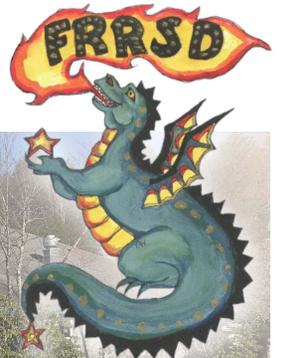


Farmington River Elementary School's DRAGON NEWSLETTER



May 2023 | Special Edition

Welcome to our first special edition newsletter of the Farmington River Elementary School!

We are excited to showcase a culmination of articles from our previous weekly newsletters in this Special Edition of the Newsletter! In this newsletter, you will find highlights of our school year, including our academic achievements, engaging enrichment programs, community collaboration, and the development of strong character traits in our students. We hope you enjoy reading about the fantastic accomplishments of our students, staff, and community. We look forward to continuing to provide an exceptional educational experience for all our students.

On September 16, 2022, the Farmington River Elementary School staff, in collaboration with the FRES PTA and Community Supporters, published the first edition of the FRES Weekly Newsletter. A weekly newsletter is emailed to all the FRES families every Friday and published on the FRES Website, where anyone can review previous editions by accessing the Newsletter Archive. Remember to share this and all past newsletters with family and friends so they can understand the great things happening daily at FRES!



**A DAY IN
THE LIFE...**

Take a peek into the daily life of our students at FRES! PG. 3



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**P.E.
HIGHLIGHTS**

Counselor's Corner

Community Connections with the Otis Food Pantry!

The Otis Food Pantry, Otis Police Dept & Farmington River Elementary School were able to connect to help provide food for some families during the April break.



Sgt. Tammy had bins placed throughout the community for a food drive; with this food, as well as the generosity of the Otis pantry, we were able to drop food off to local families. We would like to give an ENORMOUS shoutout to The Smile Like Jack Foundation, who donated a huge amount for this drive. Also, Otis Ridge Ski Area and St Mary's Church patrons The food pantry had many other donations from local people who saw the Facebook post and received an email from the Email Elf. What a great community contribution!!

Farmington River Elementary also wants to THANK Terry Gould and the Otis pantry volunteers who put together the totes for non-perishables and helped to load and deliver them to the school. Berkshire Bounty was able to increase our vegetable, fruit, and dairy as well.

A true community effort. We are so fortunate to live in a community that cares so much for everyone. Terry and her crew of amazing volunteers hope that families will come and visit the pantry in the future. It is a very happy and positive space.

Officer Messina & Archer Visit FRES for Read Across America Week!

Sgt. Weidhass, Officer Clark, Officer Beauchaine, and Great Barrington K9 Officer Messina conducted an assembly in December for PreK-6 students. The assembly's focus was on the importance of treating everyone with respect and kindness and how students can help prevent bullying. While all of the presenters were well received, the star of the assembly was the Therapy K9 Archer.

They spent time afterward visiting individual classes. All the students were able to pet Archer and ask the officers questions about his duties as a comfort dog.

Officer Messina & K9 Archer returned for Read Across America Week in early March, where they read a book to the entire school with Archer.



Mindfulness Yoga

The students have been enjoying yoga and mindfulness during Miss Terri Time this week. All the classes were able to experience and try out some new yoga poses. Words kids used to describe how they felt after were: calm, relaxed, tired, focused, revived and happy. Although Yoga and mindfulness may not be for everyone, it sure is a great technique to create mental clarity and kindness, as well as relax your mind, and body.



FRES Cafeteria to Feature a Student Salad Bar

The FRES Food Service Director, Sarah Hopkins, applied for the competitive School Nutrition Equipment Assistance Grant. Thanks to her hard work, the district will soon have a new warming table and a student salad bar. The new salad bar was delivered this week, and the warming table will arrive soon. We hope to have the equipment up and running after the April Break.

This is yet another example of the dedication of the FRES staff to improving the student experience.



A Day in the Life...

A day in the life of an elementary school student is full of adventure, learning, and fun. These young students are at a crucial stage of their development, and every day presents new opportunities for growth and discovery. Their day is packed with activities that help them learn and explore the world around them. Whether in the classroom or on the playground, Farmington River Regional Elementary School students are constantly engaged in activities that build their knowledge, skills, and character.

In this article, we will give you a quick glimpse into what a typical day in the life of our students looks like at each grade level here at Farmington River!

PRESCHOOL



Character Week PJ Day: After a school-wide assembly focused on Character Week, the PreK class enjoyed wearing their jammies for the whole school day with Mrs. Hamill and Mrs. Messina!

Our preschool and early kindergarten program offers a developmentally appropriate, integrated early childhood experience in accordance with the guidelines provided by the MA Department of Early Education and Care. Special emphasis is placed on stories, songs, and poems that encourage language development. These skills and the development of gross and fine motor areas are primary tools for building future school success.

Preschoolers Explore Measurement: Mrs. Hamill's preschoolers explored measurement, comparing different things that are longer and shorter.



EARLY KINDERGARTEN



Mathematics is Sweet in Early K: The children enjoyed graphing with "Lucky Charms" cereal! Magically delicious!

Letter of the Week: Early K has been working on hard on a letter of the week. We finished our entire alphabet and put it together to review!

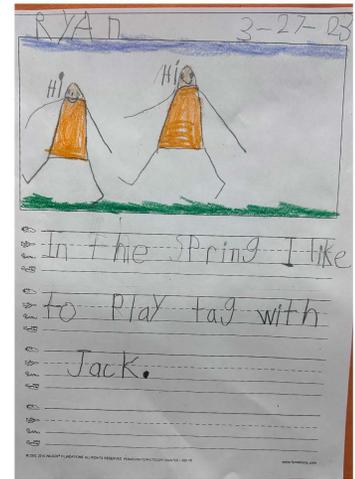
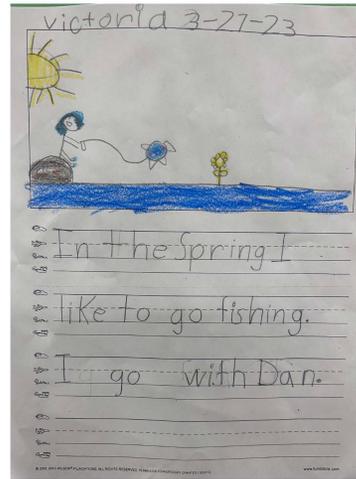


Interested in enrolling your child in our Preschool/EK Program or the 2023-2024 school year?

We are scheduling screenings/registration for students at least 3 years old by October 2023 for our next school year. Give us a call at the school (413-269-4466), and we would be happy to share more information or schedule an appointment at your earliest convenience!

KINDERGARTEN

Spring is in Full Bloom in Kindergarten: Kindergarten is ready for Spring!!! The students wrote about the different things they are looking forward to as the weather gets warmer. The students were given the sentence stem "In the spring I like...."



Reading Buddies: Kindergarten students loved participating in buddy reading during literacy centers. Reading buddies helps to build social skills, encourage communication, and develop confidence. They can also learn to take turns and work together to complete reading activities to reinforce phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension skills, which can help them become better readers over time.

1st GRADE

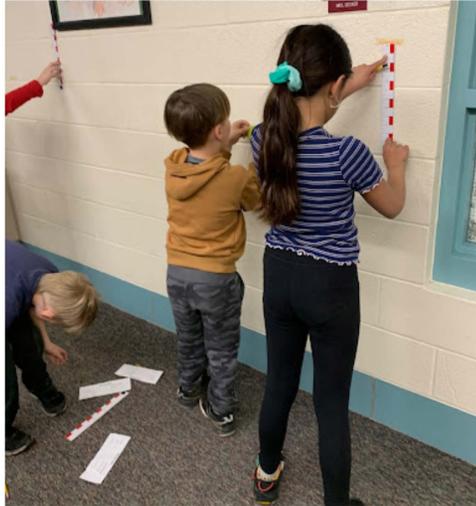
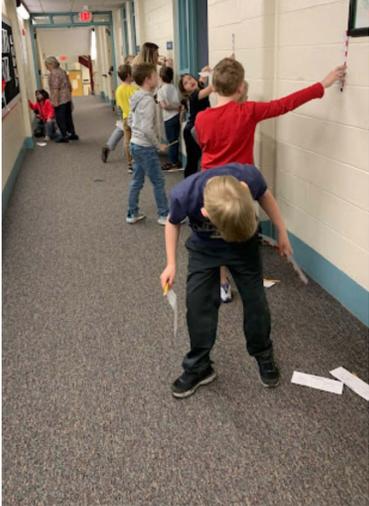
Mathematics in 1st Grade: This week, first-grade students have been learning about place value. After guessing my mystery number, "My number has 3 tens and 5 ones," students used a place value chart drawn on their desks to build the number 2 different ways with place value blocks and write the number.

Place Value Bingo: First-grade students enjoyed having fun while learning about math at the same time! The highlight was the desk pets they earned for winning! Place Value is a skill you can practice with your child at home. Give them a 2-digit number and ask them how many tens the number has and how many ones it has. For example, you can use the day of the month; 23 has 2 tens and 3 ones.



2nd GRADE

Second Grade Measurement: The second graders have been working on telling time and measurement over the past two weeks. On Wednesday, they estimated their own height in inches as well as feet. Then we went to the hallway to get some answers! The students had fun measuring themselves and comparing their height to some of their classmates.



2nd and 5th Grade Reading Meet-Up: The 2nd graders were excited to be invited to the library for some buddy reading time with the 5th-grade class. Students took turns reading to one another and switched partners so everyone was able to read as many books as possible.

3rd GRADE



Elapsed Time Centers: Third grade put their newly learned elapsed time strategies to use in centers measuring time intervals in different ways! Elapsed time is a great skill to practice in real world situations such as having your child figure what time to leave the house to get to baseball practice on time or how long a movie lasted if you know the start time and end time!

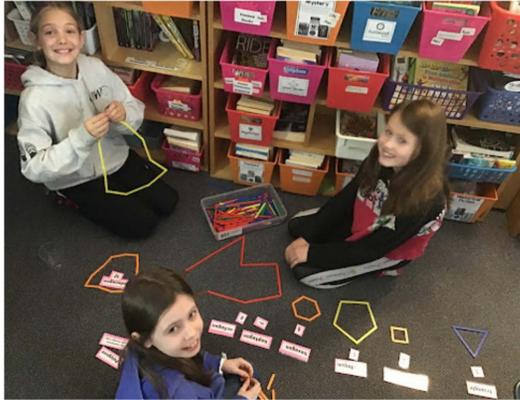


4th GRADE



An Unexpected Visitor for Math: While hard at work, an unexpected visitor stopped by and made himself right at home with fraction tiles! As always, it was a welcome surprise since we all love opportunities to show others our wonderful work and GRIT. As students navigated the strategies for multiplying mixed numbers by whole numbers, Mr. Putnam supported their visual understanding of the concept while modeling and demonstrating fraction equivalence. I would guess that we learned as much from Mr. Putnam as he learned from us!

4th GRADE (cont'd)

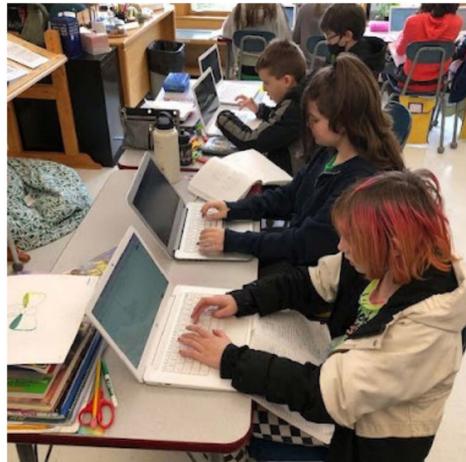


Geometry Challenge: Geometry has a lot of wicked wonderful words to learn and understand. But, have no fear...4th grade mathematicians are here! They have done an amazing job finding ways to demonstrate their understanding of geometry vocabulary and build their learning muscles with a variety of classroom materials!



5th GRADE

Grade 5 Reporters: Grade 5 reporters are busily working on their news stories for the upcoming release of the 5th Grade newspaper, The Farmington Times. Students were assigned "beats" or topics they needed to investigate. All students became actual reporters as they completed interviews and researched their topics. Students also created editorials and fun advertisements!



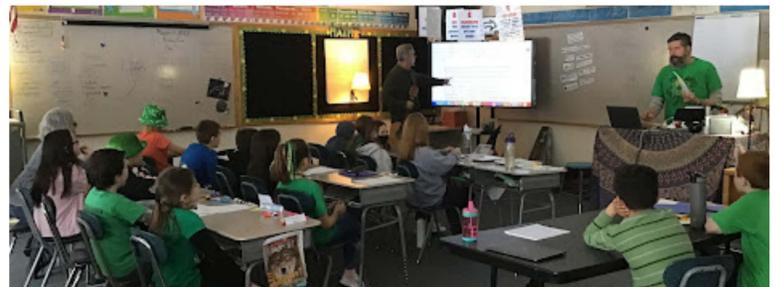
Science Experiments: Future fifth-grade electricians complete a simple circuit as part of the fifth-grade science curriculum on electricity. This week they will be learning the difference between simple, series, and parallel circuits as they create examples of each.

6th GRADE



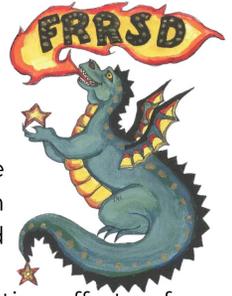
6th Grade Dragon Art for the Yearbook: The 6th grade class has been working on illustrations of dragons (FRRSD's Mascot) for the yearbook. The results are amazing!

Mr. Putnam Teaches St. Patrick's Day Songs! In the 6th-grade classroom, grades 4-6 enjoyed an informative and entertaining performance by Mr. Putnam himself! He taught us about different Irish songs that were sung on ships a long, long time ago. We then sang along to the songs 'Noah's Ark' and 'Irish Eyes', among others. He ended by telling us about his family history, in which his great-grandfather worked on ships that imported guano! We will leave it up to you to figure out what that is if you're unfamiliar with it!



Dragon Eggs!

Our school-wide character-trait incentive program!



Our new school-wide behavior and academic incentive program is an exciting initiative that will motivate and inspire our students to achieve their best. Students can earn "dragon eggs" by exhibiting behaviors that we focus on to improve character and academic achievement. This program is designed to be fun, engaging, and rewarding for all students, creating a positive and dynamic learning environment. The collective efforts of our students and achieving school-wide goals will earn exciting rewards, individual recognition, and special events and activities for the whole school each time the dragon tube is filled. With this program in place, our school community will be buzzing with excitement and energy as students work hard to meet and exceed the expectations set out for them.

Beginning after the March Break, we focused on "Caught Being Kind" and "Great Grit" first. The goal is to fill the "dragon tube" with dragon eggs in order to earn a school-wide reward.



Since its launch, students across all grades have eagerly participated in this program, displaying remarkable kindness towards one another. Catching students being kind as a part of the Dragon Eggs Program has been incredibly successful, with teachers and staff reporting numerous examples of students going out of their way to help others. We are thrilled to see our students actively seeking opportunities to be kind and compassionate toward each other. The program has created a positive and inclusive school environment and encouraged our students to become better citizens, showing kindness and compassion towards everyone they encounter. Seeing our students embodying these values and making a difference in their community is heartwarming.



For many weeks, the FRRSD staff, faculty, and students have been enjoying discussing and demonstrating grit. Our discussions have included how grit (based on the research by Dr. Angela Duckworth) is one way to support our abilities to persevere in times of challenges and choose to stick with things. It connects to the work Miss Terri D has done over the years with our students regarding growth mindset (based on the research by Dr. Carol Dweck) and how it is okay if we don't understand something "yet"...that is what learning is all about! Classrooms are buzzing with differentiated instruction designed to academically challenge all students using a variety of techniques and building students' understanding that we are lifelong learners. It is important that students understand that learning is hard, mistakes are part of the learning process, learning is supposed to be challenging, and that we have a lot of tools, strategies, and skills, we can utilize to grow our learning muscles each day.

THE REWARDS!



As a celebration of our **Grit** Dragon Eggs school-wide incentive, we all enjoyed a [movie and popcorn party](#) on the Friday before April Vacation!

Students in grades Kindergarten through 2nd watched the movie "Luck" in the gym, while students in grades 3rd through 6th watched "Akeelah and the Bee" in the library, featuring themes of determination and perseverance. Students were treated to popcorn made by our very own teachers while watching the movies!

UPCOMING REWARD

Our next incentive for filling up the Dragon Egg tube a second time is an extended recess and popsicle party outside on the backfield!



As a celebration of our **Kindness** and for filling our first half of the tube with Dragon Eggs earned by demonstrating kindness, students earned a [Popsicle Party!](#) Mrs. Flower played a fun playlist over the intercom while students enjoyed popsicles! 4th - 6th graders enjoyed the music and delicious treat together while celebrating in the library!



Girls on the Run

Girls on the Run kicked off their spring season! Led by coaches Mrs. Daley, Mrs. Digrigoli, Mrs. Martin, Mrs. Maxton, and Mrs. Mielke, 10 amazing girls in 3rd-6th grade made a commitment to increase their physical activity while learning about many important life skills. Some of these include; embracing our uniqueness, standing up for ourselves and others, showing our STAR power, and the choices we have to make each and every day. We will culminate our season with a 5k on June 3rd at Western New England College in Springfield, MA.



ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

Girls on the Run is a non-profit organization offering an after-school program to inspire young girls to be joyful, healthy, and confident. The program promotes physical activity, positive self-image, and teamwork through a curriculum combining running, games, and activities that help young girls build social and emotional skills. The program is geared towards girls in third to eighth grade and consists of a 10-12 week program that culminates in a celebratory 5K run.

Girls on the Run aims to instill in girls the importance of maintaining a healthy physical and mental lifestyle. Through the program, girls learn to appreciate the value of exercise and healthy eating habits and develop their self-confidence and ability to work collaboratively with others.



Speech and Language

Say this out loud "I love Farmington River Elementary School".

You have just used all the necessary skills you need to communicate and learn. You had to coordinate your lips, tongue, and muscles of the face, and respiratory system to make the sounds into words. You also read and understood the words and sentences. A school speech and language pathologist is trained in many areas to help students to do all of that! We study psychology, literacy, cognitive, social, auditory, and emotional development. Our goal is to ensure that your child does well in school, interacts as best as he or she can, and communicates well when talking and writing. Our work includes prevention, evaluation, and intervention. We work in the speech room, classroom, gym, or playground. We truly enjoy finding ways to find what is most helpful for children in their play and work.

Lucinda Hastings, *Speech and Language Assistant*

Jana Pfeiffer, *Speech and Language Pathologist*



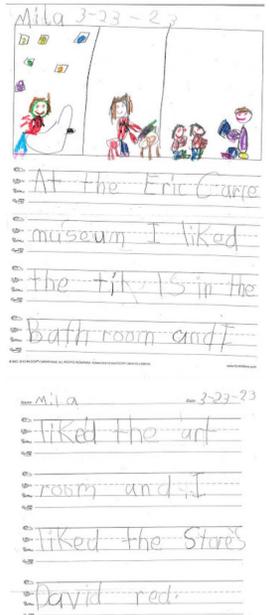
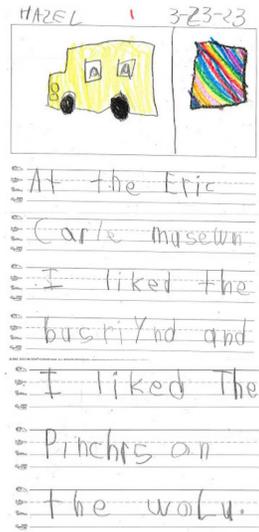
Field Trips Galore!

Field trips can be fun and educational for students to explore the world beyond the classroom. They provide a unique opportunity for children to learn experientially and engage in hands-on activities outside their typical academic setting and can create lasting memories for young learners. Here are a few highlights from our student's most recent field trips!



Kindergarten's Field Trip to The Eric Carle Museum

The Kindergarten class visited the Eric Carle Museum on Wednesday, March 22, after learning about the author, Eric Carle. The kindergarten class was awarded a \$500 grant through the Eric Carle Museum, which covered the student's admission to the museum and the bus ride to the museum. At the museum, children listened to one of Eric Carle's earliest books he wrote with a Japanese author, Kazuo Iwamura, how Eric Carle created his illustrations, and also listened to Rain, a book by author Christian Robinson. In the second half of the tour, the students entered the art studio and created a piece of their artwork using paint, crayons, and water while listening to classical music for inspiration. The students loved everything about the field trip, including the bathroom tiles that featured characters from Eric Carle's books!



Gr. 5th & 6th's Field Trip to Nature's Classroom

Nature's Classroom is an outdoor learning program that provides students with an immersive and

interactive experience in nature, helping them develop a deeper appreciation for the environment. Experienced educators lead Nature's Classroom programs and are trained to facilitate meaningful learning experiences and create a safe and inclusive learning environment for all participants. Through this program, students gain valuable knowledge about ecology, biology, and natural history and develop essential life skills like teamwork, problem-solving, and critical thinking. Offered every other year, students in 5th and 6th Grades can participate in activities like hiking and wildlife observation and develop a deeper understanding of ecology and the environment, and is often one of students' highlights at FRRES!



PE Highlight

Here's an action-packed glimpse into the fun activities our students enjoy with Mrs. Daley in P.E.!

1st graders enjoyed sitting inside their "parachute igloo!"



Students in 2nd grade had an opportunity this week to try out a new piece of equipment - the "Spoooner Board"!



Students in 3rd-6th grade finished up their basketball unit with a fun game of basketball golf!



Students in all grade levels enjoyed some beautiful weather and the snow. Snowshoeing was a fun and new (for most) experience!!





FRES PTA President Receives Massachusetts PTA Advocate of the Year Award

The FRRSD is a small district in the southwestern corner of the state, but, as you can see every week in the school newsletter, great things are common.

The FRES PTA President, Cecily Goulange, was awarded the Massachusetts PTA Advocate of the Year award. The Outstanding Advocate of the Year is awarded annually to one individual who most exemplifies the qualities of a great child advocate leader, a true advocate for all children, and a model of public service and volunteerism who has positively affected legislative and/or regulatory policy. The individual must be dedicated to moving the mission and goals of the PTA forward and be a PTA member in good standing at the time of nomination. The staff and students of the FRES are thankful for all the things the PTA does. The community should be proud.

Donation of Spanish Books from Scholastic



Thanks to another generous donation of Scholastic Books, our collection of Spanish books is growing. While these books have mainly been utilized during Spanish Club, they are available to all classrooms and students.

Mass Audubon Visits 3rd Grade!

Third graders have loved their visits from Mass Audubon! We have been lucky to have Shannon visit us on Fridays to learn more about our local wildlife and environment. So far, we have learned about insect life cycles and got to see different insect stages close up. We also got to learn about streams and had a visit from a snapping turtle!



Mass Audubon's visiting program is a valuable resource for elementary schools looking to enhance their science curriculum. Through this program, trained naturalists from Mass Audubon visit schools to provide engaging and interactive presentations on a variety of topics related to the natural world. These presentations can be tailored to the needs and interests of each classroom and may include hands-on activities, live animal demonstrations, and multimedia resources. By bringing the expertise of Mass Audubon educators directly into the classroom, students are able to connect with nature in a meaningful way and gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for the world around them. The Mass Audubon visiting program is a great way to inspire young minds and foster a lifelong love of learning about the natural world.



After School Care Program



Our school-provided after-school care program provides a range of activities and support to help children complete homework, socialize with peers with their peers in different grade levels, and engage in recreational activities.

Amy Maxton and Sue Olds start the After School with academic activities and support during the first hour. Activities include Silent Reading, Extra-Credit Math, Playing Uno, and Working on School projects. In the last hour of the program, each day transitions into open recreation time for students - either in the gym or on the playgrounds in the warmer months!



With the program, parents can feel confident that their children are being cared for in a safe and structured environment. We are all thankful to Jerilynn Beauregard and Karen Yvon for donating books and games!

In addition to the After School Care Program, FRRES offers a number of wonderful after-school Clubs, including but not limited to Girls On the Run, Intramurals, Band/Chorus, Video/Photography Club, Spanish Club and many more!

We're keeping busy at FRRES!

UPCOMING DATES:

- 5/1 - 5/5: Screen Free Week
- 5/3: Literacy Night
- 5/5: Gr.1 & 2 Field Trip to Hancock Shaker Village
- 5/10: Gr. 3 Field Trip to Berkshire Museum
- 5/15-5/18: MCAS: Math
- 5/19: PreK Field Trip to The Zoo at Forest Park
- 5/19: Spring Musical @ 6:30 PM
- 5/20: Spring Musical @ 4:30 PM
- 5/22 - 5/23: MCAS: Science
- 5/24: Kindergarten Field Trip to Westfield's Children Mus.
- 6/2: Kindergarten Field Trip to Lupa Zoo