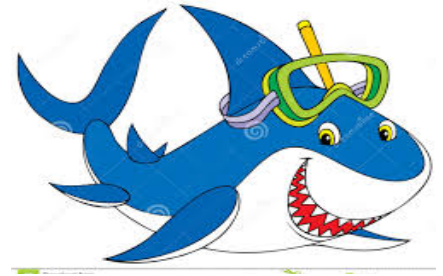


Roger Sherman Elementary School

250 Fern Street

Fairfield, CT 06824

Phone (203) 255-8330



Source: Worldartsme.com

Dr. Ian M. Banner, Principal

Have a fierce resolve in everything you do....Demonstrate determination, resiliency, and tenacity....Do not let temporary setbacks become permanent excuses. And, finally...Use mistakes and problems as opportunities to get better—not reasons to quit.

– Angela Duckworth (Psychologist and author of *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*)

For: November 2018

Dear Parents and Families:

Despite the ever changing weather and temperatures, it certainly now feels like fall is very much upon us, and like the weather, we have had a lot going on inside the walls of Roger Sherman elementary. I have collected five years worth of achievement data since I arrived and have looked at a wide variety of measures that indicate how well the Sherman students have and are achieving in literacy and numeracy, as well as other areas, such as PE. I have embarked upon a quest to deeply understand how and why we are achieving at the levels indicated in our data, which will take time to continue to gather more of this information. As such, I have lead numerous discussions with our staff focused on expanding our collective capacity to more widely consider how well our students are doing and why. This has also provided a new platform on which teachers' learning goals for students, as well as their instructional goals, are now built, and I am excited to soon share much of this information with you.

Update on Grit & Perseverance

If you haven't had the opportunity, I encourage you to read Angela Duckworth's *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*. She outlines through her research just how grit supersedes talent in most endeavors and across a multitude of varied settings. She defines grit as passion and perseverance, whereas I tend to think of it with a slight twist. I often feel grit is most notably demonstrated when one encounters something that one doesn't necessarily want to do and has to do it anyway. To keep moving towards a successful completion then requires perseverance and grit, combined. While I would hope that we can aim to make school a means for having students find their passions and learn to better understand themselves and the world around them, they will inevitably face experiences and expectations for which they would not select if left to their own devices and direction. However, when they overcome such challenges, they learn to see themselves anew, and become more aware of their capacities, which are often much greater than they realize. They also begin to recognize that they are more resilient than they had realized.

Since beginning this work, we have formally recognized 46 students for demonstrating grit and perseverance during the school day. Even our wonderful 3rd grade teachers have been recognized by colleagues for their grit and perseverance. Additionally, teachers and parents have been very actively emphasizing and reinforcing this message, and below are a few examples that I have collected in the last month:

“we are discussing it at morning meetings and I'm encouraging students to share examples they've witnessed of classmates demonstrating perseverance and grit. I'm also reminding them that I will be sending names to you as well to recognize students I witness” (5th grade).

“I discussed perseverance and grit when I assigned the class a challenging reading open-ended response on making meaningful connections. This was the first time they had to do this for me this year and I had provided them with a detailed checklist and color-coded model. It was a little overwhelming at first but I talked to them about how with effort and stamina THEY COULD DO IT! We discussed how they needed to have grit and they could persevere through it. They worked really hard that day and produced the best they could” (4th grade).

“I actually hear them say the steps of the strategies out loud. With them doing this, I can actually see their way of thinking. This shows they’re never giving up regardless if the problem is challenging” (3rd grade).

“my first grader: I asked her to tell me about the young man that was recognized. She couldn't remember the specifics but she summed it all up like this: *it's like how when I couldn't do my 'back hip circle' in gymnastics. And I kept trying and trying and now I can do it*” (parent).

Please continue to keep emphasizing these character traits in as many contexts as possible, because I truly feel that we will help our children not only improve their academic achievement, but increase their capacity to feel that they have a greater degree of control over their world—their emotions and how they choose to think about and view various situations.

School Safety

As a reminder, on the weeks specified below, which may be subject to change, we will be conducting either fire or lockdown drills. During these exercises, students will practice responding to such events under trained faculty direction in a calm and orderly manner.

Month	Week of	Safety Drill
September	31	Fire drill
	10-14	Lockdown 1
October	15-19	Fire drill
November	5-9	Fire drill
December	3-7	Fire drill
January	7-11	Lockdown 2
February	11-15	Fire drill
March	11-15	Fire drill
April	22-26	Fire drill
May	20-24	Fire drill
June	3-7	Lockdown 3

Tech Insight

Please see *Appendix A* at the end of this newsletter for information on media release opt-out.

A Note from Mrs. Goldberg

Also, our Application Specialist at Central Office, Chris Brand, has been working on getting Typing Agent up and running for us again. Typing is a new database and unfortunately we were experiencing intermittent login issues. If you received an updated letter or are receiving the letter again, your student has regained access and should be able to successfully login again. HOWEVER, YOU MUST GO THROUGH THE VIRTUAL LIBRARY LINK and USE YOUR STUDENT's SCHOOL ID # instead of Qwerty. The Virtual Library is found on the menu at the top of the Sherman Homepage, or may you copy and paste this link in your browser:

<https://sites.google.com/fairfieldschools.net/roger-sherman-virtual-library/home>

Our IT department has explained that Typing Agent required us to use a different rostering/authorization method, which changed the login password to each student's ID number. It also required us to sign in through the Clever Link, an automation program allowing for the secure transfer of student rosters to authorized parties. Please note your student's password is still the same, but their password is their ID number. A letter was sent home about a week and a half ago with that information. If your student does not know his/her number, please let us know and we will send it home again.

A Note from the Nurse

Dear Sherman Parents,

With the cold and flu season rapidly approaching, it's important for me to monitor communicable diseases. When you call the absence line to report your child out sick, please be specific when you leave your voicemail, (cold, flu, stomach bug, lice, strep, fever etc.). Please report all MD diagnosed cases of flu, lice, strep and conjunctivitis to the school nurse as these conditions require follow up and documentation by the nurse. This may be done via telephone message or email to the school nurse at jcorona@fairfieldschools.org.

This information is kept confidential and is only used for infectious disease tracking only.

The absentee line is 203-255-8420 and the main office is 203-255-8330. Please call either of these numbers when your child is ill.

Thank you,

Janine

Important Events and Dates

Fire drill	November 5-9. Sometime during the week
School Closed (Election Day) (Teacher Professional Learning) PTA Bake Sale in Lobby	Tuesday, November 6
School Store	Wednesday, November 7
Pasta Dinner	Friday, November 9
Picture Day retake	Thursday, November 15
PTA Meeting	Tuesday, November 20, 7:00pm in APR
First Marking Period ends	Friday, November 30

Note. Please *SharkBytes* for additional PTA information and events.

A Few FYIs

Playground

It was brought to our attention last week that the inspector's report on the playground identified the swing-set as being unsafe for children, and it will need replacing. The swings have been removed and we are awaiting a quote for a full swing-set replacement, which will also provide us with an estimated timeline for this project. I'll keep you updated on this.

Tools for Schools

As a reminder, *Tools for Schools* is a program developed by the EPA that enables us to monitor our indoor air quality and areas in and around the school that may be in need of attention/repair. Our committee, consisting of three parent volunteers, met twice last week to walk the building and observe existing or potential issues, as well as discuss checklists staff members were required to complete from observations in their rooms or the building at large. I will be compiling this pretty extensive collection of information over the coming days, and will provide an overview of our findings in a separate communication. I want to thank the committee members for their time and energy in combing through each classroom and closet to identify areas of question and address.

Recycling

UPATE

I am continuing to emphasize with our staff, especially during lunch, the need to have and remind our students to employ environmentally friendly practices that include placing their plastic and metal recyclables on the metal cart in the cafeteria instead of throwing them in the garbage bins. During last week, the cart was overflowing after lunch, which represented progress when compared to prior weeks. Continued work on increasing our collective consciousness in this area is still needed.

Roger Sherman Building Committee (RSBC)

I continue to be in close communication with the committee by attending committee meetings and weekly meetings with our central office members, the civil engineers and architects (Silver/Petrucci). To date, we have explored over 10 schematics for the proposed parent drop-off/pick-up route, and we have most recently began reviewing plans and discussing the new stage/platform to be added to the gymnasium. In both aspects of the renovation, the

RSBC members continue to push the Silver/Petrucci architectural firm to consider every possible option to ensure that the eventual plans for both are useful and supportive of the needs of our students and community.

Please stay informed and up-to-date on the Roger Sherman Building Committee's work for our upcoming Phase III renovations by using the link (<https://www.fairfieldct.org/rsbc>), which will provide updates and progress on the agenda items and minutes for and of past meetings.

Reflections

The PTA is already advertising for participants in this year's Reflections Arts Program (see *SharkBytes*, 10/26/18). This is a wonderful opportunity to support your child in developing other and often less emphasized forms of expression and creativity. Given my youngest son's penchant for expressive movement, I have recently enrolled him in dance classes, which is serving as a valuable opportunity to develop his whole being.

Reminders

We encourage you to remain or become familiar with our school's website (<http://fairfieldschools.org/schools/sherm/>), from which you can also access our PTA information, and the district website (<http://fairfieldschools.org>). A great deal of pertinent information can be found at these online locations.

Your Feedback

Let me know what questions you have on these and any other topics, as well as how we're doing. While the staff and I are very busy in the educating of our youngsters (your children), an important and essential element of doing that effectively is having an open and on-going dialogue with you.

Yours truly,

Dr. Ian M. Banner

ibanner@fairfieldschools.org

Follow us on Twitter: @rogershermanllc

See Appendix A, below

Appendix A

Dear Parents, Families and Friends:

In this age of information, education now publicizes its endeavors on a variety of online forums such as, and certainly not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, and web pages, and there is obvious concern regarding the confidentiality and privacy of the children it serves. Fairfield does take this emerging area of educational accessible information very seriously and is constantly refining and drafting policy to address the challenges it presents. Therefore, I want to inform you about the policies that serve to protect our children's information with respect to online privacy.

Fairfield defaults to every family accepting that any media release and/or directory information regarding their child being made available within the confines of the law. If a parent wishes to opt-out of this, this simply requires that they follow the communicated procedure for doing so. Copy and paste the following link to your browser (<http://fairfieldschools.org/parent-resources/family-guide/>) to locate this information on our district's website.

Additionally, please use the same method as above to access and read our policies on

- Student records confidentiality (6141.324AR)
(<http://cdn.fairfieldschools.org/boe/policies/5000/5125AR%20-%20Student%20Records%20-%20Confidentiality.pdf>)
- Publishing of student images (5125AR)
(<http://cdn.fairfieldschools.org/boe/policies/6000/6141.324AR%20-%20Administrative%20Regulations%20on%20Publishing%20of%20Student%20Images.pdf>)

Please also note that these policies and opt-out agreements do not apply to PTA-used mediums. Thus, if you do not wish for your child to have his/her images and information posted on a PTA Facebook page or Twitter, for example, you would need to speak directly to the PTA about this.

Hope this helps and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to forward them, and I will either answer or direct you to someone else who can provide further support or clarity.

Many thanks.

Ian.