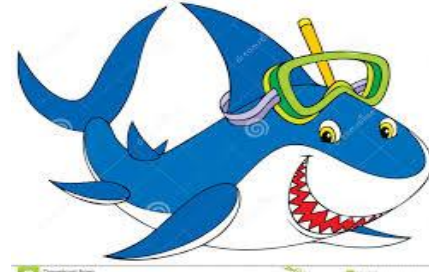


Roger Sherman Elementary School

250 Fern Street

Fairfield, CT 06824

Phone (203) 255-8330



Source: Worldartsme.com

Dr. Ian M. Banner, Principal

Simplicity is genius, but the genius is in being able to simplify and clarify within chaos.

– A

For: January 2019

Dear Parents and Families:

I'm hoping that you enjoyed a wonderful holiday period, and I'm welcoming you back to the second part of the school year. As always, there's a great deal going on between now and June, and I'd like to give you a heads up on some items that are upcoming, as well as give you a little insight on some aspects that occur more behind the scenes, so-to-speak, but I feel are important for you to know about.

Lost and Found

We still have many lost and found items that are currently housed in our lobby on tables. We will leave them on the tables until Thursday (1/10) morning and will box up any items thereafter for donation. If you there are any items that you feel may be on the table, please have your child check, or you can check after 3:30pm on Monday (1/7), Tuesday (1/8) or Wednesday (1/9).

Nurse

Since just before the break, our nurse, Mrs. Janine Corona, took a leave of absence. Since that time, the Fairfield Public Health Department has and continues to work to support our school with a substitute nurse. They are working to provide us with as much consistency of personnel as possible, which may translate into us having one person for two days and another person for the other three days of each week. We hope this to begin very soon, but until then, please be assured that we will have each day a qualified school nurse who is employed by the town of Fairfield to support our children.

If you have questions for the nurse, at this time and until further notice, please email or call the main office, as substitute nurses are not on our email listing until they assume a more permanent status.

Sherman Student Achievement and School Goals

In the fall, I communicated that I would provide you with an overview and summation of achievement of students at Sherman. Let me first clarify that I use the term *achievement* to mean the score or outcome that a student achieved on a given measure. I define *performance*, therefore, as the manner in which a student performs when taking a test or engaged in a task that will produce a score. I think it's important to distinguish between the two because it is all too easy for us to access a student's score/outcome, but his/her achievement can be greatly dependent on his/her performance, which is not so readily and easily accessible. Thus, behavior quite often determines the outcome.

When discussing or reviewing a student's achievement, I always ask teachers and staff *how* a student performed (did they focus only on their task? Did they do so for the length of time required? How long did the test or task take them compared to the given timeframe? Etc.), and not just what they achieved. Additionally, I think it is of critical importance to keep in mind that many measures that are used to publicly report achievement can often be negatively influenced by numerous factors. It is therefore completely impractical to set goals that are solely bent on raising achievement scores without considering the reason for the outcome. Both data forms are important and necessary. *What factors can impede achievement?*

It is often the case that many issues of achievement relate to one of two factors or a combination of both. These can be academic or behavioral issues.

I define academic issues as not knowing information or content, or understanding it in which to use the information when required to. It can also mean not knowing how to use certain procedures and/or steps to accomplish something. For example, a student may be unable to define a fraction (content) or be unclear on how to simplify a fraction and convert it into a decimal or percentage (procedure).

I define behavioral issues as actions or behaviors that do not enable a student to adequately attend to academic work, which includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. A lack of interest in the task,
2. Not feeling capable of completing the task,
3. A lack of attention to or focus on the task,
4. A lack of stamina to continue focusing and working on the task.

I think it's important to highlight here that numbers 1-3 relate to *grit*, whereas number 4 relates to *perseverance*, and this is the reason that we have emphasized these two areas this year.

What are our current achievement levels?

I have collected as much data as I have been able to access that I feel are relevant to me understanding Sherman students' achievement. Some of this data is available to the public (for example, Smarter Balanced Assessment data), while other data are primarily internal measures of achievement of the FPS curriculum. From this, I have calculated average scores on various English Language Arts (ELA) and Math measures, and I can report to you in summary that Sherman students in Kindergarten through grade five have collectively achieved around 86% on various ELA measures combined, and 87% on various math measures combined over the last one to three years.

What goals have we developed?

As a faculty, we have reviewed all of the information I have collected—both quantitative and qualitative data—to derive three main goal areas, which will likely be a focus for 2-3 years or until we feel we are consistently seeing the desired positive impact on each.

The three main goals derived are as follows:

1. We want our students to increase their understanding and use of content relevant language (vocabulary and figurative language). This translates into words or phrases that may appear on various kinds of tasks and tests for which they are less familiar. Obviously, when this is the case, students experience difficulty in understanding what the question or task is actually asking or requiring them to do.
2. We want to identify students as soon as possible that demonstrate evidence of achievement issues (based on the multiple measures we use) and then provide the necessary intervention to support them towards increasing their achievement. We also want to support our teachers in feeling ever more capable of providing these interventions whilst attending to the curriculum.
3. We want to increase the frequency and clarity of the school's communication to the community/parents, and to develop and implement a consistent approach and plan for addressing disciplinary issues.

What will be evidence that our goals have been mastered or at that we're making adequate progress?

1. We will utilize teacher observations of students' work (classroom tasks) across multiple subject areas, as well as students' responses to questions on varied types of tests, including SBA and STAR when possible, to determine the impact our content relevant language goal is having.
2. Numeric data from our Early Intervention Planning (EIP) meetings will be used as evidence of improvement for goal #2.
3. Regarding our communication goal, feedback from you, and from the students and staff will be used to determine whether we are improving in this area.

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 continue to practice responding to such events under trained faculty direction and in a calm and orderly manner. It's also an excellent opportunity for the staff to further review and refine our procedures to avoid needing to think in the event that a real emergency does arise and simply act with speed and efficiency.

Month	Week of	Safety Drill
September	31	Fire drill
	10-14	Lockdown 1 (regular)
October	15-19	Fire drill
November	5-9	Fire drill
December	3-7	Fire drill
January	7-11	Lockdown 2 (drill 2)
February	11-15	Fire drill
March	11-15	Fire drill
April	8-12	Lockdown 3 (drill 3)
	22-26	Fire drill
May	20-24	Fire drill
June	3-7	Lockdown 4 (drill 4)

Curriculum Notes

STAR parent reports for students in K-2 will be available in the Campus Backpack on Infinite Campus on January 11. You will be notified when they are available.

Please remember that these reports represent just one piece of information about your child's progress.

Please reach out to your child's teacher with any questions.

A reminder to save the date for the Sherman Family STEAM Night, which will be on **February 6th** (Snow date Feb. 13th) from 6:15 to 7:30 p.m. STEAM Night permission slips will be sent home this week (1/7-11). Please keep an eye out for them in your child's backpack. Only one needs to be returned per family.

Important Events and Dates

Lockdown drill	January 7-11. Sometime during the week
Scoliosis testing (grade 5 only)	Tuesday, January 8
School store (during lunch) 5 th grade field trip (Discovery Museum)	Wednesday, January 9
Movie night	Friday, January 11 at 7:00pm
3 rd grade field trip (Discovery Museum)	Tuesday, January 15
PTA Meeting	Wednesday, January 16 at 7:00pm
Winter concert (5 th grade chorus and orchestra)	Thursday, January 17 at 7:00pm
STEAM (4 th grade cardboard challenge)	Friday, January 25
Sweetheart dance	Friday, February 1 (7:00-9:00pm)

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

A Few FYIs

Roger Sherman Building Committee (RSBC)

I would like to personally applaud the Roger Sherman Building Committee for its tireless efforts since its inception. It has worked diligently to consider options for parent pick-up/drop-off and stage/platform redevelopments from multiple angles and explored varied possibilities to increase efficiency and safety.

I want to continually remind and encourage you to stay informed and up-to-date on the building committee's work for our Phase III renovations by using the link (<https://www.fairfieldct.org/rsbc>). This will provide updates and progress on the agenda items and minutes for and of past meetings.

As always, I encourage you to attend the meetings or at the very least refer to link above for details regarding location, dates, times, because the committee has now tentatively selected a very new proposed plan for the parent drop-off and pick-up, which, if fully agreed upon and permitted, will look very different from the current one. There will likely be a chronological overview presented at this month's PTA meeting on this new drop-off and pick-up plan, but it is important that you be informed as soon as possible and ask questions of the committee at the scheduled RSBC meetings.

Reflections

Here's a final reminder for the *Reflections Arts Program* submissions, which are due on 1/14.19. This is a wonderful opportunity to support your child in developing other and often less emphasized forms of expression and creativity. We have issued reminders to the students during lunch times and will continue to do so during next week.

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