

The Buzz

September 7, 2018



Welcome to McDevitt Middle School! This newsletter, "The Buzz," is our cluster's way of keeping you informed of all the exciting things going on here at McDevitt and within our Honey Bee Cluster (6B). It will come home each week in your child's social studies folder. Please be sure to look it over every Friday, sign the checklist in the folder acknowledging that you have seen it and have your student return their folders every Monday for class credit. Besides special events being run at the school, the newsletter will highlight the activities that took place in our classes this week and will keep you posted on what to expect in the coming weeks regarding quizzes, tests, and projects.

In addition to this hard copy, you will be able to access "The Buzz" each week from our cluster's page on the McDevitt School Website. While viewing the digital edition you can also click the Google Translate button to interpret the newsletter into any preferred language. We hope that you find this communication a great tool for keeping track of your child's responsibilities and assignments throughout the year.

A few important notices were sent home over the past two weeks including: an emergency contact form, a media release consent form, and a PBIS acknowledgment. Some students, who had not received a Chromebook over the summer, also got a very important packet of information, which needs to be signed so that computers can be distributed. Please be sure that you have seen, signed and returned these notices to your child's homeroom teacher. All 6th graders were also given a lock and a school agenda book that will be used daily to track assignments. The agenda books cost \$5.00 payable to your student's homeroom teacher. Every Tuesday you will receive a Red folder from your student's homeroom containing weekly notices. Please read them, remove them and return only those needing a signature. Folders will be collected on Wed. and held until the following week.

Student Binders: You may have noticed that your student has put together their "master binder." This system allows students to have all their supplies (ear buds, pencils, etc.), agenda book, homework folder and all class subject materials in one place. The dividers are labeled for each class and teachers will work to organize student papers as well as clean out papers at the end of each unit. It would be most helpful if parents could help keep students organized by checking their binders. No papers are to be kept in any of the front or back pockets of the binders and all subject related papers should be clipped in the sections (not hanging out). The homework folder should contain work that is due each night and work that must be passed in the next day. It should never be bursting with other papers. Mastering good organization skills is a key to success in middle school and will help prepare your students for high school and beyond!

Our first week has been very smooth! Students who were initially a little nervous have transitioned well and all are seemingly getting more comfortable in their new building.

We also attended a "Welcome Meeting" with 6th grade Assistant Principal, Julie Lamoly. Be sure to ask your students about the Renaissance Program, which they learned about this week. This incentive program aims to reward students at the end of each term based on their attendance, behavior, course grades and school spirit (the ABC'S). Students who participated today will earn the first of many school spirit points possible. Speaking of school spirit, we have an awesome website where you can order McDevitt gear. Be sure to check it out at: <https://www.havasimpactpromotions.com/mcdevitt/main.aspx>

The **McDevitt Middle School Open House is scheduled for Thursday, September 27th** from 6:00-8:00 in the evening. We look forward to seeing you and to giving you a glimpse of the exciting year ahead. This week has also been busy with Fall play tryouts and upcoming soccer tryouts. Be sure to check the school website daily for a list of events and activities coming up.

Finally, we are happy to welcome you and your student to the Honey Bees. Our team has worked together closely for a number of years with the wonderful addition of Ms. Boudett who will be joining our ELA dept. this year. We hope that you will reach out to us with any questions or concerns. We are also happy to meet as a team as needed with parents to give you an idea of your student's progress and successes.

Please note the following important dates and be sure to mark them on your calendars:

Sept. 10th - No School (in observance of Rosh Hashanah)

Sept. 19th - No School (in observance of Yom Kippur)

Sept. 27th - Open House Night 6:00-8:00 PM

Oct. 5th - Friday Parent Coffee Talk 8:00-9:00 AM

Oct. 8th - No School (in observance of Columbus Day)

Oct. 12th - Spanish Language Parent Coffee Talk 8:00-9:00 AM

**We promise our newsletter will usually be a quick read! We just have too much share right now as we kick off the year.

English Language Arts - Mrs. Creonte

It was a pleasure getting to know your child over the past two weeks. We have spent our reading, English, and academic support classes getting to know each other through various surveys, writing assignments, readings, and videos. In addition, the students are in the process of completing reading and writing pretesting. They have all completed decoding, encoding, and writing assessments. By the end of next week the Reading A to Z benchmark assessments will be completed and all students will have picked a free choice reading book at their independent reading level. This week all students got organized in class as well. All binders are set up and each child is confident about staying organized by following this binder system throughout the school year. I look forward to a wonderful school year with your child.

Thank you to all of the parents who have already completed the optional homework assignment. I enjoyed seeing your creative minds at work and hearing about your children. Please do not hesitate to email me with any questions, comments, or concerns (sandracreonte@walthampublicschools.org). I look forward to meeting you at Open House on September 27th!

English Language Arts - Mrs. Peterson

As this first edition of the Buzz hits the press students are already hard at work. We began the year getting to know each other, which culminated this week with our BioPoems and Biography Box presentations. We also found time to tour the building, complete a scavenger hunt in the classroom and review both classroom expectations and school wide policies/guidelines.

We've also jumped right into our summer reading book, Slacker. Over the next week students will review elements of fiction as we discuss and work with the story. We will also examine the characters' transformations, explore the themes presented, and complete our first writing samples utilizing prompts about the novel.

Please be sure to follow our class on both Instagram and Twitter @MrsPeterson6 so that you can keep connected with us and see what is going on in our classrooms.

Reminders: 1) Please don't forget your optional Parent Homework Assignment! If you missed today's Sept. 7th due date, I'll accept "late" letters all next week! 2) Students should have shared our Class Management plan with you. Please sign and return the acknowledgement slip as soon as possible. Keep the hot pink plan at home as a reference.

English Language Arts - Ms. Boudett

We are off and running here in Room 140 for 6th grade ELA! We started the year by getting to know each other, our classroom, and the expectations for our community. You should have received and signed a sheet of expectations for ELA, which should be at home for your reference. Meanwhile, students are learning to get organized as middle schoolers. Ask your children to show you their spotless binders!

In order to build our classroom community, students are in the process of delivering short "All About Me" presentations to the class. Through these presentations, students are practicing speaking and listening in class while sharing important pieces of themselves with their classmates. You also should have received the "Million Words or Less" assignment from your student. This is a chance for you to share your unique perspective on your child with us. There is no official due date for parents.

Finally, we have begun our work with this year's summer reading book, Slacker. The novel gives us the opportunity to review the elements of fiction in a text and to analyze how characters change over time. Students completed both a written and a creative assignment about the novel over the summer; students will also have the opportunity to show what they know about the book through a take-home essay test that will be due next week. Thank you for supporting your students and making it a great beginning of the year!

Reminders: 1) Don't forget your optional homework assignment, "A Million Words or Less"!

Science - Mrs. Rodgers

The theme of our first unit is STEM, the combination of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. We will be using the engineering and design process to solve different problems. We have several fun projects to help us practice following this process. In their binders students have a pink colored overview sheet explaining the goals, activities, vocabulary and assessments. This week we tested how small changes to a paper helicopter affect its flight, making it spin differently or drop faster. For each trial we wrote a hypothesis and identified the variable we were changing. I will be sending home a copy of the helicopter pattern for them to experiment with over the weekend.

Math - Ms. DiTroia

I am one of the math teachers on Cluster 6B. This is my third year teaching at McDevitt, and I am so happy to be back on the Honey Bee cluster! Each week, I will use this section of the Buzz to write a quick summary of what the students learned in math and where we are headed next. I will also let you know about upcoming quizzes/tests or other important announcements. We spent the first few days of school getting to know each other and setting up our class expectations. I enjoyed getting to know all of my students and learning about everyone's unique strengths and abilities! This week, we started our first unit on Ratios. We learned what ratios are and how they are used in the real world. Then, we practiced solving problems involving equivalent ratios. Ask your student about Mr. Maillis's perfect Arnold Palmer drink, and see if they can explain how this relates to ratios! Next week, we will continue learning about different strategies for finding equivalent ratios, as we practice using them to solve real world problems. Looking ahead, we are planning to have our first quiz on Ratios within the next couple of weeks. I will let students know about it at least a few days ahead of time, so they are able to prepare and can drop by for Extra Help if they need it.

I look forward to hopefully meeting you all soon! In the meantime, please don't hesitate to reach out and email me with any questions, comments or concerns.

Math -Mr. Maillis

Hello Cluster B families. I am thrilled to be one of the cluster's math teachers this year, having just moved over from Cluster A. Your 6th graders have just finished their first 6 day cycle at McDevitt, and they should be very proud of their effort so far. They have already been hard at work on our first unit, exploring ratios. We just today practiced three strategies for finding equivalent ratios. As I stated in my email last week, I am available most days after school for extra help, so please take me up on my offer. When I'm not planning math lessons, or rooting for all Chicago sports teams, I'm most likely at the rink with my two hockey playing boys or my synchronized skating daughter.

Social Studies - Ms. Hanes

It has been such a pleasure getting to know my students these first two weeks! After we created our classroom contract and went over all of our classroom procedures, we were ready to dive into the Social Studies curriculum. We have begun by looking at the Where (maps) and When (timelines) of History.

I am so pleased with the level of effort and thought that has gone into both homework and class discussions. Next week we will look closely at the two types of historical sources and figure out how to determine if a source is trustworthy. The following week on Friday, Sept. 14th, we will have our first quiz on maps, timelines, and sources. Students will receive a study guide packet that will cover all of the material.

Finally, thank you for taking time to talk with your child about your family history. In class we pinned where our families were from on a map of the world. We now have a wonderful visual of how connected we are to countries all over the globe. Have a great weekend!

Academic Language Specialist - Ms. Schettino

Hello and welcome! I'm the new ESL teacher and will be working with 6 grade students who need support with language. I'm going to be with them everyday during Social Studies. So far, it has been a pleasure to get to know all the students in this cluster. Being a language learner myself, I can relate to the difficulties that learning a new language may pose. Please contact me with any questions or concerns that you may have: IvanySchettino@walthampublicschools.org.

Cluster B Fun Facts:

In an effort to help families and students get to know their teachers over the first few weeks, we'll try to share some Staff Fun Facts with you as part of our newsletter. This week, we'd love for you to know that we are all animal lovers! Our furry (and not so furry) friends include the following and you'll hear us mention them a lot!

Lucy Peterson	"My Little Cactus" Boudett
Matthew Hanes	Boss Cat DiTroia
Buddy Rodgers	Calvin Kissane