why children need opportunities to practice this growing skill.

That may look like the infamous marshmallow study, where a child must delay gratification and wait before consuming a treat, but it can also look like play time! Movement games that require a child to stop and go like Red Light/Green Light, Dance and Freeze, and Simon Says give kids practice quickly shifting gears and controlling their impulses to move.

Pretend play is also a great way to build these skills. By taking on a new character and an imaginative storyline, children have to plan before acting, take turns and make rules to follow. They also practice thinking outside of their own perspective and act as they think another would, rather than simply following their own impulses.

Our fast-paced society may give you the impression that your child needs to learn more academic skills—and sooner than ever before. However, the reality is that the “soft” social skills they gain in early childhood—through the slow, simple processes of playing and interacting, engaging with their families, and paying attention to the world around them—will serve them much better and for much longer.

Amanda Morgan

Amanda Morgan holds a BA in both elementary and early childhood education and an MS in family and human development, but received some of her most valuable training from her four rowdy boys. She writes, speaks, and consults on the topic of intentional, whole child development and is the creator of the blog Not Just Cute.