

20 March 2014

Dear Walden Green Families:

Today is the Vernal Equinox and therefore, the first official day of spring. I'm sure that we can all agree that as beautiful as it was, it has also been a long harsh winter. As the temperatures rise and spring truly starts to blossom, we will need your help in making certain that your children have all the jackets, pants, boots and other appropriate weather gear to address the still quite cold Michigan spring that lies ahead. As always, we appreciate your support.

The Next Three Fridays.

Just a quick reminder that our students will not be in school the next three Fridays.

Tomorrow (3/21)– Records Day

Next Friday (3/28) – Professional Development for teachers

April 4th – The beginning of spring vacation.

Supporting our mathematics curriculum

As I shared with you in my last newsletter, the MEAP scores do not adequately represent the mental capacity of our students, the hard work and dedication of our teachers or the commitment from you, our families. What the MEAP scores do represent is that we need ongoing conversations about Montessori Best Practices. We need to address some of the holes that have been present in our student's academic experience and we need focus. I wanted to share with you a number of items that have already been put in place to address this issue and to turning these scores around to better represent Walden Green as a whole.

1. Curriculum mapping. This past summer, Mark Roessing worked with our faculty to map out mathematical concepts and to align them to Michigan standards. This in no way takes away from the Montessori experience of our students; rather, it creates a map that sees to it that every student's benefits from the entirety of the Montessori mathematics curriculum.
2. Team meetings. In October we implemented a weekly team meeting where our teachers work with one another to discuss curriculum matters and to provide next steps in our instruction practices.
3. After school tutoring kicked off in January and is meant to support our students who need assistance in mathematics and reading. This is the first year that these services have been provided school-wide and already we are seeing a nice impact.
4. Walking mathematics in our upper grades. As of late February, our 4-6th grade students have had the opportunity to work with fellowing classmates

- of similar skill sets. This occurs for one hour each Wednesday and supports our young learners right where they are.
5. IXL Mathematics program. Maria Montessori believed that you should start with the concrete and move to the abstract when you are teaching a lesson. That is the same belief that the Walden Green faculty and I share. The works and materials that our students interact with each and every day are vital to the concepts that our students need to know and understand as they progress academically. The works and materials are doing a fantastic job in sparking interest and providing the concrete information needed to master concepts. I have purchased the IXL math program because I believe it address our school and more importantly, our students' individual needs. IXL is not where our students receive their lessons, but it is where they are allowed to practice and progress. IXL is a web-based program that can also work from your home or the public library. You will soon be receiving more information on how we would like your support from your child's teacher.
 6. Spring inventory. Later this spring we will be conducting a classroom inventory to see that each of our classrooms has the necessary works and materials needed for a full Montessori learning experience.

I feel good about these 7 steps that are already in place to address the deficient within our curriculum. Some of these are quick fixes and will make a significant impact. Still, others will require more time to bring forth the impact we expect to see for our students. No doubt we will get there.

A Great Big Thank You.

Thank you to all the families, faculty members and friends of Walden Green who came to support us at Barnes and Noble on Saturday. We had a terrific time and made a nice profit for our Walden Green library. Remember, you can still order online through midnight tonight.

Thank you also to the families that supported our faculty with dinner during these two weeks of conferences. These are long hard days for our staff and your kindness and generosity have made all the difference.

Dates to be aware of:

March 21 – no school, records day
March 24 – rescheduled Board meeting
March 27 – Application deadline
March 28 – no school, professional development
April 2 – lottery for new families
April 4 – no school, spring vacation
April 14 – school resumes
April 21 – Board meeting, 6:30
April 22 – tentative PIC meeting, 6:30

