



Neelsville News



The Neelsville MS PTSA Newsletter

February 2011

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UPCOMING EVENTS –

- **February 21st (Monday)**
 - >Holiday – President's Day
- **February 23rd (Wednesday)**
 - >Boys Basketball vs. Redland (3:00 pm – 4:00 pm)
- **February 25th (Friday)**
 - >Interims Due
- **February 28th (Monday)**
 - >Spirit Week (Thinking Cap Day)
- **March 1st (Tuesday)**
 - >Spirit Week (Reading in Red Day)
- **March 2nd (Wednesday)**
 - >Spirit Week (Power in Numbers Day)
- **March 3rd (Thursday)**
 - >Spirit Week (College Apparel Day)
 - >Dominos Pizza Night
- **March 4th (Friday)**
 - >Spirit Week (Neelsville Rocks Day)
 - > Early Release Day
- **March 7th (Monday)**
 - >MSA TESTING BEGINS
- **March 8th (Tuesday)**
 - >PTSA meeting (7:00 pm – 8:00 pm) Media Center
- **March 16th (Wednesday)**
 - >MSA Testing Ends
- **March 17th (Thursday)**
 - >Chik-fil-A Night
- **March 30th (Wednesday)**
 - >End of 3rd Marking Period (Quarter)
- **March 31st (Thursday)**
 - >No School for Students
- **April 1st (Friday)**
 - >4th Marking Period Begins



From the Principal's Desk

What the Maryland State Assessments Should Mean to You as a Parent

What is the purpose of the Maryland State Assessments (MSA)?

The MSA is an assessment tool used to determine a child's mastery of math, reading, and science content standards that have been established by the Maryland State Department of Education. Students are assessed in reading and math in grades 3-8 each year. Students are assessed in science in grades 5 and 8. MSA is a requirement of the federal government's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policy which requires each state to have an assessment program for grades 3-8.

How are students assessed with the MSA?

The MSA is composed of both selected responses (multiple choice) and brief constructed response items. All students are assessed on their current grade level. Additionally, ESOL students and Special Education students are also assessed at their current grade level with the same assessment that is given to non ESOL students and regular education students.

When are students assessed and when do you receive your child's results?

Students are assessed in the spring of each year. Normally assessments take place in the month of March. Schools will receive their overall results and individual student results during the summer months. Parents will receive their child's results late in the summer or towards the beginning of the fall. Results are reported out that a child is either at a basic (i.e. failing) level, proficient level, or advanced level of understanding the content standards.

How are results used?

Results from the MSA provide both the school and the parents with an understanding of how well a student has mastered the state academic concepts.

(...continued on page 2)

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Schools use the results to determine the area(s) where they need to focus on instructional practices as well as professional development for staff. Schools may also use a child's scores in the articulation process when a child moves from elementary to middle school and from middle school to high school. Students who score at the basic level may need to take remedial math and reading classes in addition to the on-grade level classes to shore up their deficiencies. This may mean that a child who scored basic in reading in fifth grade may be taking two reading classes in 6th grade rather than one reading class and one elective class. A child who continues to score basic in middle school may continue to take additional reading classes in addition to the English classes rather than taking English and an elective. A basic score may mean that the child needs more foundational work in addition to the on grade level work. Students who score at the basic level are encouraged to attend the extended day program at the middle school level. Students moving from middle school to high school who have scored basic may be enrolled in additional reading classes to address deficiencies. This will mean that the child will have fewer elective options to take.

Scores from the MSA also are used to determine if a school is making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). AYP is tied to the NCLB policy and a school must have a certain percentage of students scoring at proficient or higher on the math and reading assessments. A school must have all subgroups (i.e., all racial groups, special education, FARMS (Free and Reduced Meals), and Limited English Learners) meet the proficiency standards in both reading and math to meet the AYP standard. Even if a subgroup misses the standard by one child, the school does not meet AYP standard. Additionally, the state has specific attendance requirements; therefore, attendance rates at a school could affect a school making AYP.

What happens when a school does not make AYP?

The first year a school does not make AYP, the school is on "alert" status. The second year a school does not make AYP, the school is in "Year 1 of School Improvement". The third year a school does not make AYP, the school is in "Year 2 of School Improvement". The fourth year a school does not make AYP, the school goes into "Corrective Action". The fifth year a school does not make AYP, the school goes into "Restructuring". During the restructuring phase a school writes a totally new school improvement plan. Additionally, the system looks to replace 51% of the staff within the school including the administrator. The sixth year a school does not make AYP, the school implements its restructuring plan.

For Title 1 schools, there is a slight variation to the above mentioned information. The second year a Title 1 school does not make AYP, the school must offer School Choice. The third year a Title 1 school does not make AYP, the school must offer School Choice and Supplemental Educational Services (Tutoring). School Choice and Tutoring siphoned money away from the Title 1 budget which means the Title 1 schools have smaller budgets to spend on hiring staff and putting money towards parent involvement activities and professional development for staff.

MSA TESTING

As we approach MSA testing, remember that as a parent you can assist your child in doing his or her best on these assessments by following these top 10 tips:

Tip #10: Attendance

Students must arrive at school on time each day during testing. Since classroom instruction begins at 7:55 a.m., students should arrive between 7:40 and 7:50 a.m. Students should be at school all day as long as **they are healthy**. Doctor and dentist appointments and all other non-urgent matters should be scheduled outside of this testing time frame. According to MSDE Attendance Policy, your child will receive a score of zero—lowest possible score—for absences. This score of zero is considered in our school score as well as in each individual student score.

Tip #9: Diet

Make sure your child eats a healthy breakfast each morning.

Tip #8: Avoid Test Anxiety

You can be a great help to your children if you observe these DO's and DON'Ts about testing:

1. Don't be too anxious about a child's test scores. If you put too much emphasis on test scores, this can upset a child.
2. Do encourage your children. Praise them for the things they do well. If they feel good about themselves, they will do their best. Children who are afraid of failing are more likely to become anxious when taking tests and more likely to make mistakes.
3. Don't cram the night before the test. Cramming increases anxiety which interferes with clear thinking. Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep. Rest, exercise, eating well is important.

Tip #7: How Can I Help My Child?

Helpful websites include: <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/TestTaking/index.html> and www.mdk12.org. Provide books and magazines for your child to read at home. By reading new materials, a child will learn new words that might appear on a test.

Practice tests are available on - http://www.mdk12.org/assessments/k_8/index_c.html

Tip #6: Following Instructions

Encourage your child to listen to ALL INSTRUCTIONS and follow test directions carefully. Remind your child that it is OK **before** the test begins to ask questions if the instructions do not seem clear.

Tip #5: Test Items

Help familiarize your child with test item types. MSA will include two test item types:

1. Selected Response SR (Multiple Choice): For each selected response item there will be four possible responses (answers). Students will be asked to select one. If students are uncertain of an answer, we encourage them to guess.
2. Brief Constructed Response BCR (3-5 sentence essay): An appropriate response will be complete and will fully address the question. Students can earn points by attempting to answer the question, so we encourage all students to show some effort in answering each question—even when they are not certain of the complete answer.

Tip #4: The Night Before the Test . . .

- Make sure your child gets to bed on time.
- Plan ahead to avoid conflicts on the morning of the test.

Tip #3: The Morning of Test Day

- Get up early to avoid rushing.
- Have your child eat a healthy breakfast.
- Have your child dress comfortably.

Tip #2: During the Test . . .

- Read all directions carefully and critically.
- Read items carefully. Think about what the answer should be. Read all answers. Choose the one that makes sense.
- Budget your time. Go through the test at least twice; a first pass as what you know easily, a second pass to work through the tough questions.

Tip #1: After the Test - Relax

"STRAIGHT A" - Honor Roll (2nd Quarter)

Grade 6

**Bethel Afful
John Burley III
Tuan Gbehan
James Malone III
Wilson Walter**

**Mackenzie Allen
Rebecca Duran
Paige Glenzer
Luxmi Padigalingam**

**Jessica Bleich
Renee Gasbarre
Sindhu Iyer
Jeanifer Udugampola**

Grade 7

**Kowshik Manogaran
Aavash Thapa**

Jennifer Milhiser

Dekonti Sayeh

Grade 8

**Yasmine Bencheqroun
Seran Navaratnam
Angelique Ryan**

**Akash Bhargava
Seyon Padigalingam
Fredrick Schellhase**

**Gabrielle Mathis
Janeily Perez**

Congratulations and keep up the good work!

-- Dollye V. McClain



Did you know...

... You can stop Bullying

Bullies come in all shapes, sizes, genders, and ages. Most students comply with bullying out of fear; fear of negative ramifications, or fear of being ostracized by their friends. Talk with your child about Bullying. Make sure that your child knows that they can talk with you at home and that they can speak with their counselor, assistant principal, or teacher about incidents at school. As a community of learners, we all have a responsibility to stop Bullying. Reporting incidents of bullying is not "tattling" it is being responsible. Students who are bullied are able to fill out a report on the incident. Students, who bully, will have their name placed on the Bullying Register for Maryland. If you have any questions or would like to talk with your child's counselor about this topic, please give us a call: 301.353.8071.

... Registration for Spring and Summer Youth Program at Montgomery College has begun

Summer classes at Montgomery College help your child explore many new interests and hobbies as well as provide instruction in Math, Science and English. **These classes fill up fast, so register now.** <http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/wdce/youth.html>

... Registration for MCRD Junior Counselor program is underway

The Junior Counselor Program (previously known as the CIT program) is the ultimate volunteer experience. Teens train to become recreation leaders by providing assistance in the Montgomery County Department of Recreation summer programs. Teens get valuable leadership opportunities as well as earn SSL hours. **This is a highly coveted program, and volunteer spots fill up fast.** Enroll via Montgomery County RECWEB .
<https://recweb.montgomerycountymd.gov/Activities/ActivitiesAdvSearch.asp>

... Valentine's Day Carnation Sale was a great success

We had a very successful carnation sale which netted the PTSA \$443.00! A very special thank you to **Vicky Nathan** for going out of her way to go to the florist **twice** on Monday so the students had enough flowers. Thanks to **Jeannie Meece**, **Art Butler** and **Marisol Jimenez** for their help and support.

-- Mary Jane Siok



CLASS ROOM NOTES

6th Grade

Outdoor Education

Outdoor Education is quickly approaching! Ms. Lieberman's science classes will be going April 11-13 and Mr. Hyson's science classes will be going April 13-15. Students received permission slips and important paperwork last week. Please be sure to send in the permission form as soon as possible. If you have any questions please contact Mr. Thornett at Christopher_D_Thornett@mcpsmd.org or 301-353-8064.

Social Studies 6

In social studies classes students have begun their unit on Economics. Students are busy learning important vocabulary and principles about economics. Students will soon begin their unit of Study on China. Students will start with the geography of China and then learn about the history or Ancient China. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher with any questions.

Science 6

Did you know that the average shower head uses 4 gallons of water every minute? During the Going Green unit, students are learning about natural resources and conservation. Not only are the students researching various resources that we use on a daily basis but they will also learn the simple things they can do to conserve the Earth's gifts. Here are a couple things you can do to make a difference in your home:

1. Don't keep the water running while you're brushing your teeth.
2. Take shorter showers. Make it a game. Keep an egg timer in the bathroom and see who can get their showers down to three minutes. (And still get clean!)
3. Help your mom or dad fix the dripping faucet. Did you know that it can waste 20 gallons of water a day?
4. Turn the lights off when no one is in the room.
5. Recycle paper, cans, and bottles!

English 6

With the third quarter well under way, Sixth Grade English launched the unit of Challenges and Barriers. Students are exploring the complex nature of challenges and how an individual's experience and relationships influence how he or she faces obstacles. Regular English classes are reading *Among the Hidden* by Margaret Peterson Haddix, while the GT classes are enjoying the adventures of Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH by Robert C. O'Brien. The topic of persuasion will begin this week and we will explore how persuasive techniques influence the reader and the audience. We will also be studying and creating our own impromptu speeches as we study the techniques of

great orators like Martin Luther King Jr. and President Roosevelt. February is Black History Month and we are remembering the events in the history of the African diaspora. We have also commemorated the Challenger Space Shuttle tragedy.

French 6

The French 1A students conducted interviews with their classmates. The students have been sharing information with each other about their classes, periods, and start times.

The French 1B students also conducted interviews with their classmates. They, too, have been presenting information to their classmates about their meal preferences, and taking notes on capture sheets to then synthesize in writing the information they gathered.

Like the French 1A and French 1B students, French 2A students also just finished some activities from interviews they conducted with each other about their favorite activities in each season and when the weather is nice or bad. They will now start working on French 2B curriculum and are looking forward to new and exciting adventures in learning.

7th Grade

Science 7

Seventh grade science students are continuing their study of nutrition and the human body. We have completed our first dissection – chicken wings – which we hope the students share with you over the dinner table sometime! We will be completing our next two dissections within the next month, which will be sheep eyeballs and frogs. Students will also be completing the project for this unit which is to create a nutritionally balanced menu.

World Studies 7

Students in 7th grade world studies are learning about how geography affects the ways cultures develop. We are looking at Latin American geography – from Mexico to the tip of South American and the Caribbean. The students will be working on a research project soon. They will receive written directions. Ask them to explain it to you.

Parents, please check that your students have the necessary supplies to do their work – pencils, paper, pens wear out and must be replaced.

Homework Club for 7th graders is on Wednesday after school.

8th Grade

U.S. History 8/ Advanced U.S. History 8

During the third marking period, students will be studying Andrew Jackson and his new style of democracy. In addition, students will learn about the plight of the Native Americans. Finally, we will be focusing on the geographical growth of the United States through Manifest Destiny.

Please encourage your child to come to class with his/her books and materials. In order to be successful, students must be prepared.

Math 8

All students are preparing for the upcoming MSA. Teachers went over the last practice MSA with the students in their math classes.

Honors Geometry students are working on indirect measurement methods.

Algebra students are studying probability and Data Analysis.

Math C students are solving equations using math properties.

Science 8

Welcome to Earth Science! Students are now investigating our home planet. The structure of the Earth is the topic for the month of February with Earthquakes and Volcanism not far behind. How do we know what the inside of the Earth is like if we've never been there? What causes Earth's magnetic field? How are earthquake epicenters located? These and many other fascinating questions will be answered as we begin to explore the Structure of the Earth!

English 8

Students in 8th grade English have been engaged in a research report based on a controversial issue approved by the teacher. Students learned to cite sources correctly and studied the techniques of propaganda. We are finishing up reading our unit novel and preparing for the end-of-semester exams. English students identified an individual who has impacted the community and wrote a 5 paragraph essay on the topic.

Students should be reading a book every night. Some students may need that extra push from parents to read for 30 minutes on a daily basis. Please note that students are required to take weekly Accelerated Reader tests which are a part of their English grade. As students think about next year, they should consider reading some of the books at the high school level.

Here are some books that have been on the Black-eyed Susan list.

Alcott, Louisa May. *Little Women*. [Bagnold, Enid. *National Velvet*](#).

Bradbury, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. [Bunyan, John. *The Pilgrim's Progress*](#).

Christopher, John. *The White Mountains*. Cleaver, Vera. *Where the Lilies Bloom*. Cooper, James Fenimore. *The Last of the Mohicans*. Defoe, Daniel. *Robinson Crusoe*. Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan. *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. Dumas, Alexander. *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Eckert, Allan W. *Incident At Hawk's Hill*. Forbes, Esther. *Johnny Tremain*. Frost, Robert. *Poems*. Hilton, James. *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*. Hunt, Irene. *Across Five Aprils*. Hunter, Mollie. *A Stranger Came Ashore*. Irving, Washington. *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. Keith, Harold. *Rifles for Watie*. Kipling, Rudyard. *Kim*. LeGuin, Ursula K. *A Wizard of Earthsea*. Lester, Julius. *To Be a Slave*. Malory, Sir Thomas. *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Mazer, Harry. *The Last Mission*. Peck, Richard. *The Ghost Belonged To Me*. Pyle, Howard. *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*. Rawlings, Marjorie Kinnan. *The Yearling*. Reiss, Johanna. *The Upstairs Room*. Schaefer, Jack. *Shane*. Scott, Sir Walter. *Ivanhoe*. Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. Smith, Betty. *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*. Sperry, Armstrong. *Call It Courage*. Steinbeck, John. *The Red Pony*. Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Treasure Island*. Taylor, Mildred D. *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. Twain, Mark. *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Uchida, Yoshiko. *Journey to Topaz*. Verne, Jules. *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. Webster, Jean. *Daddy Long Legs*. Wells, H.G. *War of the Worlds*.

We encourage students to study literary terms. We encourage students to be mindful of the 6 traits of writing when submitting written work. We invite students who need extra help to make an appointment to come in during lunch or after school.

Registration Info

8th Grade Students have met with the counselors from Clarksburg and Watkins Mill High School. If you did not receive the registration paperwork, please contact your child's high school, or speak with the 8th grade Counselor, Mr. Alessi.

7th & 6th Grade Students have received the registration information; they are supposed to be turned into their Social Studies – or World Studies teachers by February 11th. If you have not seen this information, please contact your child's counselor: Ms. Merrill Oben – rising 8th grade and Ms. Slotkowski – rising 7th grade.



Student Service Learning (SSL) Notes

Give a Little Time...Make a Big Difference

February 2011

Students MEET REAL NEED and ACHIEVE CURRICULAR OBJECTIVES.

- Participate in school-sponsored clubs and organizations that promote service.
- Consider service activities in celebration of President's Day, February 15, 2010.
- Get involved in service-learning activities on the afternoons of "Early Release" days. (Like Friday, February 26, 2010--- coming up!)
- Remember: SSL is a state graduation requirement just like any other...It must be completed in order for students to graduate from Montgomery County Schools.
- Find meaningful, high quality service-learning opportunities by searching www.mcpsssl.org.



CONTESTS AND COMPETITIONS

2011 Siemens Competition (For students currently in 8th Grade)

The Siemens Competition in Math, Science & Technology recognizes remarkable talent early on, fostering individual growth for high school students who are willing to challenge themselves through science research. Through this competition, students have an opportunity to achieve national recognition for science research projects that they complete in high school. Registration and updated instructions for the 2011 Siemens Competition will be available by April 29, 2011. Don't wait until then to begin your research. Start early! Come back on April 29th to register. Project deadline is Monday, October 3, 2011 at 5pm Eastern Time.

Registration Opens - April 29, 2011

Project Deadline - Monday, October 3, 2011 at 5:00 pm (Eastern)

Website - <http://www.collegeboard.com/siemens/>

Doodle 4 GOOGLE Contest 2011

Doodle 4 Google, is a competition where K-12 students design the Google logo alongside a theme. This year's theme is — **what I'd like to do Someday...** and the winning doodler will have his or her artwork viewed by millions on the Google homepage, win a \$15,000 college scholarship, earn computers for his or her school, and other prizes. Students who want to participate must get a teacher or parent to register them in the contest. The winning doodle will be featured on the Google.com homepage on **May 20, 2011**.

Register by - 11:59:59 p.m. Pacific Time (PT) on March 2, 2011

Submission Deadline - March 16, 2011 11:59:59 p.m. Pacific Time (PT).

Website - <http://www.google.com/doodle4google/index.html>

Montgomery County Recycling Poster Contest 2011

The Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), The Montgomery County Division of Solid Waste Services (DSWS), and Waste Management (WM) of Gaithersburg, MD sponsors this contest for MCPS students. The theme of the Montgomery County Recycling Poster Contest is: — **Watt's Up? With Recycling?** Schools can hand deliver entries to the *SERT Office, 2096 Gaither Road, Suite #200, Rockville, MD 20850. attn: -Barbara Ruppel*. Pony mail cannot guarantee the condition of the posters; therefore, hand delivery is recommended.

Entry deadline - March 15, 2011, 3:30 p.m (EST).

Website - <http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/facilities/greenschoolsfocus/pdf/wuwrecycling.pdf>



Domino's Family Night

Where - 13050 Middlebrook Rd.
Germantown Md. 20874
301-540-3388
&
Flower Hill Way
Gaithersburg Md. 20879
301-869-3000

When - Thursday, March 3rd, 2011

From - 4:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Take a night off of cooking and order pizza at Domino's! Help the Neelsville PTA raise money with every order purchased. Remember when placing an order to give the driver or cashier your order slip so that the school can get credit. Thank you for your support.

(CUT THIS FORM AND GIVE TO THE DRIVER AND CASHIER WHEN PLACING YOUR ORDER)

DOMINO'S PTA PIZZA FORM

SCHOOL: Neelsville Middle School TEACHER: _____

DATE: Thursday, March 3rd, 2011 FAMILY'S NAME: _____

TOTAL OF SALE \$: _____

Neelsville Family Night at Chick-fil-A



Please join us for the Neelsville Family Night at Chick-fil-A.

Where - Chick-fil-A

19945 Century Blvd
Germantown, MD 20874
(240) 686-1110

When - Thursday, March 17th, 2011

From - 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Come out and have dinner. Parents this is a great way to meet other Neelsville parents and could build a support system to help your child. Students you could help support your school by joining us from 4pm to 8pm. **Please mention that you are a Neelsville family when placing your order so the school can get credit.** *20% of the sales (eat in/ carryout) from 4:00 pm until 8:00 pm will be donated to the Neelsville PTSA.*

No DRIVE THRU will be accepted for the fundraiser.

PARENTS – GET CONNECTED, STAY INFORMED!!

- **Edline** – Student’s grades and assignments. www.edline.net
- **NMS Website** – Morning announcements at NMS. <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/neelsvillems/>
- **Quicknotes** – MCPS email news - <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/quicknotes/>
- **NMS PTSA Yahoo Group** - PTSA information - <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NeelsvillePTSA/>

Don’t forget to join the new NMS PTSA Yahoo Group (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NeelsvillePTSA/>)

You don’t have to be a PTSA member to join. Membership is open to all parents/guardians of current NMS students and NMS staff. Email NeelsvillePTSA-subscribe@yahoogroups.com to submit a membership request. You can choose to receive the emails in the form of a daily or weekly digest. Please send the following information with your membership request –

- Parents – your name, your child’s name, your child’s grade
- Staff – your name, department.

ABOUT THE NEELSVILLE NEWS

Neelsville News is the monthly newsletter published by the Neelsville PTSA. We hope that you will find this a valuable resource for keeping up to date with PTSA news, notes and events, as well as an excellent tool for communicating important PTSA and school information to our school families. If you have any questions or comments on the newsletter or would like to submit an article, please email the editor.

General PTSA information like names of PTSA board members, meeting dates, **forms for joining and volunteering**, and back issues of the newsletter are **available online at the Neelsville Middle School website** under the “Parents” tab.

Please note that there are limitations as to what can/will be printed in the Neelsville News. All content is subject to space limitations, PTSA by-laws, and the discretion and approval of the PTSA President, Principal, and/or Newsletter Editor. Not all content that is submitted will be printed. The Newsletter Editor, PTSA President and Principal individually and collectively reserve full editorial license to determine what content is most appropriate for and/or considered of interest to the general readership of the Neelsville News.

About the Neelsville News

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PTA Meeting	Print Deadline	Email Deadline	Online
Mar 8	Mar 9	Mar 11	Mar 15
Apr 12	Apr 13	Apr 15	Apr 19
May 10	May 11	May 13	May 17



**Mark Your Calendar –
PTSA Meeting Schedule**

- March 8
- April 12
- May 10