



East Hartford-Glastonbury Elementary Magnet School MAGNET NEWS

February 2012

A NASA Explorer School

A Magnet School of Excellence

305 May Road
East Hartford, CT 06118
Phone(860)622-5400

Mr. Glen J. Peterson
Principal

IMPORTANT DATES IN FEBRUARY

2/4, 2/11, 2/25 Saturday
Academy 9:00-12:00

2/7 Glastonbury 5th Grade
Spelling Bee

2/20 Presidents Day Holi-
day

2/21 SCHOOL TODAY! This
was a day added back to
the calendar to make up
for days lost in the fall.

2/23 Take Apart Lab be-
gins. Please sign up to
volunteer. Also, see the
back page for information
about donating items.



Visit us at our web site for more school
information and teachers classroom
events and links to great websites.
You may even register to
receive alerts when pages are updated!

Karen Brunette, Editor

www.crec.org/ehgems

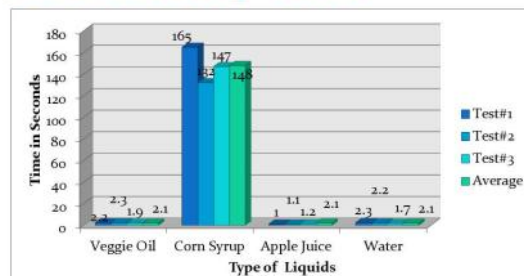
EHGEMS is managed by



Principal Peterson's Page

We are so proud that a team of EHGEMS teachers are going to participate in the NASA Microgravity Opportunity. Our school was one of 12 schools selected from a field of over 1400 schools from throughout the country. On Sunday second grade teacher, Mrs. Raffalo, science teacher, Mrs. Rand, and fifth grade teacher, Ms. Wilson will fly to the Houston for a week of professional development activities related to microgravity at NASA's Johnson Space Center. The highlight of the trip will be the microgravity flight. For many weeks students have been participating in experiments that the teachers will recreate in the microgravity environment during the flight. When they return the students will study videotapes of the experiments and compare the results to what they saw in school. The graph to the right shows the results of tests students conducted relating to the viscosity (thickness) of liquids. Students at all grades participated in the experiments.

NASA Viscosity Test #3



The Connecticut Mastery Tests for students in grades 3-5 will begin on March 6. That's less than 20 school days away. I will send parents a letter with the schedule and other details very soon.

There is a great change happening in educational curriculum these days. Most states in the country, including Connecticut, are adopting the Common Core State Standards. These standards will involve some significant changes in how we teach. One of the most areas where the changes will be very apparent is math. Right now most math curriculum "spirals." That means that students see the same type of content year after year and they are supposed to master it over time. The new curriculum won't spiral. Students will be expected to master topics at specific grade levels. So students will be studying less topics each year, but they will be studying them at a deeper level. In the area of arithmetic students are expected to master the basic math facts and gain fluency with basic arithmetic.

- K Add/subtract within 5
- Grade 1 Add/subtract within 10
- Grade 2 Add/subtract within 20
- Grade 3 Add/subtract within 100 (with pencil and paper)
- Grade 3 Multiply/divide within 100
- Grade 3 Add/subtract within 1000 (with pencil and paper)
- Grade 4 Add/subtract within 1,000,000
- Grade 5 Multi-digit multiplication

Kindergarten News

Kindergarteners celebrated Martin Luther King Jr. Day by listening to stories and learning about kindness. We made books about treating others equally. Their favorite project was titled “We are all the same on the inside.” Students worked together to make people with different skin color on the outside and the same red heart on the inside. Our hope is to instill kindness and respect for diversity.



First Graders Track Connecticut's Dinosaurs



First graders always find life exciting. When it is two hundred million years old it is AMAZING! On their January fieldtrip to Dinosaur State Park young scientists were thrilled to see the REAL fossil tracks named Eu-brontes that were made by Dilophosaurus, a carnivorous dinosaur.

The fieldtrip began outside with a walk along the time line in to the geodesic dome. Then, using interactive technology, there was an introduction to fossils and dinosaurs.

Each class had a tour of the museum and time in the lab to classify dinosaurs as herbivores and carnivores. The young scientists were able to apply the knowledge that they learned prior to the visit and to wonder, ask questions and to broaden their understanding of life in Connecticut two hundred million years ago.

Building Update



February is here and the weather has been unseasonably warm. That's not good for the skiers, but it has been great for construction. The building project continues to move forward. The construction is nearing 50% complete. The classroom wing is scheduled to be completed in mid-July and the rest of the building soon after. The photo is about a week old. It shows the round masonry wall being built around the planetarium “silo.” I had a move meeting yesterday to discuss the plans and timelines for the actual physical move to the new school.

Second Grade News

This is a great time to take care of some housekeeping items for our classes. Please make sure your child has hats and mittens each day for school, as we are never sure if we will have recess inside or out. Also, our building temperature can vary from very warm to cool, so please have your child dress in layers. Many children do not regularly have snack and are often hungry since we do not have lunch until 12:10. Please make sure your child has a **healthy** snack each day.

Valentine's Day falls on a Wednesday this year and children will have an opportunity to exchange Valentines with their classmates. Class lists will be sent home shortly.

Our school had an assembly on Friday, January 27th as a send off for Mrs. Raffalo, Miss Wilson, and Mrs. Rand. These teachers are heading to the Johnson Space Center in Houston, TX to participate in a micro-gravity flight. They will conduct various experiments that the 5th graders created. The results will be compared – how did things react on Earth and how did they react in micro-gravity? During the assembly, Mrs. Raffalo's class demonstrated how a Slinky looks and moves on Earth. Mrs. Raffalo will bring the Slinky onto the flight and observe how it looks and moves in micro-gravity. For the assembly, Ms. Yencho's class had a great time dancing along with the Schoolhouse Rock song and video, "Victim of Gravity".

Third Grade News

Third graders have recently finished all mid-year assessments, and are currently involved in their "Test Prep" units in reading, writing, and math. They are reviewing all of the strategies learned so far this year in preparation for the March CMT's. For example, in writing, students reflected on themselves as writers and brainstormed the things they do well when planning, writing leads, elaborating, revising, and writing endings. They jotted these things down under the heading, "I am the type of writer who..." Having a set plan or repertoire of ideas helps the students when faced with assigned prompts to write about. We even compared our strategies for writing with the strategies used for (video) gaming, such as being alert, engaged, and quick to respond. The next step for writers has been to practice "talking through" a given prompt where they act out a given scenario with a partner. This has proven to be a fun way to bring stories to life as students prepare their elaboration and dialogue techniques before actually writing. Students are learning to make connections to everyday life experiences in everything they do.

Tech News Flash

Check out the following education websites:

- www.abcya.com (Kindergarten-5th grade)
- Enhance your math and language arts skills through playing these fun educational games.
- pbskids.org/sid/ (Kindergarten)
- Play fun, educational science games with Sid and his friends. pbskids.org/dinosaurtrain (1st Grade)
- Learn all kinds of dinosaur facts, play games and watch video from Dinosaur Train! All Abooooooard!
- BiteSize Science Clips-Properties of Matter (2nd and 3rd Grade) http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/scienceclips/index_flash.shtml
- Mrs.Vestergaard's Wiki Page <http://ehgems-tech.wikispaces.com/>

News from Grade 4

The fourth graders have continued their study of Force and Motion by using what they learned at The New England Air Museum about the forces involved in flight. With this knowledge, they created simulations of a Mars Rover. The students dropped glass ornament balls, and devised a way to slow their ornament down as much as possible, taking advantage of air friction, known as drag, through the use of a parachute. They also created a way to protect their "Rover" from the force of the impact. The "Rovers" were then dropped from the ceiling of the All Purpose room and evaluated based on how well the "Rover" was protected and how slowly it fell. Some students presented their work at an all school assembly to celebrate the teachers who will be heading to NASA to experience reduced gravity.

The students continued to explore the Laws of Motion by building a car using Duplo blocks. They increased the amount of the pull force applied to the car and observed the difference it made in the way in which the car moved. The students will also experiment with the effect additional weight on the car has on the way in which the car moves. Through the labs described above as well as additional work in the classroom, the students are making sense of Newton's Laws of Motion.

The photo shows Chris, Bay, and Jonathan who designed a parachute to protect their "Mars Rover."



Grade 5 News

January has been a blur in fifth between spelling bees, mid-year assessments and magnet school fairs. Congratulations go out to our school level winners: Mark Davis, Alex Nordlund, and Kairi Musall as our top three and Tam Vu as our alternate. The entire fifth grade performed impressive and the competition was stiff. The Glastonbury Town Wide Bee is Tuesday, February 7th at Gideon Welles.

All fifth grade students despite the crazy schedule have shown off their brains on their mid-year assessments. BRAVO!!! These results will be shared with you at conference time.

Another huge focus in Science this month has been the Micro-Gravity Experience. The students have participated in three NASA designed experiences as a preparation for our Zero-gravity team of teachers: Mrs. Rand, Mrs. Raffalo and Ms. Wilson trip to Houston, where they will be performing the same experiments in a reduced gravity situation. Our fifth grade will then compare their results to the data recorded by our EHGEMS teacher team when they get back. This event has also allowed our students to directly discuss their findings with Jamie Semple at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston through the Distance Learning Network. This has been an amazing experience for all!

PE NEWS



The results are in! Due to your generosity, our school has raised \$1504 for American Heart Association through Jump Rope For Heart! Heartfelt thanks to all. Thank you gifts for contributors will be handed out before March. Students in all classes are involved in a unit comprising balance and tumbling. We are working on the three Bs – controlling the **body** by focusing on one thing and keeping the weight evenly distributed, using the **brain** to think about what we are doing, and use slow and steady **breathing**. Positions were created on high, medium, and low levels. Upper grade students identified and performed static and dynamic balances. Coming up – after practicing rolls and other inverted tumbling skills, students will perform a self-selected series of basic tumbling moves combined with balances. Please remember that on PE days, children need to wear sneakers for class. If boots are worn to school, children should change into sneakers before PE. The PE schedule can be found on the PE Wiki page on the school's web site.

The results are in! Due to your generosity, our school has raised \$1504 for American Heart Association through Jump Rope For Heart! Heartfelt thanks to all. Thank you gifts for contributors will be handed out before March. Students in all classes are involved in a unit comprising balance and tumbling. We are working on the three Bs – controlling the **body** by focusing on one thing and keeping the weight evenly distributed, using the **brain** to think about what we are doing, and use slow and steady **breathing**. Positions were created on high, medium, and low levels. Upper grade students identified and performed static and dynamic balances. Coming up – after practicing rolls and other inverted tumbling skills, students will perform a self-selected series of basic tumbling moves combined with balances. Please remember that on PE days, children need to wear sneakers for class. If boots are worn to school, children should change into sneakers before PE. The PE schedule can be found on the PE Wiki page on the school's web site.

Music News Update

Kindergarteners continue to develop their singing voices by playing musical singing games and learning new songs. They are learning the names and sounds of classroom percussion instruments and will be learning how to find, and play, the 'big beat' on these instruments.

Children in **First and Second Grades** are developing harmonic concepts, by singing partner songs and singing songs in rounds. They are developing rhythm vocabularies and accompanying their music with classroom percussion instruments. Classroom percussion includes pitched and non-pitched instruments. Examples of pitched instruments include: xylophones, metallophones, resonator bells and glockenspiels. Non-pitched instruments are drums, tambourines, triangles, wood blocks, maracas, and rhythm sticks.

Third Graders continue developing music literacy skills. They have learned how to draw a Treble Clef and are memorizing the letters of the musical alphabet assigned to the lines and spaces of the 'G' Clef. This preparation is a prerequisite for playing the recorder.

Fourth Graders are working hard memorizing songs for their musical program in April. Students who are interested in performing a solo are encouraged to sign up for an audition.

Fifth Graders will be learning about the 'sound' of music, reviewing concepts learned in science and applying their newly acquired vocabulary to practical application on musical instruments. Vibrations, pitch, frequency, loudness, softness and timbre are explored in music class. Later in the month they will begin a unit on piano keyboards.

February Art News

Time flies when you are having fun—and we have been busy working in the art room! The kindergarten classes have been working on a Japanese inspired "Koi Pond Collage". We learned some watercolor techniques as we painted our fish bodies. First graders are starting a dragon art project. We will be working collaboratively to create a dragon to celebrate the Japanese New Year and the Year of the Dragon. The second graders are working very hard on their jungle landscapes. We talked about how to mix different shades of greens to make our painting more interesting to look at. The third grade classes have started their "Fantasy Fish Sculpture" project. They will be using clay over a cardboard armature and focusing on creating interesting patterns and textures in the clay. Fourth graders have started a "Mola Collage" using construction paper. Molas are a hand stitched craft made by the Kuna people of South America. Molas are known for their many layers and brightly colored fabric. The fifth grade classes are stretching their imagination muscles as they work on a mask project. This is a multimedia project where students can choose from a variety of art materials.

Looking to do something fun, artsy and **free** with the family this winter? There are several art museums that offer kid friendly art programs. The Wadsworth Atheneum has a monthly program called "Second Saturdays for Families". The next event is on Saturday, February 11th. You can get more information on their website at www.wadsworthatheneum.org. The New Britain Museum of American Art has their next "Family Day" on Sunday, February 19th. On all Saturdays the NBMAA has free admission from 10 am to noon. See their website for more information at www.nbmaa.org. Get out and enjoy some art-filled fun with the family!



Second graders work on jungle watercolors.

From the Reading Resource Center

The student readers and writers at EHGEMS have embraced their reading and writing lives this year and it shows. If you walk into classrooms at the lower and upper grades students are spending an abundance of time reading books both in fiction and nonfiction that they love. They are talking and writing about books at various points during the day.

Students are building their writing folders with drafts of both narrative and nonfiction stories. In kindergarten students have been spending time writing pattern books and in fifth grade students have been spending time in a unit of study on information writing.

EHGEMS is becoming a Reading and Writing Workshop lab-site for CREC and we are well on our way. Our efforts can be seen within the walls of every classroom at EHGEMS and even at home. We have been clocking students reading minutes and classrooms have been reading ferociously at home. The efforts of our students reading lives at home cannot go without celebrating their home reading by showing the school community by grade level how many minutes each classroom reads weekly.

As we move forward in the coming months students in the lower grades will continue working on building their reading muscles by working on retelling about the books they read and writing about their reading. Students in the upper grades will begin spending the next month on Reading and Writing Test Preparation Units of Study. Below we are including a new segment that you will find in the "Reading Resource Center," portion of the newsletter. This segment will include book features, websites for parents and students and tips and tricks to support students in reading and writing. Enjoy!

This Month's Book Features

My Uncle Martin's Words for America by Angela Farris Watkins

No Two Alike by Keith Baker

The Orphan (a Cinderella story from Greece) by Anthony Manna

This Month's Parent and Student Website Feature

Internet 4 Classrooms: A high-quality resource for teachers, parents and students of all ages to reinforce specific subject matter in school and at home. www.internet4classrooms.com

This Month's Tip to Support Independent Reading

Create an at home reading partnership with your child. Find out what book they are going to read next and check it out of your local library. Plan your reading time together and when you will chat about the book.

Library Reader of the Month

Chelsey , a third grade student, has been chosen for reader of the month.

What book are you currently reading?

I am reading the book *Hoot* by Carl Hiaasen.

What genre is the book *Hoot*?

It is a realistic fiction book.

Why did you choose this book to read?

I chose *Hoot* to read because I like the topic of the book. It is about a boy named Roy who moves to Florida and tries to save a colony of burrowing owls from a construction company trying to build a pancake house on their habitat.

What do you like about the book *Hoot*?

I like that the topics in the book are realistic. In addition to saving the burrowing owls, the book also talks about bullying. The book has some action too. In one part of the story a character was bitten by a dog and had to go to the emergency room.

Where do you like to read?

I usually keep this book in school and read it at my desk. When I am home I like to read on my bed.



From Nihongo

International Night 2012

I am looking for parents and the students in 4th & 5th grade who can help at our Japanese Table during International Night 2012 on **Thursday, February 9**. It will be at Smith Middle School in Glastonbury from 6:00–9:00 pm. Glastonbury's Foreign Language Department is hosting this exciting event. During the event you can enjoy sampling international cuisine, a talent show, language and dance lessons, and extensive displays of student work in many languages including EHGEMS students' Japanese projects. Please come and support our Japanese program!

Greeting Cards from Tokyo, Japan

In January we were very excited to receive Nengajo greeting cards from Tsurukawa Elementary in Tokyo. (The principal of the school came to visit us last February, and I went to visit them last July.) In the photo Kean is pointing to his favorite dragon design by Japanese 5th grader.



Shin-nen-kai was once again a great success. Arigato gozaimas (Big thank you) to all the parents, students, staff, friends in the community and GHS Key Club students who helped to make our 16th ShinNenKai possible! You make this school a wonderful place to be! We would especially like to thank Tsuji-sensei and Mrs. Crooks who together have led this wonderful event for many years.

Photos from Shin-nen-kai 2012





EHGEMS SCIENCE ZONE

Science Lab for Young Children becomes GAVRT Mission Control East Coast

The student astronomy team, "Explorers of the Universe and Beyond!" have become expert at manipulating the GAVRT, 850,000 pound, 10-story-tall radio dish telescope. Students demonstrated their operating skill for parents and newspaper reporters. The team also trained other students to take over the controls in our school science lab of this 34 meter dish located in the Mojave Desert. The team of students received great reviews and photos in a three-page news article in *The Glastonbury Life!* They look forward to representing the school at The New England Air Museum "Space Expo" **on Sat., April 1, 2012** to share their knowledge of astronomy and excitement of exploring space! Try your own hand at running the telescope on **May 18th at our Annual GEMS Family Science Night from 6:30-8PM!**



It's time to drop off your broken items at school (NO monitors, NO microwaves) for our annual, all-school, Take Apart Labs! Every child

will work with adults to take apart a broken, once useful item in the school science lab during the week of **Feb 23- March 2nd!** Volunteers will be needed in the Take-Apart Lab in the mornings and afternoons! This is a great opportunity to enjoy a little time in the lab with your child and classmates if you are able. Please watch for sign-up sheets coming home with your children! We are in need of your old/broken keyboards, vacuums, phones, CD/DVD players, radios, printers, CPU's and electronics for our annual Take-Apart-Lab held in February. **NO monitors, TV's or microwaves please.**

Thank you! Moore and Shah Families for helping take care of our science lab animals over winter break! They all look great and well rested! If your family is interested in signing up for animal care during April vacation, please contact Mrs. Rand drand@crec.org or Mrs. Brunette kbrunette@crec.org



Scientist of the Season

Second grader, Rufus has completed many science experiments at home and has filled a large science notebook with all of his discoveries. He has written, labeled and drawn diagrams of things he noticed and wondered about which led him to more experiments! Any student can become "Scientist of the Week" by showing Mrs. Rand a science activity he/she did at home.



Trout in the Classroom:

The brown trout have matured to fingerlings, showing their spots and stripes and have reached 1" in length. Many of the strong fingerlings have swum up and OUT of the safety confines of the egg basket that hangs in the corner of the large 60 gallon tank. The water is a chilly 46 degrees and the chemical levels have been consistently a little low or a little high. Food and poop are the major factors for the chemical changes, but these minor differences do not seem to be bothering the fingerling. The 4th graders will continue monitoring the conditions of the tank, making observations and track the growth of their babies. In a few months, they will be set free in a local stream. Fourth graders Jocelyn, Keya, and Liana, pose during their monitoring duties.