

In The News

from the Director

Welcome to our 15th school year at New School Preparatory. We have an exciting year planned for our students and hope you will be able to participate in family activities we have planned.

Our first all school event was a book fair held at Barnes and Noble. A percentage of all purchases at any Barnes and Noble location were credited to New School. Under Robin's direction, New School students performed in drama, music, and drumming. Under Olivia's direction, there was an active, creative craft table. Diane, Karen, and Zulma provided story telling time for Barnes and Noble customers.

Thank you to all those who came to participate and support us. We would also like to thank Barnes and Noble for hosting us.

Our Annual Picnic will take Place at Maitland Community Park on Saturday, October 3 from 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. This is one of the most popular events of the school year, so be sure to mark your calendar now.

This year the Central Florida Chess Club has chosen New School as its central location for its monthly chess events for children. Family Chess night is planned for Thursday, September 17 from 5:00-6:00 p.m.

I am often asked about important books we read that help us in our work to raise responsible children. This year, I think it is appropriate to re-read the work of Barbara Coloroso, author of the international bestseller *Kids Are Worth It!*, *Parenting Through Crisis*, and *The Bully*. She reminds us that there are six critical life messages to give children:

- I believe in you.
- I trust you.
- I know you can handle this.
- You are listened to.
- You are cared for.
- You are very important to me.

As we begin our new school year, let us ensure that we deliver these messages to our children every day.

Morrie Sorin

Dates to Remember

September 4-6 (Mon-Sun)
Barnes & Noble Book Fair
Altamonte Mall

September 7 (Monday)
Labor Day - School Closed
Book Fair, Altamonte Mall

September 17 (Thursday)
Family Chess Night
5:00pm-6:00pm

September 24 (Thursday)
Open House
7:00pm-8:30pm

September 28 (Monday)
Teacher Work Day
Non-Student Day

October 3 (Saturday)
School Picnic
Maitland Community Park
1:00pm-4:00pm



KINDERGARTEN

The **Kindergarten** year has started off with fun and excitement. The children are fascinated with our classroom animals. At last count we had two hermit crabs, two African Dwarf frogs (which by vote have been named "Hoppy" and "Jumpy"), a gourami fish (who, overnight, ate the guppies sharing his tank!) and carpenter ants digging in a space-age ant farm. We are waiting for a delivery of worms for our worm farm and caterpillars will soon be with us. The children are practicing observation skills as they watch and discuss changes and behaviors of our wild life. We research the animals so we are aware of their needs and we discuss the habitats they need. The children are eager to create the habitat for the worm farm, which includes making great quantities of mud. As time goes on and the children's skills increase, they will be keeping written journals of the changes they see.

Kindergartners are also involved in a unit on Nursery Rhymes. These simple rhymes are used to discuss rhyming words, rhythm, song and drama. In music class, the children are learning new and old tunes to many of the rhymes. The children are learning to read magnitized sentence strips with the text of the rhymes, then to put them in order on the chalkboard, and then take turns reading the rhyme. They especially love it when the strips are out of order and the reading becomes a silly story!

The children love working in their journals and are excited to realize they can write "real words". Every child is now sounding out the letters he/she hears in the words describing the picture he/she has drawn in the journal. Journaling has become a favorite activity.

The children are doing activities to discover themselves and their similarities and differences. They have compared the color of their

skin by holding their arms together and have chosen crayons that reflect their individual skin tones. They are making graphs to chart their similarities in hair color, eye color and numbers of letters in each name. The main concept in this work is the understanding that each of us is different, and each is special. The children are learning tolerance and acceptance.

Following the study of themselves, they will learn about families, grandparents and community. They will create a "Neighborhood" on the bulletin board and "mail" letters to one another.

Each day the children work with graphing. They make a graph at snack time that shows the variety of snacks they bring to school. They create a graph on the chalkboard illustrating how many shirts we have of each color. The skills and concepts in graphing broaden the child's understanding of number. They are able to use the language of math to show quantities in different ways. They are excited to see how many of an object can be determined by looking at colored spaces as well as numbers.



FIRST and SECOND GRADE



Active learning in a language rich environment begins by exposing students to high quality literature. Our first novel of the year is "Charlotte's Web" by E. B. White. While most of the students know the story (via the big screen), they have bypassed the important concepts the book deals with in depth. To respect the dignity and worth of each member in a community and recognize the interdependence between those members is a valuable lesson that NSP students must practice everyday. The value of friendship, developing a multicultural perspective that welcomes diversity and differences, dealing with emotions such as loneliness, loss, anticipation will all be discussed as our students recognize that literature reflects real life.

This presents us with an opportunity to examine a different kind of community- a farm community. In Social Studies students will learn the impact farmers have on our lives.

Through various activities we will develop an understanding of the role of the farmers in modern society. We will recognize the importance of the crops and the animals and learn how the farmer organizes the production, and distribution of the goods that we consume.

Climate, weather, the seasons, animal behavior are all important factors that can determine the farm's success or failure. In Science we will explore the processes in the environment that affect the farm. One example is the earthworm. We are learning that earthworms are a valuable asset in the farm. They are certainly valuable in the classroom helping us develop the skill of observation, experimentation, data analysis and communication. They will also be valuable to us in next month's unit. We are also recognizing that cyclical changes in nature are common to all living things such as seasonal cycles, life cycles, etc.

In Math our goal is to understand the concepts. For this reason the students were assessed and placed in groups for instruction to work at their own pace and level. Some of us are working at understanding the concepts in addition and subtraction; one group will be preparing for the introduction of the concept of place value while another will be using place value in the addition of two digit numbers. ALL second graders are working on math facts for speed and accuracy. ALL STUDENTS are working on problem solving and critical thinking.

We are looking forward to a great year!

THIRD and FOURTH GRADE



Language Arts

In Third/Fourth Grades we have began our exploration of Greek mythology by comparing two different versions of creation myths. We discussed the roles myths play in peoples lives and how differing versions of similar tales developed over the ages. We will continue to read about the gods of Olympus and discuss their exploits and how they relate to our lives today.

Social Studies

In Social Studies we have been discussing why people need governments, whether at home or school or around our country. We've looked at the needs for rules and laws and what makes them good laws or not-so-good. We will go on to look at how a law is made and the branches of the U.S. government. We will also begin researching current events and sharing our findings each day in class.

Third and Fourth Graders are enjoying their social studies enrichment based on the connections between the Olympics and the Greek gods. The guided discovery approach used in class involves students discussing a series of questions and solving problems designed to introduce the social studies concepts. Concepts to be introduced include: The promotion of goodwill as a unifying force between nations/city-states, "sportsmanship" as a socially embedded construct, and the importance of travel in cross-cultural understanding.

Math

In math the students are reviewing their skills and concepts and getting up to speed for the year. Please remember to review math facts with your child EVERY NIGHT even if your child already knows them. The quicker they are able to recall their facts the easier that computation work will be for them in class. We have also been working on problem solving skills as well as working in a team to solve problems.

Science

We are well underway in becoming disease detectives in Science class. Right now we are focusing on Epidemiology, the study of infectious diseases. Students are learning about the epidemiological triangle and the information needed to studying the spread of an infectious disease. We are also focusing on the agents that spread disease (virus, bacteria, parasite, and fungi). Students are researching a disease of their choice to present to the class in the coming weeks. Once we learn about the spread of infectious disease we will look at our own body's immune system and how it fights disease for us. We have already completed one experiment this year that involved the spread of "germs" throughout the classroom. Students put fake "germs" on their hands and later tracked them with a blacklight to see how they had left behind germs on everything they touched.



FIFTH and SIXTH GRADE



Language Arts

We've started off the year reading the book *Holes*, the exciting tale of an unfortunate boy who goes to a camp for troubled youth after being falsely convicted of a crime. We'll be paying particular attention to the author's techniques of character development. We're also doing lots of work to improve spelling as students learn spelling rules, master new vocabulary words, and maintain a personal spelling list of words they tend to misspell. We're working this fall to prepare ourselves for the launch of a school newspaper. We'll be learning to write informative articles, editorials, reviews, and features. Look for our first issue in early 2010.

Social Studies

Students will become young historians as they sharpen their interview and analysis skills to uncover the life history of one of their living relatives. They'll need to verify their findings by fact-checking with other relatives and acquaintances, then package their findings into a compelling presentation for the class.

Meanwhile, we've been learning about the nature of culture and ethnocentrism. Students took part in a simulation called *Rafa Rafa* in which they role-played one of two very unfamiliar cultures. Each culture had to send emissaries to the other to try and discover how the other culture functioned. It's a lesson that requires patience, keen observation, data collection and interpretation, and of course teamwork. Students learned that their first impressions of other cultures are often mistaken or misinterpreted.

Math

5th Grade is working with equivalent fractions, reducing fractions to simplest form, and adding fractions with like denominators

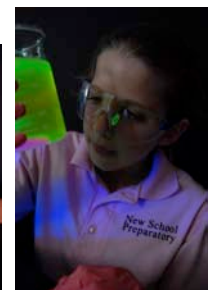
6th Grade is working on adding fractions with unlike denominators, adding mixed numbers, and have been reviewing improper fractions and mixed numbers.

Science

Middle grades Science has experienced many changes over the years as "standards" are updated to reflect new discoveries or to correct old misconceptions. The concept of classification is a perfect example of how change can be used to teach. Taxonomy catalogues life's diversity and is an essential tool for communication. As scientists strive to put everything in its place, modern classification systems become catalogs of relationships among species.

Identifying both new and old species alike, requires a system for "ruling out" based on morphology, or physical form and function. The dichotomous key is an important tool for classifying an ever-increasing number of organisms. Students will be using and designing their own dichotomous keys.

Grades 5-6 are well into the study of classification, with an emphasis on assembling a menagerie of genus and species from the various kingdoms, a la Linnaeus and then constructing a bingo game featuring common organisms. Inspired students are challenged to flex their intellectual creativity and introduce unique and unusual specimens to the activity. They will then narrow the field to marine organisms, visiting the shore to get a more up close and personal view of some Florida species. Your child may have already volunteered you to drive.



SEVENTH and EIGHTH GRADE

**Language Arts**

Students will be learning to debate this year. We've begun our study by looking at logic and the nature of argumentation. We're using syllogisms as a basic exercise in recognizing the quality of an argument. We'll also be learning to recognize logical fallacies and to attack them with counter-arguments. As we do these things, students will be honing their public speaking skills with a series of challenges that require them to think quickly and speak extemporaneously.

Meanwhile, we've been reading the book *You Don't Know Me*, a darkly humorous story of an abused teenage boy struggling to adjust to high school life.

Social Studies

After a short unit on the timeline of American History, students have begun a unit on economics. We've been focusing first on the basics of personal finance and investing. Students will take part in an online stock market simulation and learn about stocks, bonds, commodities and mutual funds. Next we'll examine how the current financial crisis developed. This crisis will then be compared to the Great Depression. Questions will be explored, such as: What caused the Great Depression? What protections were put into place as a result of the Great Depression? Why did those protections fail? What new protections are being considered? We'll also study the cultural effects and developments made during the Great Depression.

Math

Algebra students are working on order of operations and reviewing the use of negative numbers in computations.

Pre-Algebra students are studying the order of operations and the properties of addition and multiplication such as the associative, commutative, and distributive properties.

5th-8th Grades are all working on learning problem solving strategies as part of MathCounts practice.

Science

Middle grades Science has experienced many changes over the years as "standards" are updated to reflect new discoveries or to correct old misconceptions. The concepts of classification and phylogeny are a perfect example of how change can be used to teach.

Taxonomy catalogues life's diversity and is an essential tool for communication. As scientists strive to construct phylogenies, diagrams that show relationships among organisms through ancestral lineages, modern classification systems become hypotheses about the genetic relationships among species and the bio-evolutionary past.

Tracking and analyzing new molecular data, usually DNA sequences, make taxonomy one of the most dynamic areas of interest because there is molecular data available for an ever-increasing number of organisms.

Grades 7-8 are well into the study of classification. Assembling a menagerie of genus and species from the various kingdoms, a la Linnaeus and the depending upon skill level, constructing a phylogenetic tree to diagram the relationships over time. They will then narrow the field to marine organisms, visiting the shore to get a more up close and personal view of some Florida species. Your child may have already volunteered you to drive.

Computers

Kindergarten - The children are learning new art programs. They have been exploring the beautiful compositions that could be made by using geometric shapes and by changing colors and sizes.

Grade One-Two – The students are learning how to manipulate paint tools.

Grade Three-Four- The students are learning and reinforcing touch typing skills as well as how to lay out a document.

Grade Five-Six – In addition to perfecting typing skills, students are learning how to use the Pages program to make matrix-grid designs for science classification.

Grade Seven-Eight - In addition to mastering Pages, students are learning newspaper layout which includes column production and how to create map links.

Music

This year our Music Studies begin with refreshing our Patriotic Repertoire. The Star Spangled Banner is even introduced in Kindergarten! Our focus also includes developing our vocal technique and singing in two and three part harmony. We have also begun African Drumming in Grades 5-8. In our Music History Class, we will focus on Symphonic music and the composers Handel, Tchaikovsky, Saint-Saens, Delibes, Holst and Beethoven. Our studies will culminate with a trip to see the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra, October 7th, 2009. Information on the field trip will be forthcoming.

Noticias en Español (Spanish Newsletter)

We will start our school year reviewing what we have learned last year and practicing the vocabulary from the textbook “Paso a Paso”.

Kindergarten

The children will be introduced in a fun and enjoyable way to Spanish the language, a new language for them. They will learn the Spanish song “*Buenos dias a ti...*” (Good morning to you...) and expressions like “*hola*” (hello), “*buenos dias*” (good morning), “*buenas noches*” (good night/evening), “*mi nombre es*” (my name is). They will learn how to count up to ten.

First and Second Grade

We will introduce the class with a welcome song “*Buenos dias a ti...*” (Good morning to you...). They will learn basic greeting/farewell expressions and how to recognize and write the numbers, colors, and days of the week. Our first reading booklet will be “*Mi primer dia de clase*”.

Third and Fourth Grade

We will start this new school year reviewing greetings and farewells. The students will be introduced to vocabulary and expressions to indicate gender for not only nouns but also adjectives as English language does not have this type of gender identification. The students will also learn how to use the definite article “*el*” and “*la*”. Our first reading is “*¿Cómo soy yo?*” to incorporate the basic expressions learned.

Fifth and Sixth Grade

We will start using the “*Paso a Paso*” textbook along with its workbook. *Paso a Paso* is based on the belief that the purpose of learning Spanish is to communicate with the people who speak it and to understand their culture. We will start *Paso a Paso* with introduction of personal information, greeting/farewells, and cognates. It is important for the students to study the new vocabulary.

Seventh Grade

The students will learn how to use the verbs “*tener*” (to have) and “*ser*” (to be) in present tense; they will also learn how to differentiate the verbs “*ser*” and “*estar*” in Spanish as in contrast, English language uses a single verb (to be) for these two verbs in Spanish. In the coming week we will be working on the possessive adjectives *mi/tu/su*. The students have to practice the vocabulary every day.

Eighth Grade

We will work on stem-changing verbs o/ue, such as *dormir/duermo* (to sleep), *poder/puedo* (can), *costar/cuesta* (to cost), *contar/cuenta* (to count). We will emphasize on the indirect object pronouns *me/te/le* like “*me/te/le duele la cabeza*”. 8th grade will also learn how to avoid redundancy in common expressions. It's important for the students to study the new vocabulary every day.

