

Growing by... & Leaps & Bounds

Martha Jones School - Westwood, Mass.
Issue 16 - Apr. 30, 2021



[Westwood Public Schools](#) | [Martha Jones School](#) | [Martha Jones PTO](#)

Important Dates

Date	Event
Tue., May 4th	Gr. 3 Enrichment: Tsongas Center - Virtual Program
Tue., May 4th	PTO Meeting - 7PM
Wed., May 5th	Walk to School Day Safe Routes to School
Wed. & Fri, May 5th & 7th	Gr. 5 - Our Changing Bodies
Thu., May 6th	Virtual MCAS Parent info session 6:30 PM (grades 3, 4, & 5)
Tue., May 11th	Gr. 3,4, 5 ELA MCAS
Thu., May 13th	School Committee Meeting 7PM
Tue., May 18th	Gr. 3,4, 5 Math MCAS
Thu., May 20th	Gr. 5 STE MCAS

Martha Jones School Telephone Extensions:
Office 781-326-7500, ext. 6321
ext. 6261: Diane Santangelo
ext. 6262: Donna Tobin
ext. 6263: Dawnmarie Shu

Message from the Principal

Walk-To-School Day

May 5th is Massachusetts Safe Routes To School (SRTS) Walk-To-School Day and Martha Jones School will be participating this year. We are encouraging all students to Walk To School on May 5th. [Link here](#) for more information on meeting spots for most of our neighborhoods; Team Captains. who will be leading groups of students as they walk to school; and how you can volunteer to help out!

Parent/caregiver volunteers are needed to make this a safe walk for everyone. If you are willing to help out by walking your child and a group of students to school, [PLEASE SIGN UP HERE](#) as a parent/caregiver helper. This is a great way to encourage students (and families) to get exercise. Buses will run their regular routes for bus students that are not able to participate and all bus students will take their buses home in the afternoon (this is a morning event only).



Field Day - Yay! We Are Having Field Day(s) This Year. We are working hard to honor some of our end of year traditions within the COVID guidelines. This year we will be holding grade level Field

Days on June 2nd (grades K & 1), June 3rd (grades 2 & 4) and June 4th (grades 3 & 5). Each grade level will have a field day morning or mid- afternoon with fun activities led by Mr. Foley and our MJ Staff. More info to follow. Unfortunately, we are not able to have parent volunteers this year 😞.

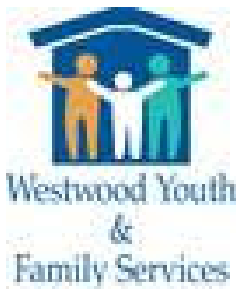
MJ & District News

Class Placement - In May, teachers, special educators, specialists, the school psychologist, and I will begin the process of class placement for the 2020-2021 school year. I recognize that this has been a challenging time for our students as they have dealt with a very unique learning environment with interruptions, changes, and challenges over the past 14 months as we have all navigated living in a world dictated by COVID 19 restrictions, requirements, and regulations. That being said, I am confident our team will take each child's needs into consideration during the placement process.

We review information about each child's academic, social, and personal characteristics and use that information when making placement decisions. Our primary goal is to develop well-balanced classrooms and assign each child to a classroom in which he or she can develop academically and socially. I am confident that all of our teachers provide students with wonderful learning opportunities.

If you have specific information about your child's learning needs that you would like us to consider during the process, please email me that information **by Friday, May 7th. Only information provided to me, in writing, will be considered.** Please email me with the subject, Class Placement, in the subject line of the email. Conversations with teachers during conferences that are not shared with me in writing, requests from previous years, and information from prior conversations will not be considered in the placement process. Please note that letters and emails are not kept from previous years since children change and grow and we make decisions based on current information. ***Westwood Public Schools does not allow parents to request their children's teachers; therefore, requests for specific teachers will not be accepted or considered. Specific requests to have a teacher will not be honored and will result in your child not being placed in the requested class.*** Sometimes, parents assume that if one of their children had a teacher in the past, the other child will automatically have that same teacher. This is not true. Previous family placements are not considered in the placement process. If you are the parent of multiples (twins, triplets, etc.), you may specify whether you want your children placed in the same class or different classes. Please don't assume we know this information, if you have a preference for together or separate for your twin/triplet placement, let us know. All class placements are final and will be shared with parents at the end of the summer. Please contact me if you have any questions about the process.

WARMER WEATHER - Please be sure that your child has on sunscreen and bug spray. They are outside each day and the sun gets hot in the middle of the day. Refillable water bottles are great. We have a filling station at school where students can refill their water bottles.



A Message from Westwood Youth and Families: We are happy to announce that Westwood Youth & Family Services is offering another round of our 6-week virtual Anxiety Coping Group for kids! It's called, "Calm & Cope." Based on results from our parent survey in the fall of 2020, we know that anxiety has been a struggle for many children during these unprecedented times. We are currently half-way through our first round of Calm & Cope and ended up running a long waitlist for this group. As a result, we decided to open another session starting the week of May 17th. The program will be available via Zoom in two groups: one for 2nd and 3rd graders, and one for 4th and 5th graders.

Please see the [attached flyer here](#) for more information.
Registration link is [here](#).

SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”
- Margaret Mead

In my last *Leaps and Bounds* I mentioned that I would share with you some of the work we are doing as individual educators, as a school, and as a district to further develop our understanding and professional practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion and to support the district goals and our own growth in pursuing equity, promoting integration, battling racism and celebrating diversity.

Currently, there are a number of staff across the district (including myself and some Martha Jones teachers) engaged in two courses - (1) *Exploring Self to Create Anti-Bias Curriculum* and (2) *Antiracist School Practices to Support the Success of All Students*. In addition, as part of the Westwood Public Schools Leadership Team, I participated in a 6 hour seminar on *Anti-Racist Decision-making Strategies for School Leaders*. Many of these courses have been through the [IDEAS](#) (Initiatives for Developing Equity and Achievement for Students) program at EDCO (an educational collaborative). It has been great to engage in this important work with my colleagues and I recognize that we have much work to do as a school, district, and community. My plan for next year is to reinvigorate the MJ Welcoming School Team and the School Site Council to move this work forward. I hope that more of you can get involved and as a school community we can make progress towards our goals.

Please reach out if there are any immediate steps that you would like me to consider in moving this work forward and/or if you have any concerns about our current practices, events, or school community.

You may have read or be interested in re-reading [Supt. Parks' previous letter](#) outlining some of the initiatives that have been on-going in the district. I have include some of her letter here to highlight the on-going work:

Curriculum and instruction:

Since 2018, our school libraries have updated collections so that they represent much greater diversity of authors, characters and nonfiction subjects. The goal of this has been to support a “mirrors and windows” philosophy of literacy. In the books they read, we want children to see reflections of themselves (mirrors) and to encounter the rich diversity that exists in the world (windows).

Teachers and departments have started the work of updating and supplementing core classroom texts, particularly in literacy/English language arts. For example: 4th graders will be reading *Hot Day on Abbott Avenue* by Karen English and *Fox* by Margaret Wild during one of their literacy units; *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang and *The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander are both new additions at the middle school; and the English courses at WHS has been updated to include texts like *The Hate You Give* by Angie Thomas, *Simon vs The Homo*

Sapiens Agenda by Becky Albertali, *All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely, *The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo, *Passing* by Nella Larsen and excerpts from *So You Want to Talk About Race*.

Professional development sessions (Wednesday/full day in service training and courses taken for credit) have focused on culturally responsive practice and meaningful classroom conversations. Sessions the past two years have included: Exploring Self and Social Awareness to Create an Anti-Bias Curriculum for Students, Creating a More Culturally Competent Curriculum, Discussions on Race in the Classroom, Incorporating a Dignity Framework into Student Discussions, and Read-Aloud Books That Reflect Dignity.

School and district culture:

Staff have revived and expanded the Let's Talk About Race, Culture and Ethnicity (LTARCE) group at WHS. After participating in training, LTARCE member students have facilitated student-to-student conversations about topics related to race and identity.

Anti-racist book groups were run by WPS faculty and administrators during the summer of 2020, and over sixty educators read and discussed various titles, including

Stamped from the Beginning by Ibram X. Kendi, *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo

The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander, *Waking Up White* by Debby Irving, *Raising White Kids: Bringing Up Children in a Racial Unjust America* by Jennifer Harvey, and

Don't Ask Me Where I'm From by Jennifer DeLeon.

School-based anti-racist educators groups have formed at many schools. These voluntary groups are run by staff and are working to support the infusion of curriculum resources and instructional strategies designed to combat racism.

Guest speakers for students, staff and the wider community have supported ongoing conversations about race, racism, diversity, equity and integration. Speakers so far this year have included Dr. Nicole Christian Brathwaite, Dena Simmons, Anthony Valentine, Michael Curry, Dr. Olivia Moorhead Slaughter, and Jennifer DeLeon.

Recruiting, hiring and retention:

The district has joined several groups in order to improve in our efforts to recruit, hire and retain a more diverse workforce: the Greater Boston School Human Resources Network, the Massachusetts Partnership for Diversity in Education, and DESE's Diversity Network.

Thank you!



PTO News



MASSACHUSETTS SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL (SRTS) WALK-TO-SCHOOL DAY

May 5, 2020 at 8:15 a.m.

On Wednesday, May 5, the Martha Jones community will be walking to school as part of the statewide Safe Routes to School Initiative. Please see the email from Donna Tobin dated April 28 for more information. Parent/caregiver volunteers are needed to make this a safe walk for everyone. If you are willing to help out by walking your child and a group of students to school, [PLEASE SIGN UP HERE](#) as a parent/caregiver helper.

PTO BOARD MEETING

May 4 at 7 p.m.

Our final PTO meeting of the year will be held on Tuesday, May 4 at 7 p.m. via Zoom. At that meeting we will be voting in the PTO Board Officers for the 2021-2022 school year. We are still looking for someone to come on board as the Social Media Co-chair and shadow Megan Brenk, our current Social Media Co-chair. It is a two year position. Please reach out to Megan Brenk (mbrenk@gmail.com) if you are interested. We will email out the Zoom link to all parents next Tuesday.

5TH GRADE FACEBOOK CLAP OUT SHOUT OUT

To honor our 5th graders as they get ready to move up to middle school (can you believe it?), we wanted to offer a "5th Grade Clap Out Shout Out" on the MJ Facebook Page.

Jamy Sesselman will do one post for each 5th grader whose parent(s) would like a shout out for their child. This is, of course, completely voluntary.

All you would need to do is email Jamy (jampombo@yahoo.com) a photo of your child with a few sentences about him/her.

You could send a baby picture and a current picture if you'd like OR just a current photo.

You could include any or all of the following:

- Activities involved with at MJ, (For example Talent for a Cause, Band, Math League, Student Council, etc.)
- Hobbies/ Sports your child enjoys
- What they will miss most about MJ
- What they are looking forward to in 6th grade.
- Or any thing else you'd like to share about your special child

Jamy will post them on the MJ FB page as they are received.

MABEL'S LABELS FRIENDS AND FAMILY SALE

Summer camp is around the corner and Mabel's Labels is having a friends and family sale! Click [here](#) to get 20% off their most popular products. Get all the labels you will need for camp today! Go to campaigns.mabelslabels.com and enter "Martha Jones PTO" as the fundraiser you would like to support. You can even order the "combo label pack" with the MJ logo. By purchasing **any** of the labels via our fundraiser, you will receive free shipping (labels are mailed directly to your address) and the PTO will receive 20% of your purchase.

ELECTRONIC BOX TOPS - COLLECTION ONGOING

Download the Box Top App and scan receipts within 14 days of purchase. Click [here](#) for more information about how to download the Box Top app and scan your receipts. Each Box Top is worth 10¢ for our school.

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Support Martha Jones with every purchase

The Amazon Shopping app now supports Amazon Smile! Simply download the newest version of the Amazon Shopping app, go to settings, turn on Amazon Smile and choose the Martha Jones PTO as your charity. After you've done that, every purchase you make will automatically support the Martha Jones PTO at no cost to you.

You will find the exact same prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to the Martha Jones PTO.

MARTHA JONES PTO FACEBOOK GROUP

Did you know Martha Jones PTO has its own Facebook group page? Join the Facebook group to get the latest PTO news and updates delivered right to your news feed! Click [here](#) to join!

PTO CONTACT FOR EVENTS, NOTICES

If you have an event or notice for our PTO update, please email it to PTO Co-Secretary Amy Amatangelo at amyamatangelo@yahoo.com.

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