McGinn is Thinking Purple to kick off the month of April. Students will have many ways to celebrate how they are unique, including a daily selection of fun activities brought to us by the PTA.

We welcome back McGinn PTA’s Fearless Dragons Writers’ Club 4/1. Our third marking period comes to a close on 4/2 when we start our Spring recess. School reopens 4/13.

Our fourth graders visit Terrill for Orientation on 4/14. That evening, at 7:00 PM, parents visit for their Orientation at Terrill. On 4/15, McGinn hosts the next Fun Family Fitness Night for grades K-2. Fit Club continues on 6/16. School Spirit Day is 4/17, and students bring home their third marking period report cards.

Second grade students will take the New Jersey Proficiency Assessment of State Standards (NJPASS) 4/20 through 4/22 and 4/24. This district administered test consists of two days of Language Arts and two days of Math. Take Your Child to Work Day falls in between the Math tests on 4/23. Please let your child’s teacher know by 4/17 whether your child will be absent from school on this day.

There will be a School Safety Committee Meeting on 4/21 at 2:30 PM. Please come out for the district art show on 4/23 at 7:00 PM. This event at the high school is always full of surprising talent and interesting displays.

Fourth graders brought the crowd to tears with their touching rendition of R. Kelly’s, “I’m the Greatest” for the closing act of this year’s Variety Show. Fourth grader, Dylan Fei accompanied on piano.

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The next Garden Meeting will be 4/23 at 3:30 in the Conference Room. We have ordered some great supplies and have kicked off planting. Please join us to start the rest of the Spring planting festivities!

Third grade will host its annual Westward Ho! experience on 4/24. Families, staff and students will walk on the Oregon trail and experience life as early American settlers to culminate their Native American unit in Social Studies and Language Arts.

Second graders will take a field trip to the community Theater performance of “Junie B. Jones” on 4/28. On 4/29, the District Music Festival takes place at the high school. Come enjoy music from our talented high school groups.

McGinn’s Student Council meets on 4/30 at 12:20 PM. Please see the article in this Memo for more information about the Council’s work. Students are encouraged to help committees of the Council achieve school initiatives. The second BOE Meeting is 4/30 at 8:00 PM.

March flew by, but with many fond memories made! Family visitors read with us for Read Across America Week. Third and Fourth grades took the first computer-based state assessment, PARCC, with success. Thank you, parents, for helping us with drop-off! Spanish Club celebrated a fiesta with parents at the end of last month replete with Spanish-inspired cuisine.

Parents and children attended one of the three district art nights where teachers led artist-inspired projects for parents and students to complete together. These families show how much fun it was!

Third grade explored one Native American culture through the Lenape Lifeways in-school experience.

Our students were the big performers for March and wowed us with their musical numbers at the “Lights, Camera, Action!” Variety Show. We ended the musical month with a visit from Terrill Middle School Jazz Band.

Drop Off Safety Reminder - There is no “drop off” at the top of Roosevelt Ave or in the parking lots. If you choose to park and walk, please do so from Trenton Ave or another side street. Thank You.

Basketball in PE classes to match March Madness!!!
Read Across America Day
Fourth Grade Band Meets Terrill Jazz Band

The first full 4th grade band practice was the best sounding first day ever!

Two sets of Terrill and McGinn siblings!

McGinn Garden
Seeds are planted in all kindergartens and first grades. We will finish planting in all grades as soon as we return from Spring break.

If you would like to help classes plant or contribute your time in another way to the garden, please feel free to email sslocum@spfk12.org. We have received new supplies for spectacular improvements this year, including drip-irrigation, pH testing kits and moveable planters.

Guest Readers in our classrooms play an important part in promoting a love of reading. Thank you for the time you take to read with our students!
Señora Sanchez hosted a fun-filled afternoon for her Spanish Club. Students brought food inspired by Spanish-speaking countries’ cuisine. Family members came and played a friendly game of Jeopardy against their fourth graders. Much to their chagrin, the fourth graders had been learning about the information during each Spanish Club session!

FAMILY JEOPARDY AT CLUB DE ESPAÑOL FIESTA!

The Lenape Lifeways inschool field trip exposed students to crafts and culture of the early New Jerseyans.

Above: Students partner read outside of their classroom in the lending library.
Below: First graders read one another’s stories in a gallery walk and leave a post-it for each piece with a positive comment about each author’s work.
2nd Below: 2nd Graders Skype with 8th graders through Google Hangout.
Maya Handler, Jacob Jones, Bridget Hernandez and Benjamin Pritzker have made a significant contribution to William J. McGinn Elementary School in their development of our school’s first Student Council. As a result, they have been nominated to represent McGinn in a New Jersey State Board of Education Recognition Program. Their names and a description of their achievement will be sent to Union County to be considered for this award. Whether or not they are selected, their achievements are important to celebrate.

Maya and Jacob independently wrote persuasive letters last Spring to the Principal requesting the start of a student council for the new school year. Their request was approved with the understanding they would work together. In the Fall of 2014, Maya and Jacob elicited the help of several fourth graders to determine how many positions would be included, how elections would take place, and for what the student council, once elected, would be responsible. With persistence and enthusiasm, Maya, Jacob and many other fourth graders scheduled meetings with the principal for answers and spread the information.

In November, the school was covered with campaign posters for the established positions, the most innovative of which were boy and girl co-presidents. Despite push back from the principal, all students who were now involved insisted that boys and girls be equally represented in the top position. The result has been impressive. Our first co-presidents, Bridget Hernandez and Benjamin Pritzker, have sat next to each other in every meeting and run our Student Council collegially, compassionately and equally. Other positions established by the group of students are Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer (all fourth grade positions and members of the cabinet) and two representatives*, one boy and one girl, at each grade level, including fourth grade and AM and PM kindergarten. Meeting times are rotated monthly before school and after lunch to ensure full participation of the Council.

The Student Council has accomplished several positive enhancements already for McGinn. Brightly-colored Student Suggestion Boxes are now located in the hallways for students to submit ideas for Council to consider. The first “Sit with a Friend Friday” will take place at lunch for first through fourth graders and at snack time for AM and PM kindergartens on May 22nd. The Council is also working with students who want to lead athletic and art clubs at recess to coordinate efforts. Meetings for the next three months are April 30th at 12:20PM, May 14th at 8:20AM and June 11th at 12:20 PM.

* There was a tie in the third grade elections for male representative. After a recount by two adults, the tie was confirmed, and there are three representatives for third grade this year.

McGinn’s Student Council meets monthly in the conference room near the main office. The co-presidents run the meeting. First, they review old business from previous meetings and update the Council on progress towards those ideas. Next, representatives share any new business from their grade level constituents. Then, suggestions from the Suggestion Boxes are considered. The Council votes on whether to discuss, table or not discuss topics brought before them. Finally, the Council discusses selected topics. Representatives report out to their grade levels in different ways.
Kindergarteners explored their life-sized number line by creating it in their classroom. Students have used it in the hallway as a math center across the three classrooms.

First Grade
Head phones help these first graders focus on their independent word study center while other students meet with their teacher or work in another area. The head phones block sound and help students remember the importance of their tasks.

Second Grade
Second graders learn concepts of volume from real-world items, such as cartons of milk. Here, they fill some with water to learn the relationship of each quantity, building fraction skills too.

Third Grade
As part of their learning about Native Americans, third graders have kept track of their background knowledge and what they have learned along the way through research. Students have added self-assessing “post-its” to their class charts to build class knowledge on their unit topic.

Fourth Grade
Fourth graders (right) worked on literacy circles where they led discussions on Roald Dahl books and typed up discussion information to share.

April Celebrates
Poetry Month
Earth Day
Take Your Child to Work Day
Arbor Day

REMINDERS: IMPORTANT DATES
4/2 - End of 3rd Marking Period
4/3 - 4/10 - SPRING BREAK - Schools Closed
4/14 - McGinn Grade 4 Visit to Terrill Middle School; 4th Grade Parent Orientation at Terrill Middle School - 7:00 PM
4/18 - McGinn Family Fitness Night - Grades K-2 6:30 - 8 PM
4/17 - McGinn School Spirit Day & Pretzel Sale
4/20 - 22 & 24 - NJ PASS - 2nd Grade
4/21 - School Safety Committee Meeting - 2:30 PM
4/22 - District Art Show 7 - 9 PM
4/23 - Take Your Child To Work Day; Garden Meeting - 3:30 PM
4/30 - Student Council Meeting - 12:20 PM

Looking ahead...
5/4 - 5/8 - Staff Appreciation Week
5/8 - McGinn Plant Sale

Check out our website and the PTA E-mail blast for the most current McGinn information!!!

1. Please drive ALL THE WAY to the next car in line up to the end of the drop-off path. DO NOT STOP part of the way up. This causes delays.
2. There is NO PARKING in the two lots in the morning. These are staff assigned spaces.
Thank you, McGinn Community!!!

On behalf of the PTA and McGinn School, we thank you for your many contributions to our programs and events. The following people have recently shared their talents, time and caring for our students in many ways. If you do not see someone posted here you know contributed time and care, please email sslocum@spfk12.org. Your time and efforts are greatly appreciated!

Sharing Lunches Collections
Thank you
• • •
Kirsten Pickel
Erin McElroy-Barker
Nancy Wall

Drop Off Line Support
Thank you for helping through PARCC Testing! Thank you also for helping on early morning band days!
• • •
Tina Schmidt, Patricia McNulty, John McNulty, Josette Sohmer, Kirsten Pickel, Sharon Van Ostenbridge, Nancy Wall, Jennifer Campion, Lori Minall, Shelly Hughes, Suzi Schirm, Jennifer Power, Nuha Alsouqi

Think Purple Week
Thank you
• • •
Sharon Van Ostenbridge
Damaris Gutierrez

Outdoor Sign Boards
Thank you
• • •
Lori Minall

Apparel Sale
Thank you
• • •
Noreen Fitzgerald

McGinn Fit Club
Thank you
• • •
Kathy Fritz & YMCA

Hershey Park Tickets
Thank you
• • •
Lori Minall
Christa Teevan

Lord & Taylor Fundraiser
Thank you
• • •
Regina Gannon

Variety Show Chairpersons, Directors & Volunteers
Thank you
• • •

Spring Flowers for Staff
Thank you for the lovely surprise!
• • •
Nancy Wall

These third graders run their word study center game independently.