Wider Horizons School

Every new challenge widens my horizons, strengthens my self-competence and heightens my enjoyment of discovery.

IMPORTANT DATES:
1/16 Martin Luther King Day - no school
1/20 Jr/Hs to Brooksville Raid
1/26 Chinese New Year lunch at Chinese Buffet
2/9 Science Expo
2/20 Presidents Day - no school

WELCOME BACK TO A GREAT NEW YEAR

YOUNGEST STUDENTS BACK AT WORK
Preschoolers came back from vacation ready to learn. They used the many new materials that the teachers have created for the classroom.

PARENTS ARE THE PRIMARY TEACHERS
BY DOMENICK J. MAGLIO

A child’s education begins at home. Functional parents naturally provide role modeling that is fertile ground for the child’s moral, emotional social and educational development. Children spontaneously imitate speech patterns, vocabulary, thinking and the value of continual learning of the parent.

In the past families was a cohesive group that did almost everything together. Sitting down to meals, working around the house, recreation, visiting relatives, church attendance were practically rituals for the family. It was the most important social unit in society.

Modern parents are often AWOL in crucial areas. Although parents work hard chauffeuring their children to extra curricular activities they miss the exposure to many of the child’s important behaviors. Infants are often left in centers to be cared for by “professional” strangers. The majority of parents enroll their children in preschools instead of keeping them at home. Both parents often work long hours and are lucky to spend a few quality moments with their child.

Many parents take for granted the school is educating their child. This can turn into an educational disaster that can threaten the child’s abilities and opportunities to succeed later in life.

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PRESCHOOL
Mrs. Bermudez & Mrs. McKinney

Welcome back! We hope you enjoyed your holidays. In language and math, the children are already hard at work again, reviewing sounds and sound blends, numbers, addition, and subtraction. Every other day, they work on penmanship. Congratulations to Christian who is reading Bob books now. The children are also working on the alphabet; they are learning the correct order of the letters, and which letters come before and after other letters. They will have a lesson on the movable alphabet.

In science, the students will also learn facts about horses and birds. They will learn names of the parts of each. We will talk about winter, animals, and learn winter songs! Since returning from break, the students are doing a great job of challenging themselves to master new or difficult work. We are very proud of them! And congratulations to Christian: he is reading the Bob books!

PRIMARY
Mrs. Youse, Mrs. Yoneva, Mrs. Marciano, Mrs. Wang

Welcome back, we hope everyone had a safe and fun vacation! The students returned happy and ready to work. Lots of new work and activities were introduced this week. In language we talked about homonyms and mystery language cards with secret sentences. There are new pictures for creative story writing, which the students are encouraged to write in their language books daily.

In math we talked about money, specifically coins and their values. We also sang a song to help memorize the coins and their values. We reviewed our clock work and continued to learn how to tell time. The children are learning a new song to help with the clock work and they are working on making their own clocks. The students had a lesson on the Wrapp-ups, which is a fun and unique way for them to memorize their basic math facts—addition, subtraction, multiplication.

In science they had lessons on nocturnal animals, seasons, and climates. Using craft sticks the students are constructing various geometric shapes in sensorial. In practical life they are learning how to braid, continuing to master tying shoes, and even double knotting to ensure the laces will not come undone.

Congratulations to Lilah, Alex, Parker, Edward and Isabell for moving up a level in the multiplication tables. Shiyalah, Krish and William mastered subtraction facts and are now moving on to the multiplication tables. Sophia mastered the addition facts to ten and is working hard at memorizing subtraction facts.

Science fair papers went home in the green folders this week. Please select a topic and return the papers back to school as soon as possible so a teacher can approve it.

LOWER ELEMENTARY
Mrs. Urbanek, Mrs. Bianco, Ms Bennett

We would like to welcome back all students. We hope that you had a safe and restful break. There is an excitement in the air that comes with a new beginning. Let’s make 2017 an exceptionally good one!

This week in spelling the students wrote their spelling words in alphabetical order, learned definitions verbally, and created a word search.

In math the students worked in their math booklets, applications, and continued to work on measurements.

This week in language the students worked from the tower. They finished and illustrated their cube stories.

This week in geography the students continued to work on landforms.

In history the students continue to work on needs of man. The students have several extensions on this work that they will be able to start upon completion of the work.

In Spanish the second and third graders learned about manners, pronouns, objects in a house/school, and seasons.

The students learned about the importance of botanical illustration in the past and present time. Next week in art they will utilize what they learned by creating their own drawing of a flower or fruit.

The students did not have any multiplication tests or reading sheets the week before break. We started again this week.

The students are enjoying several special activities. They have been working hard on their dance steps. We encourage the students to continue to practice at home. Every week bowling teams sharpen their skills. This week the students began learning to tie knots. The first type of loop knot is called a bowline knot and has been used for centuries. It is interesting because it is easily untied when desired. Lessons will be given on tying neckties. If you have any extra ties that you would like to donate, please do so. When we are finished learning to tie them, we will then recycle them in an art project.
We were happy to see everyone return safely from their vacation this week. Although still many were a bit weary and getting accustomed to waking up early again, most seemed eager to work.

This week, the fourth graders learned about visual representations of data. They conducted surveys of their classmates and presented their data using pictographs, bar graphs, line graphs, and pie graphs. They also had a test on the sponge. They had to label the parts of the sponge and answer questions about the vital functions, habitat, and life cycle. In history, the students could not wait to jump back into their projects. They are making historic landmarks in Florida, and they are pulling out all the stops, creating clever and complex dioramas.

The fifth graders reviewed many of the language concepts we have been studying throughout the year. In botany, we took a trip outside to investigate this further. In geography, the students partnered up and began work on their regions of the United States projects. They will focus on the similarities and differences of the topography and climate within their region. We look forward to hearing their presentations.

Sixth graders explored Canada this week in geography. They learned important historical facts and will continue to research its provinces and territories. In science, sixth graders are learning about the pH scale and the properties of acids and bases. They tested many different substances using a pH indicator to determine whether it was acidic, basic, or neutral. Many were surprised by the results of their favorite beverages.

Happy New Year! The third quarter has begun. All of the students have been encouraged to make new goals and change study habits that have not worked for them. The students that have been successful in their academics are very good examples of who to ask questions about how to be successful. We told the students at the beginning of the year that 95% of academic achievement is attitude.

Two graduates came in this week to visit. The graduates spoke to the class and told them they were better prepared for their college experience than many of their peers because of the skills learned here at Wider Horizons. They said the most important skills that helped them become successful are time management, organizational skills, and the familiarity of doing homework. We love to speak to our graduates to find out if we are covering and teaching the life skills needed to be successful at college. Many graduates that come back to speak say they begin their college classes with 80-85 students and at the end of the first semester there are usually 30-35 students. They attribute this to being poorly trained to handle time management, organizational skills, and work ethic. One student said, “There is no one to say “get up” and “get to class,” or “do your homework.” These are the reasons why we teach our students to become independent workers and thinkers.

The seventh grade students are going to begin their geography maps next week. They will need a few things to begin their maps. Please do not spend a lot of money on cork boards, even an old one will do, or Walmart and Target also have them.

After a long break, the students were able to get right back into the swing of things. They played variations of football, soccer, and kick ball during recess (which was often extended because of the cooperative weather and great behavior). Indoors, we spend time going over books about the dark. Now that the winter solstice has passed, the days will get longer but it is still pretty dark compared to the summertime. The students observed the globe when we went over why seasons change and how different parts of the earth have different seasons. As a class project on a separate topic, we also painted doves with different colored dots to symbolize peace for everyone as we approach Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

This week in after school the students enthusiastically resumed their daily routine, eagerly returning to the familiarity of the afternoon schedule. Our after school programs were genuinely missed by many, including the exciting afternoon outdoor games of tag and capture the flag. During our indoor activity time the students engaged in challenging competitions of chess, checkers and various other board games. On Tuesday, the students showed great interest in the “build something cool” challenge. Dennis found great joy in constructing a tall object out of the building materials. Several of the students have shown interest in this week’s art project and cooking projects, inputting their ideas for a fun project. An art tribute to the new year won this week’s assignment and was highly anticipated by the group.
Parents are the primary teachers. The abdicating of this responsibility is dangerous to society.

Parents are so preoccupied with their own careers that they assume their child is doing well in school since the report cards from early elementary normally indicate he is an A-B student. Often he is granted Honor Roll status. The child usually is a compliant child who stays out of any trouble at home and in school.

This typical child’s academic, social and emotional issues are not being adequately addressed. Eventually in the transition to middle school or after a comprehensive state exam the parent becomes aware of a significant two-year or more deficit in one or several academic areas. These problems prompt them to put the child in another classroom setting or school to avoid the stigma of being labeled or held back a grade.

Then reality hits them hard, the mother’s tears flow and the child realizes that his inflated grades can no longer hide the truth. The child does not know simple math no less algebra and/or is unable to write a coherent paragraph. The student and parents are crushed knowing their options are not going to correct the errors of the past without a lot of work and pain.

Students being held back or labeled are only the tips of the icebergs. Both the parents and student have to accept they have been delusional. The child has to accept a drastic change in behavior and thinking to have a chance to rehabilitate himself as a student. The parents have to restructure their lives to make a total commitment to assist the child in filling in his academic and work ethic gaps.

These incidents can be drastically reduced if parents would take the time to observe the child’s initiative, work habits and become aware of what the child actually knows. Reading the child’s reports and essays as well as reviewing math tests enables the parent to evaluate the child’s knowledge. Through daily monitoring and questioning the parents must maintain awareness of what the child is learning. There is no excuse for the parents not assessing their child’s education.

Modern parents can no longer rely on our dysfunctional education system to take over most aspects of their child’s life. We are supposed to protect and teach our children the things they need to know to prosper in life.

Casually leaving our children’s education to the schools is not a wise decision. Too many adults are more concerned with their pet’s grooming than with their child’s education. In school there are many social temptations, many opportunities to take short cuts such as cheating and little follow-up by teachers and administrators concerning academic deficiencies. Parents should more closely evaluate their child’s academics, social abilities and skills.

Parents can either shirk their duty to pass on their wisdom suffering the pain of a dysfunctional child or witness the child creating his own success.

The ability of their child to be self-reliant and successful lies primarily in the hands of the parents by training them to have positive habits, skills and values. The parents’ focusing on the children when they are young will reap them the satisfaction of participating in their success. The legacy of their children is determined by how well they were able to train them when they were young.

It is not about spending more money on education but parents placing a great value on learning. Parental observation as well as direct involvement with the child’s academics and after school activities is powerful antidotes to preventing an inadequate and disabled human being.

Domenick Maglio, PhD. is a columnist carried by various newspapers, an author of several books and owner/director of Wider Horizons School, a college prep program. You can visit Dr. Maglio at www.drmaglio.blogspot.com.