

Beyond the Classroom

News from the Library, Art, Music, Gym, and Technology Programs
Blanchard Memorial Elementary School - Late Winter 2008

From the Gymnasium

By: Rob Guilmette & Dan Shanahan,
Physical Education Teachers

What have we been doing in Physical Education? Since our last newsletter we've been very busy in Physical Education classes. We ended 2007 with the students in Mr. Guilmette's classes working on their basketball skills such as dribbling, passing, shooting and offensive and defensive strategies.



We started 2008 with the students doing gymnastics. They worked on their tumbling, vaulting, balancing, headstands and single and double bar actions. The students did a great job combining the actions mentioned and making a gymnastic sequence with a partner. The students also performed a gymnastic routine to music with implements such as balls, hula hoops, streamers and batons. This is known as rhythmic gymnastics.

The two weeks prior to February vacation the students were involved with a giant obstacle course that we set up in the gymnasium every winter in February. The students were

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March is Youth Art Month!

Blanchard's Annual Art Show On Display

The Blanchard Art Show will be up for two weeks, March 17th-28th. Be sure to look for your child's artwork displayed in the hallway.



Students Exhibit at Worcester Art Museum

Congratulations to the Blanchard students that had their art work selected to be part of the Youth Art Month Exhibit at the Worcester Art Museum: three 5th graders, one 4th grade student, two 3rd graders, two 2nd graders, a 1st grade student and one kindergartener. There is a special reception on March 9th. The exhibit will be open the entire month of March. The student exhibit is located in the Higgins Education Wing near the Lancaster Street entrance to the museum. Admission is not charged in this area of the museum.



What's MIOSM???

The month of March is a special time for students all over the country--it's Music In Our Schools Month (MIOSM). This year's theme is "Music Touches Lives." During the next few weeks in music class, students will be thinking about and discussing how music touches their lives. They'll be sharing their thoughts on hand prints which will be on display throughout the school during the month of April.

From the Blanchard Music Room!

By: Karen Sheppard, Music Teacher

SECRET SONG CHALLENGE TIME!

We just had our first Secret Song Challenge and all our classes, from Kindergarten through Sixth Grade, did a fantastic job! Our students

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challenged with over thirty obstacles. They were required to go over, under, through and between these obstacles individually, with a partner and as a class. In grades three through six the classes are given a group challenge. They are required to work together as a group to be successful with the challenge given them. The students enjoy these two weeks tremendously. They anxiously look forward to these two weeks.

Since we have returned from February vacation Mr. Guilmette's classes have started working on striking skills with their hand. The students will be using beach balls to volley back and forth. Grades Kindergarten through grade two have primarily been working with a partner striking the beach ball to a partner and over the net. Grades three through six have been working on striking the beach ball consistently back and forth to a partner. They then play modified volleyball games. The teams will consist of three or four players per team. The rules will be modified to encourage longer rallies.



Mr. Shanahan's classes have been working on a variety of activities depending on grade level. The fifth and sixth graders have been working on cooperative learning activities. Which require students to focus on working together as a class, while using creative strategies to accomplish difficult tasks. Fourth grade is currently working on cup stacking. Cup stacking helps students build bilateral proficiency which is the ability to use both sides of the body equally well. Third grade is currently working on jump roping with focus on individual jumping and also group jumping. Students in kindergarten through second grade are currently working on parachute activities. While also being a fun activity, parachute activities help develop students gross motor and fine motor movements.

Blanchard Memorial is proud to welcome a new rock climbing wall to our school. Great thanks and appreciation goes out to the PTF for funding this OUTSTANDING project. Students will now have the opportunity to climb across a 40ft long and 8ft tall climbing wall. Students will focus on using fine motor and gross motor movements to navigate their way down the wall. Parents to put your minds at ease students will not be climbing to the ceiling in a harness. Students will be a maximum 4ft. off the ground while using the climbing structure. It will also have protective mats and active spotting in case a student comes off the wall. The wall will be installed on March 20th please feel free to stop by and check it out.

Again our focus is to ensure maximum participation for all the students and to develop their general motor and skill development. Our classes consist of a warm up which includes activities that develop the students' motor skills. We then work on the skill theme which helps develops the students' motor skills. We third phase of class is usually a group activity designed to improve the students' ability to work with others on a task and general social skills.

Library Seeks Used Rocking Chair Donation

Do you have a rocking chair that you're no longer using? The school library is looking for a used, adult-sized rocking chair for Mrs. Long to use during read-alouds in hopes of creating an even more friendly and cozy environment. If the answer is yes, please contact Connie Long at 978-263-4569 ext 242 or by email: clong@boxboroughschool.org to make arrangements. Thank you!



Dr. Bates gives a hilarious reading of *Could Be Worse!*



Firefighter Scott reads to a 5th grade class

Library News

By: *Connie Long, Library Media Specialist*

In the library, we conducted a Community Read-Aloud during the first week of March. This year's theme was, "***Our Home Town – Boxborough: We are a Community of Readers.***" The timing coincided with Boxborough's town anniversary. Members of the Boxborough community including firefighters, town hall and library employees, and members from various Blanchard committees, parents, volunteers, and staff were invited to come and read to a class. Thank you to all who joined us!

Currently, we are holding reading incentive programs for all our Blanchard students. Kindergarten through third grade students are reading to earn items to fill-up pictures of the Boxborough landmarks in the front of the library. Fourth through sixth graders are reading books from a special selection in the library to earn an invitation to our end-of-the-year celebration. A big thank you to all the wonderful library volunteers who have been helping me. I am grateful for the assistance and our volunteer's tireless efforts to help maintain a well-run library. It's great to be part of this terrific community!

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learned all about and can identify all of the following songs:

March of the Torreadors from "Carmen" by Georges Bizet,

Sunflower Slow Drag by Scott Joplin.

Symphony No. I, Movement III by Gustav Mahler

Little Fugue in g minor by J.S. Bach

"Allegretto" from Symphony No. 7 by L. van Beethoven,

Short Ride in a Fast Machine by John Adams

Just Kiss Me by Harry Connick Jr.

As you can see, we learned songs from the Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Modern Eras. We learned music from both European and American composers. We learned music that was solo piano, orchestral, ragtime, jazz and music from an opera. We had a lot of fun traveling our musical journey and earning prizes for our efforts! I can't wait for our next new Secret Song!

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A Window on Technology

By Betsy Peterson, Technology Integration Specialist

The illiterate of the 21st Century will not be those who cannot read and write - but rather those who cannot learn, unlearn and re-learn.

Alvin Toffler

Our students are busy learning new skills! They have been able to explore and create in the classroom using the new laptop cart - affectionately known as the COW (Computers on Wheels). The laptops were generously donated to the school through the efforts of a Blanchard parent, Mr. Dunning, whose company was ready to replace the 3 year old machines. The Tech Department was able to purchase a mobile charging and storage cart to turn the laptops into a portable computer lab. The computers have wireless capability - so students can access the internet and local network resources. Gail Neuman worked tirelessly to get the COW ready and out to the classrooms where the students are embracing technology right in their own environment. (A second COW is on the way!)

The students aren't the only ones busy learning ... Blanchard teachers recently took advantage of technology training during the March 7th Teacher Professional Day. If you've ever wondered what teachers do on those days, they go to school! On March 7th, teachers chose from amongst 16 technology workshops to learn new ways to use technology for improved student learning. Eight of the workshops were offered by Blanchard's own teachers - sharing their knowledge of technology and ways it can be effectively integrated into the classroom experience. All teachers were invited to share classroom project ideas through a Technology Share Fair. This science-fair-format exhibition allowed teachers to get a glimpse into each other's classrooms - and technology-infused projects going on across the year.

Our teachers' learning isn't over... Teachers continue learning technology tools and techniques through after-school workshops, online learning opportunities, and our latest addition the Technology Cafe (a lunchtime technology inspiration venue, complete with coffee and pastries).



For more information about our programs or to contact school personnel, please visit the Blanchard Memorial School website at: www.boxboroughschool.org (click Specials and Activities) or you can reach us by telephone at 978-263-4569.

Thank you.