

January 5, 2012

St. Johns County Schools

Volume 1, Issue 16

Important Dates

No School Presidents' Day	1/16- 1/17
Principal Coffee House Chat	1/23
Report Cards	1/24



St. Johns County Schools

Wierda's Weekly Words

Dear Parents and Friends of Ocean Palms,

Happy New Year! It is with great enthusiasm that I welcome you back to a brand new year. I enjoyed my time with family and relished the beautiful holiday weather, yet find myself so content to be back at school, in the routine of the school day, and of course with our beautiful children here. I hope that your holidays were special, memorable and relaxing, and that along with the celebrations you also embraced some time to read and enjoy some great literature. It is wonderful to see our children embrace the challenge and joy of reading at school throughout the day, and I encourage them to share their latest books with me. I would love to hear what you are reading in 2012!

As we brave the Winter cold and head into Spring you will notice exciting instructional modifications and a variety of projects and innovative learning opportunities occurring for our children. Our teachers are learning more and implementing more of our Readers and Writers Workshop. These two best practice models include a daily 5-10 minute mini-lesson on a skill, strategy or ritual and routine, a 40 minute work time for children, and approximately ten minutes of closure for our students to meet with teachers to "re-cap" what has been learned. During the 40-45 minute work time, students are reading independently on their own level with authentic literature, conferencing one on one with their teachers about their goals and academic progress, assessing progress, engaging in guided reading or literature circles, or simply creating their writing masterpieces. We must remember that those who do the work, do the learning, and this Nationally renowned model of instruction is an optimal way for children to build reading stamina, create writing samples that are authentic and meaningful, and to have the time to discuss goals and progress with their teachers one on one or in a small group. I welcome your thoughts on our deep and rigorous process and welcome any conversation regarding instruction and our academic philosophy here.

Speaking of dialog, I am reminding you that you are all invited to attend my first Principal Coffee House Chat on Monday, January 23rd, from 9:00-10:00 in our Kitchen Resource Room. My Literacy Coordinator Kim Susice, along with Laura Simpson, will be presenting information on the Common Core Standards and text complexity, and I will open up the session to you for any questions, concerns, or celebrations that you wish to share. Note that I am available personally for individual concerns or needs. I am happy to set up an appointment to chat with you at any time.

Upcoming events also include a visit by the members of Leadership St. Johns, Hands on Problem Solving for our 4th and 5th graders, exciting Character Counts Celebrations, our Spring Data and Doughnuts Session, and a variety of events that will inspire your involvement in our school. Please know that we welcome your gifts and talents to be used here, and if you are not quite sure what you have to offer, stop by, see me, and I promise to put you to work:)

Finally, we welcome back our fabulous fifth grade teacher Ms. Shoaf, and celebrate the birth of her beautiful baby. We also extend a heartfelt thank you to our long term substitute Ms. Trish Schilling who did an outstanding job with our fifth graders. We also welcome new part-time cafeteria worker Ms. Paula Patten, who will working be in our kitchen daily with our talented team there. Ms. Susan Cebulski also joins us as a long term paraprofessional in our ESE department and Ms. Brenda Marshall will be assisting while Ms. Struble is out for the next few weeks. We have a dynamic team and the dedication and hard work of so many who make Ocean Palms run smoothly each day.

I wish you a wonderful week, stay warm, and Happy New Year!

I look forward to our 2012 journey together and sustaining the joy and deep learning of our wonderful children each day.


With Enthusiasm,

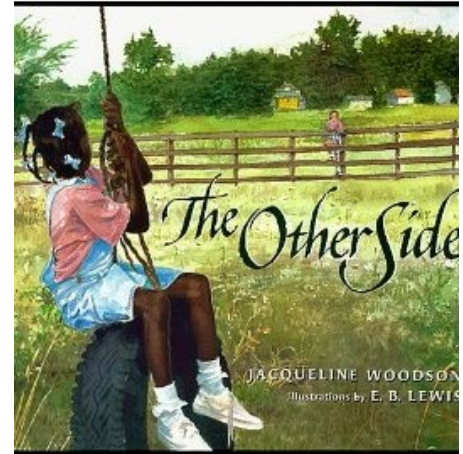
Betsy Wierda
Learning Leader

Readers are Leaders



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR PRINCIPAL OF THE DAY! WITT SCHOLL

JANUARY HERO OF		3RD OF THE WEEK
Jude Driscoll, Ms. Sheen's 2nd Grade class		
Brantley Kenny, Ms. Reid's 4th Grade class		



BOOK OF THE MONTH JANUARY 2012

Our Klothes 4 Kids clothing drive will continue until January 13th. Now that the holidays are over, please take a few minutes to go through a closet or two and get rid of the old. We are accepting gently worn clothes up to young adult sizes, especially winter jackets. We have donation boxes located through out the school or feel free to drop anything off to Mrs. Zitiello's room. As always, thank you for all of your incredible support!

Please feel free to email
Blakeney.Zitiello@stjohns.k12.fl.us






Otter Spirit Wear Special!

Winter is here, stay warm and look great with an OPE hoodie sweatshirt! Now available for only \$26!

January special: Buy a hoodie or a t-shirt, get an OPE water bottle for free!

Norwich News



What a great start to the new year!! I hope everyone had a relaxing and rejuvenating holiday break.

Classroom Visits

We have an open door policy and welcome you in to your child's class. That being said, if you want to meet with the teacher regarding an issue, this visit time is not optimal. The teacher wants to give you her undivided attention because your child is important to them!! Therefore, if you need to talk to your child's teacher

regarding a situation, please set up conference. This allows the teacher to give you their full attention and focus on instruction and safety of the students during classroom instructional time.

Celebrations, Service Learning Projects, Classroom Productions, etc.


In a continuing effort to provide safety and security to our students and staff we ask that you complete a volunteer application if you plan to volunteer at Ocean Palms Elementary. This includes if you

would like to participate in activities such as birthday parties for your child in their classroom, eating lunch with them in the cafeteria, field trips, book fairs, field days, as well as readers, tutors, mentors, etc.

<https://knt1.keepntrack.com/HTML/KnTOnlineVolunteerApplication.html?db=stjohns&version=2.7.0.17>

Melisa Norwich
Learning Leader

AVOID THE COLD AND HAVE YOUR CHILD DRESS APPROPRIATELY FOR OUTSIDE P.E. PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR OTTERS HAVE THEIR COATS, HATS AND GLOVES ON THESE COLDER DAYS.



GIFTED EVALUATION TIMELINE:
All private evaluations are due to the school counselor, Sandi Watson, by January 13, 2012.

Dear Ocean Palms Students and Families,


Thank you so very much for your kindness and participation in our How 'bout a Hug holiday gift drive. It was an overwhelming experience to see all the gifts coming through our school this week. You have made a tremendous difference in the lives of many in St. Johns County. We were able to provide gifts for 92 children and household items for 23 St. Johns County families!! WOW!

With sincere appreciation,

Sandi Watson
School Counselor

Ocean Palms 3rd - 5th graders will be raising money for the American Heart Association by participating in Jump Rope for Heart. Collection envelopes will be sent home Jan.11 - 20. The jump rope event will take place during Physical Education classes Jan. 31 - Feb.7 for all students. The class who raises the most money will celebrate with a Subway party.

Thank you for your generosity,
 Moira Catches
 Physical Education



Dear Parent/Guardian,

We hope that this letter finds you and your child(ren) enjoying a successful school year. The purpose of this letter is to provide updated and new information regarding the Hardship Out of Zone Waiver process, and the recent changes in Attendance Zones in our School District. If you already have at least one child on an approved 2011-12 Out of Zone Hardship Transfer waiver, or, if your residence falls within one of the geocode areas that have been rezoned for the 2012-13 school year, the following process applies.

If you have a child on an approved 2011-12 Out of Zone Hardship, this waiver will expire at the end of this school year. At that time, your child will be reassigned to your zoned school for the 2012-13 school year. If you would like your child to remain at the out of zone school he/she is currently attending, you **must apply for an Out of Zone Hardship waiver again.** The request may only be approved if your reason meets the criteria for a hardship.

If you have a child who will be entering the fifth or eighth grade for the 2012-13 school year and reside in one of the geocode areas that have been rezoned, they may be approved for a Hardship Out of Zone Waiver, as provided by the School Board, as a "grandfathered condition." In this case, you must complete a Hardship Out of Zone Application, and submit it for approval to the Office for School Services. Please note that this applies to families presently attending the school who reside in the applicable geocode that has been rezoned, for their fifth and eighth grade children only. For information regarding the changes in our Attendance Zones, please visit <http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/rules/zoning/>.

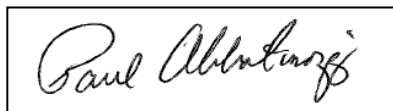
The transfer request process will begin on **January 9th, 2012**. You will have until **March 30, 2012** to submit your request. The sooner your application is received, the sooner your child's class schedule for next school year may be completed. Please be sure to mention that you are applying for the "grandfathered" condition for your fifth or eighth grade child when completing the Out of Zone Application. Your prompt attention to submitting an application will assist your school in preparing to meet requirements for state and federal funding, class size compliance, and other governmental and administrative applications. The application is available in both an electronic version (available January 9th on our website) and a paper version. Both applications and the directions for the process can be found on our district website at: <http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/depts/os/schoolserv/transfers>. Additionally, please note that transportation will not be provided to students who receive an approved out of zone waiver.

A paper version can be sent home with your child if requested. Please request this form from your current school office.

Should you decide to apply for a Hardship Out of Zone waiver, you will receive an electronic reply sent to the email address you provide on the application, within approximately three weeks from the date we receive your request. If an email address is not available, we will mail you a copy of the decision.

We look forward to working with you to address your needs. If you have any questions regarding the out of zone hardship transfer process, please do not hesitate to contact my office at 904.547.7583.

Sincerely,



Paul Abbatiozzi
Director, Department for School Services