



*In summer, the song sings itself.*

*William Carlos Williams*



**A very special  
thank you to  
Margaret Larson  
for publishing our  
Tiger Talk!**

*Renowned woodcarver Elton Braithwaite gives a lesson to grade 6 student Jessica Cowley during the June 6th artist-in-residence performance sponsored by the Southampton Cultural Council and the Southampton PTO.*

## A Word From The Principal

### **The 2008-09 School Year in Review**

The end of the school year is a good time to stop and take stock of where we have been as well as where we are headed. The 2008-09 school year has been eventful, a year that has witnessed much progress and many improvements.

### **Retirements**

At the end of the year we will bid a fond adieu to two long-time Norris staff members. Shirley Anop retires after 40 years of teaching the children of Southampton and Beverly Foster retires after 22 years working in the Norris kitchen. Both of these dedicated ladies will be missed.

### **Technology**

The technology plan for the Norris School has been to integrate technology not as a stand-alone subject, but rather woven into classroom instruction. The school now has 3 C.O.W. carts (computers on wheels) with between 20 and 25

wireless laptops in each cart. The teachers sign up for the C.O.W. and then wheel it to their classrooms for integrated technology instruction. The first two were Dell C.O.Ws and the latest edition is a Macintosh C.O.W., which has become widely popular. Additional Macintosh laptops were acquired for the special education classrooms to share, enabling classrooms to maintain a sufficient number of laptops for every student.

### **REAP Grant**

The Norris School was fortunate to be awarded a Small Rural School Grant (REAP) again this year. In previous years, this grant was used to build up our impressive technology infrastructure. REAP was used this year to employ a half time math facilitator and a half time technology integration facilitator.

These positions supported classroom teachers in meeting the needs of Norris students.

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# Library Zone

## Thanks to Our Volunteers

The library is so lucky to have a dedicated and enthusiastic group of volunteers that help our school in countless ways. I consider these fine people additions to our Norris Family. I simply could not do my job half as effectively without them and I thank them from the bottom of my heart. This year, Mr. Joseph Zalot and Ms. Beverly Berniche celebrated five years of service to our Norris Library! Books were dedicated in honor of both Joe and Beverly to thank them for their service.

Library Volunteers help run the circulation desk, aid in cataloging new books, repair damaged books and greatly help all of our Norris children be successful in the library. Many thanks go to Fran Hackworth, Mary Ingari, Tammy Howard, Rosemary Stone, Renee Dearborn, Kate Cooper, Gail Henderson, Lisa Shea, Kelly Constantine and Lorraine Dube.

## A Visit from Andrea Belanger

Mrs. Belanger, the Hampshire Regional High School Library Director, visited with sixth graders during library class this past week. Students learned about the wide variety of programs and resources available to them at the HRHS Library and were also able to ask general questions about HRHS. Our hope is that this will smooth the transition for our outgoing sixth grade class.

## Favorite Summer Read Alouds

Reading aloud together is a great (and inexpensive) way to spend time together with your children this summer. I have found that even older children (grades 5 and 6) still like to be read to, especially if the book is one they can really get into. My personal favorites are books that sound as good read aloud as they do on the page. Here are a few of my favorites, but experiment with your own!

*The Foot Book*, *The Sneetches* and *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss

Anything by Mo Williams

Anything by Eric Carle

*Where the Sidewalk Ends* (poems by Shel Silverstein)

*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis

*Spiderwick Chronicles* by Tony DiTerlizzi.

*Love that Dog* by Sharon Creech

*The Tale of Despereaux* by Kate DiCamillo

Harry Potter (any one of the series)



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# Thank You From the PTO

Thanks to all the hard work and efforts from this year's parent volunteers, the PTO was able to raise over \$17,000 to fund special events, Field Day, classroom projects, and teacher grants as well as purchase school planners, print a school directory, and fund many other requests from the Norris staff. Without our volunteers this would not have been possible. Thank you again to all who helped out!

If you would like to get involved, by sharing some fresh ideas or volunteering at any events next year, please contact the PTO at [norrisPTO@gmail.com](mailto:norrisPTO@gmail.com) or join us for our first PTO meeting in the fall. Being a volunteer doesn't mean you have to do it all yourself. We have a great group of parents at Norris and you'll find the experience extremely rewarding as we all help one another. You get to meet other parents and teachers, and your kids really appreciate it!

A few reminders: Keep saving your box tops and ink cartridges over summer vacation. There will be a collection area at the September ice cream social. And don't forget that car wash coupons are available all summer by contacting Sue Falcetti at 527-3125. Have a safe and enjoyable summer!



*The PTO Board*

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# Lessons from Kindergarten

“Everything I really needed to know in life, I learned in Kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain but there in the sand box at school.”

Robert Fulghum



In Mrs. Smith’s Kindergarten Class this is what we learned:

- “I learned to follow the school rules.” Kassandra Quinlan
- “I learned how to use the Work Board.” Ethan Buckingham
- “I learned how to count the number of school days.” Alexandra Seney
- “I learned how to write in my journal.” Martha Ahart
- “I learned how to do Math.” Gavin Buckingham
- “I learned how to write letters and numbers.” Maxwell Abel
- “I learned how to write stories.” Connor Schrauben
- “I learned how to do some good writing.” Garrett Santos
- “I learned all about the Ocean.” Colin Boyle
- “I learned that numbers never stop.” Devan Gosselin
- “I learned how to paint pictures.” Alyssa Benedict
- “I learned how to play Math games.” Thomas Lucchesi
- “I learned about different kinds of insects.” Wilson Heath
- “I learned how to read and write words and stories.” Caitlin Reardon
- “I learned how to spell new words.” Erin Reynolds
- “I learned how to make new FRIENDS!” Setota Touchette

And Mrs. Smith learned that there are so many WONDERFUL children at the Norris School!

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## 5th Grade Math Project

The K.A.R.T. Depart is a group of seven 5<sup>th</sup> graders trying to reduce the amount of food wasted in our school. K.A.R.T. stands for Kids and Adults Reducing Trash. We weighed the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders’ leftover food for 20 days total, keeping our actions secret for the first 10 days to see the amount of food that was actually being thrown away on a typical day. On our most disturbing day, our wasted food equaled 28 pounds. The lunch that day was stuffed crust pizza, and the incredible quantity wasted was only from the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades! The average amount of food waste per day, collected during the first 10 days was 21.7 lbs.

We crossed our fingers that the amount of food waste would decrease and fortunately, it has. The average amount of food waste per day during our second measuring period was 17.1 lbs. Speaking with the fourth and fifth graders, giving them suggestions on how to reduce the waste and sending a flyer home to let their parents know about our project, seemed to reduce the amount of food waste.

One setback in reducing waste is the government regulation stating that children must take a certain amount of food, regardless if they are not hungry or they don’t like what is being served. Because of this, pounds of food are being wasted on a regular basis. It is difficult to coordinate all of the people to make a change. The cafeteria has guidelines to follow and they don’t always match what the kids want.

This was a fun project, and a great learning experience for all of us.

*Deane T. Bates , Benjamin A. Chmielewski, Maitri Dalal, Erin Kelly,  
Nick O’Hare, Jordan Pickunka and Talula Thibault*

# 6th Grade Gift: A New Podium

Last year, the 6th Grade Committee approached principal Bill Collins about a gift to the school from the 2009 6th grade class. Coincidentally, Mr. Collins had just received an offer by the New England School of Architectural Woodworking in Easthampton to have its students build a project for Norris as part of their cabinetmaking training. He immediately said that he would love a new podium to replace the small one that had been at the school since its inception.

The 6th grade students raised the money by having a quilt raffle and cookie walk in the fall and organizing an Applebee's pancake breakfast in February.

The new podium, crafted of red birch and birds-eye maple veneer, was presented to Mr. Collins at an assembly in May. 6th grader Francesco Bartolemeo gave a terrific speech, expressing thanks to all involved, before a group of her classmates whisked off the covering to unveil the podium. Mr. Collins could only say "wow," especially when he saw the lovely commemorative plaque and the special pull-out stand for students to stand on when they need to use the podium and microphone.

The 6th Grade Committee would like to thank the students, parents, community, and the woodworking school for making this special gift possible.



*Principal Bill Collins tries out his new podium after the unveiling ceremony. He is pictured with representatives from the New England School of Architectural Woodworking, including the students who designed and built the podium (from L to R: student Amber Toczydlowski, school director Greg Larson, and student Arlin Peterman).*

## Electronic Tiger Talk

If you haven't already, please sign up to receive Tiger Talk by email. The electronic version of Tiger Talk significantly reduces the amount of paper and toner we use on a monthly basis and reduces the administrative time to print and distribute the newsletter, freeing our staff to focus on other responsibilities.



The electronic version offers exactly the same content as the printed version, with the added bonus of featuring photos of school activities and students in full color. Parents tell us that it's handy to be able to save the email for future reference and that they don't no longer have to worry about losing the paper version and missing out on important information.

If you'd like to join our e-mail list, please contact Mrs. Carmichael at [mcarmichael@hr-k12.org](mailto:mcarmichael@hr-k12.org). Our budget and our staff will greatly appreciate it.

### Thank You!

**Mr. Hallett would like to thank the Norris staff, students, volunteers and the Norris P.T.O. for helping to make Quidditch and Field Day such successful events!**

### SAVE THE DATE!

**September 2nd- 1st day of school  
September 24th- Picture day**

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# A Word From The Principal, Continued

The math facilitator, who on her days off flies around the country teaching teachers how to improve math instruction, filled all the seats when she offered teacher classes in Developing Mathematical Ideas (DMI). DMI explores in-depth approaches to analyzing how students acquire and build upon their mathematical proficiency. The technology integration facilitator assisted teachers in integrating technology into the classroom.

We are counting on a federal grant to fund a half-time math remediation position to support the work of our classroom teachers. We also depend on this anticipated federal grant to fund our half-time technology support position, filled by Mr. Steve Silva (long-time Norris custodian).

## **Communities of Practice**

Two of the most exciting initiatives here at the Norris School this year have been instituting CoPs (communities of practice) for the classroom teachers and the addition of interactive white boards (Promethean Boards). CoPs bring educators together for a common purpose. CoPs focus exclusively on improving student learning with a dedicated time as part of the school week. Norris partnered with New Hingham and Westhampton elementary schools to receive training from a UMASS professor who specializes in strengthening Professional Learning Communities. We were able to build weekly CoP times for every grade level teacher into the master schedule, thanks to a huge commitment from the specials teachers who rearranged their schedules.

## **Promethean Interactive White Boards**

Promethean Boards not only replace overhead projectors, wall atlases, DVD players and white boards, but these instructional tools also allow cooperation between Promethean Board users from across the hall and around the globe. Teachers can share effective lesson plans and instructional ideas. The ActiVote attachments allow teachers immediate access to interim student assessment data, while preserving student anonymity (minimizing the self-consciousness of answering questions in front of one's peers). Teachers can now alter instruction "on the fly" instead of waiting for the quiz at the end of the lesson to check for understanding. The students have already had one virtual field trip, where the children from a Norris classroom worked on a

lesson with children from a Washington D.C. classroom.

A team of Norris Promethean Board users gave a presentation to the Southampton Capital Improvement Committee on the power of these instructional tools. The Committee was impressed, resulting in four new boards a year (a grade-level's worth) being placed on the town's capital improvement plan through the 2014-15 school year. When the incoming fifth and sixth grade students return next year, each one of their classrooms will be equipped with a Promethean Board.

## **21<sup>st</sup> Century Learners**

The term "21<sup>st</sup> century learner" is thrown around in a way that could be mistaken to mean simply introducing technology in a classroom. Technology for technology's sake is no improvement. Twenty-first century skills include preparing students to compete globally for jobs that may not even exist yet. The idea at Norris is to provide students with the ability to adapt to the demands of an ever-changing world. These 21<sup>st</sup> century skills include the ability to: access, evaluate and use different forms of information, exercise critical thinking, exhibit fluency with technology tools, use various forms of media when presenting ideas, display originality, employ problem solving skills, work successfully as a team, demonstrate cross-cultural awareness, and communicate complex ideas effectively.

## **MCAS Remediation**

Following its popularity last year, Norris brought back its MCAS readiness camp. This year's MCAS Camp was offered for the 10 weeks leading up to the state assessments. Additional instructors were added to create smaller class sizes and classes were divided by grade level, each with two sessions per week. When a Norris team visited one of the highest performing MCAS schools in the state, one of the recommendations was for MCAS camp to be held in the morning as opposed to the afternoon.

## **Special Education**

Twenty percent (1 out of every 5) of Norris students are on an Individualized Education Program (IEP); thus, hiring highly qualified and effective special education teachers is of critical importance. This year we were fortunate to attract veteran special education teachers and speech and language pathologists to fill vacancies on our

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# A Word From The Principal, Continued

existing special education team. These teachers piloted co-teaching classrooms in third and fifth grade with their regular education colleagues. Building upon the success of the Norris inclusion preschool program, Mrs. Frye piloted an inclusion kindergarten class. This successful model will be expanded to include Ms Johnson's first grade class.

## **Mentoring**

One of the most effective ways that a school can build and influence the learning climate is through a comprehensive new teacher induction and mentoring program. The Norris School boasts a mentoring program which has been regionally and nationally recognized and has even been offered as a model for graduate education students. Our program continued this year under the guidance of Ms, Teece, our Mentor Facilitator.

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## **Student Placement**

We all know the importance of student placement. With this in mind, a placement team was formed to look at ways for improving the process. Classroom teachers, special education teachers, the counselor and school psychologist spent countless hours creating classroom lists, balancing classrooms and sharing information between the sending and receiving teachers. Norris, like many schools, used to post the class lists over the summer, but we feel it is better to hold *Meet Your Teacher Day* on the last day of school. This provides students the opportunity to meet next year's teacher, visit the classroom and discover who will be their classmates.

## **Clubs**

The Norris Ski Club is destined to become a school tradition. This winter offering has become immensely popular for both Norris Students and Norris Alumni alike. Mrs. Ashley not only coordinates the ski club but also the equally popular Norris Drama Club, now in its third year.

## **Facility**

Our school saw many of the common areas painted. The gymnasium floor was resurfaced thanks to the SYAA. Much of the old buckling carpets on the first floor were replaced using the last of the Norris Renovation Fund. The nurse's area was replaced with tile, which is far more sanitary. All of the cafeteria tables were replaced, addressing safety concerns.

## **Security**

Phase III of the plan to improve Norris security was implemented, this included moving away from exterior keys and to proximity I.D. cards, with readers at exterior doors, for all faculty and staff.

## **Faculty Accolades**

Three Norris teachers saw books they co-authored published this year: *My Kids Can: Making Math Accessible to All Learners K-5*, whose authors include Mrs. O'Reilly & Mr. Flynn; and *Teaching the New Writing*, co-authored by Kevin Hodgson. Mrs. Smith was honored at a gala event as a Pioneer Valley Excellence in Teaching Award recipient. Mrs. di Curcio was recognized at a reception honoring the WFCR Arts & Humanities Award nominees. When the 2009 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year was unable to attend NASA Space Camp, Ms Teece (2009 finalist for Teacher of the Year) was invited to head to Alabama this summer in his place. Mr. Flynn served as a professor in the education department at Westfield State College as part of the *Teacher in Residence* program. Mr. Flynn was a finalist for the National Education Association's Award for Teaching Excellence. Each finalist's school was given a free interactive board (this is the second interactive board that Mr. Flynn has won). Again this year, Ms. Diemand taught educators for Fitchburg State College.

## **District Pilot Programs**

The Norris School participated in a district-wide teacher evaluation pilot. We are re-examining the effectiveness of teacher evaluation and helping to develop a system that has a greater correlation between evaluation and effective classroom instruction. We are also participating in a standards-based progress reporting pilot.

## **Superintendent Search**

Two Norris teachers and I participated on the search committee for our next superintendent. As I'm sure you have learned, Dr. Craig Jurgensen from Northampton was selected. Dr. Jurgensen is both a gentleman and a scholar and we anxiously await the arrival of our district's next leader.

## **School Improvement Plan**

The Norris School Council, made up of representatives from the teachers, the parents, the community and the school committee, has revised the school improvement plan to make it a more data-driven process.

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# A Word From The Principal, Concluded

## **School of Choice**

The school funded several faculty positions with *school of choice* tuitions. Welcoming additional students from neighboring communities in a controlled fashion actually lowers our class sizes and has improved teacher student ratios.

## **Curriculum**

The science curriculum committee met throughout the year to re-align science instruction at Norris with the state curriculum frameworks and statewide assessments. Once this task was completed, a team was formed to select science materials that would fit the new alignment. This was funded through a textbook line established by the town to replace aging instructional texts/materials. We will turn our sights to the social studies curriculum alignment and texts for next year, when we will repeat the same process that was used for science.

## **Gifted and Talented**

It would have been hard to justify spending money on a gifted and talented initiative for our most academically gifted students when we did not possess the funding to employ a full compliment of special education teachers for our neediest population. Now that our school has achieved lower class sizes and a well-staffed special education program, we are in a better position to address the needs of our academically gifted and talented students. The school committee is allowing me to send one third of the Norris classroom teachers to the week-long Confratute training offered at UConn this summer. This is an exciting first step in an effort to incorporate proven instructional strategies that will help all of our achievers, while targeting our highest achievers.

## **Responsive Classroom**

Norris is a Responsive Classroom school and, as such, one fifth of the Norris teachers will be attending one of the many week-long Responsive Classroom professional development trainings offered over the summer.

## **Literacy Initiative**

The elementary principals have worked with the Superintendent and their respective school committees to align school calendars. This will allow us to better pool our resources for professional development training. One of the

biggest changes that you will notice for next year's calendar is that the students will have Thanksgiving week off. That Monday and Tuesday, the elementary teachers and administrators from across the district will be involved in two days of intensive literacy-themed professional development. District teacher leaders, in the instruction of literacy, were invited to Southampton to assist the principals and curriculum director in shaping these days. It is a nice time to offer professional development because it is far enough into the year for routines to have been established but still early enough to apply strategies that will positively impact student instruction.

Norris School has a group of early education teachers who formed a literacy study group and met throughout the year to examine current best instructional practices. This group is excited about the prospect of our school moving toward a common assessment tool that is aligned with instructional practices. There are many benefits to using the same tool across the grades.

## **Collaborative Leadership**

While I may be the person whose job description includes "instructional leader," it is important to recognize that the Norris Faculty is an unbelievably dedicated and talented professional learning community. Our school can only boast this long list of accomplishments for 2008-09 because ours is a collaborative team effort.

Our faculty meetings have become opportunities to move our school forward. In addition to our monthly Continuous School Improvement Committee meetings, this year an Instructional Leadership Team was created. The ILT is a group whose members include veteran teachers, new teachers, special educators and classroom educators representing every grade-level. The goal of this team is quite simply to take the Norris School from being a great school to being the best we can be. We feel that our school is well on its way.

On behalf of the Norris faculty and staff, I wish you all a rewarding summer filled with time for family and friends.

Sincerely,  
*Bill Collins, Principal*