

One-Time Deadlines

Emergency Lesson Plans Friday, September 9th
 IIP's signed by parents & returned Thursday, October 27th (*Deadline in the law is end of the 1st MP. Earlier is better.*)
 Team budgets to 20% carry-over Wednesday, March 15th

Monthly Meeting Cycle

	SEP	OCT †	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
Team Leaders	*6	3	7	5	9	6	6	3	1	5
Teams	12	10	14	12	*17	13	13		8	
Prof. Development (Staff)	19	17	21	19	23	*21	20	10	15	
Special Ed Team (3:00-3:20)	20	18	15	20	18	22	21	25	16	
Content Areas	26	24	28		30	27	27		22	
Child Study Teams	21	12 & 26	9	1 & 14	11 & 25	8 & 22	8 & 22	12 & 26		

* Scheduled on Tuesdays because of Monday holidays.

† The annual mandatory Detection of Abuse training has been scheduled for OCT 31st**Marking Period Deadlines**

	1 st MP	2 nd MP	3 rd MP	4 th MP
Interim grades entered & verified	September 26	December 5	February 13	May 1
Marking Period grades entered & verified	November 7	January 23	April 3	June 5
All Stars names due to Teresa	September 13	November 15	February 14	April 25

Newsletter All articles should be written in **10 pt. Arial** and placed in the "Newsletter" folder on the public drive.

Issue	Deadlines	Themes
MP 1 Interims	SEP 21	Welcome back; preview of the year to come
MP 1 Report Cards	NOV 2	Trends, strengths, weaknesses in first quarter of the year
MP 2 Interims	NOV 30	Maintaining academic performance over the holidays
MP 2 Report Cards	JAN 18	Trends, strengths, weaknesses in 1 st half of the year (follow up from 1 st MP report cards)
MP 3 Interims	FEB 8	Final prep for the DSTP
MP 3 Report Cards	MAR 29	Managing the last quarter of the year; how to finish strong
MP 4 Interims	APR 25	Final comments; wrap-up of the year

DSTP Dates

Dates	6 th grade	7 th grade	8 th grade
October 17 & 18, 2005	Science		
October 20 & 21, 2005	Social Studies		
November 16, 2005	Writing Field Test	Writing Field Test	Writing Field Test
March 16 & 17, 2006	Math	Math	Math
March 20 & 21, 2006	Reading	Reading	Reading
March 22 & 23, 2006	Writing	Writing	Writing
May 23, 2006			Science
May 24, 2006			Social studies

NWEA Test Windows (6th & 7th grades only; NWEA = Northwest Evaluation Association)

1 st	2 nd	3 rd
September 26 – October 7	January 9 - 13 (tentative, may be extended)	April 6 – 12 (tentative, may be extended)

Professional Development Days

Dates	Activities
AUG 22 & 23	Building-level days: Opening activities, organizational meetings, room preparation
SEP 15 & 16	District day: DPAS II training <i>(not work days for paraprofessionals)</i>
SEP 23	District day: DPAS II training <i>(not a work day for paraprofessionals)</i>
NOV 4	District-level day: Quarterly assessments / NWEA
JAN 17	District-level day: Quarterly assessments / NWEA
APR 3	District level day: Quarterly assessments / NWEA
JUN 9*	Building-level day: Packing up for the year; closure activities & final meetings

* subject to change depending on weather-related school closings during the year

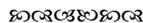
SCHOOL-WIDE EXPECTATIONS FOR 20XX-20YY

Principal's Comments: We are under Academic Review for missing our NCLB targets in special education. The highest priority for the year, therefore, will be to do whatever we need to do to meet those targets and to regain our Commendable rating. We will bring to bear whatever resources we have available to us from whatever level – our school, our district, DOE or beyond – to accomplish this goal. The good news is that our percentages in our other NCLB cells are good. We cannot afford to back off in our efforts in those cells, but we can afford to focus our extra efforts on special education.

We are participating in two district/state pilot programs this year. The DPAS II pilot will affect every certificated staff member, and it promises to bring major changes in the evaluation process. At the time this is being written (August), the details of DPAS II are not yet available. So far, we know only what we can get from reading the law, information provided by our professional associations, and Charlotte Danielson's *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*. From just that, though, we should expect a process that involves much more teacher/specialist data collection and analysis and much more professional reflection than did DPAS I. For some this may mean significant changes in practice. For most, however, the work we have done in past years here at Fifer should serve you well, and implementing DPAS II may mean little more than incorporating things you already do into the formal process.

English and math teachers in the 6th and 7th grades are participating in a pilot of an assessment program provided by the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA). The three NWEA assessments – one in late September or early October, then again in January and April – should provide valuable indicators of student performance and even more valuable information on individual student needs. When the program is fully implemented it should give us three interim indicators of student progress and needs, and should help us to monitor student progress more closely and scientifically from one DSTP to the next.

Given the time and effort that it will take to get out of Academic Review and to participate in the two pilots, it would be unreasonable to add major new school-level initiatives to the School-Wide Expectations. Reading, writing and math across the curriculum; planning with results in mind (including creating high quality classroom assessments); using rubrics to evaluate student work – all of these should be standard practice by now. They are effective in improving student performance and should put us ahead of the game with DPAS II. Expectations in these areas, therefore, will not change. Reaching the hard to reach student will become ever more important as NCLB targets approach 100%, and much of the work we will do here will flow from the information we get from NWEA and will fit perfectly with what we will be required to do for DPAS II.



Across the Curriculum: *Every teacher in the building is a teacher of reading, writing and math.* Every teacher should understand the terms “derive meaning,” “interpret meaning” and “extend meaning” and be able to show students how to do these things in his/her content area. (Is there a content area in which the purpose of reading is *not* to “derive meaning from text”? Is there a content area in which to be truly successful a student does *not* have to interpret what the author is saying, or to extend that meaning to the student's specific situation?) Similarly, *every* teacher should be aware of how mathematical concepts are applied in his/her content area, and should have definite strategies for teaching these applications to students. Finally, *every* teacher should be explicit about doing all this, and wherever possible should be explicit about the connections between content areas (“I know you learned this concept in math earlier this year. Now here's a way you can use this concept here in social studies class.”) In short, while knowing your curriculum is vital to becoming a good teacher, knowing the curricula of other content areas is now vital to becoming a master teacher.

While at their most basic levels reading is reading, writing is writing, and math is math, every content area has its own particular slant on how these skills are applied.

Reading: Analyze the reading that you require students to do (which should be the same type of reading done by professionals in your content area, albeit at a different level of complexity and proficiency) and integrate into your lesson plans specific instruction on strategies that will help students to pull the meaning the authors intend from the readings you assign. If all you want your students to get from a piece is the facts, then say so (and then don't worry about whether students read every word). If you want students to tune in to the underlying meaning (sarcasm in a

Comment [DLS1]: Opening comments – right from the start, setting the tone and being unambiguous about what is the Number One Priority for the year. Professionally stated, but no hedging, no beating around the bush.

Comment [DLS2]: This section is informational, introducing staff to two new pilot programs. This sets the stage for new work to come.

Comment [DLS3]: Trying to make a point about DPAS-II (a huge unknown for my staff) while also making it less threatening. There's also some back-up for the work I had been pushing for my staff to analyze data and to base their decisions on data. I was doing this already under DPAS-I (yes, it was possible and legal), and for my staff members who took it all to heart, I was predicting that DPAS-II would not be much of a change.

Comment [DLS4]: While we at the school did not seek involvement in the pilot, participating in it will give us an opportunity continue our work in using data and to take that work to a higher level.

To put it another way, this was imposed upon us by our district office, but we're going to fit it into our ongoing work and use it to help us reach our school goals.

Comment [DLS5]: Taking a stand as a principal. Our pattern was either to introduce some new initiative each year (always scaffolded to past work and always in keeping with our school focus and mission, and in the service of meeting our instructional goals). This year the district mandated our participation in two pilot programs, so with those and the work that we would have to do to get out of Academic Review I made the executive decision that it would be unreasonable to add building-level initiatives to this. This did not fit with my long-range plan as the principal, but it was the reality of the situation for the year. Notice that even under these circumstances, our past efforts were not abandoned. This is partly because I didn't want to give up any instructional ground gained, and partly because I/we believed that the work we were already doing was the right work to do to continue to improve our students' performance.

Notice also the tone. I'm taking a firm position while also being sympathetic/empathetic with my staff, but I'm keeping the tone professional and not talking down to my staff.

Comment [DLS6]: Here it is in writing. More than just a platitude – it's officially an expectation. The rest of this section goes on to operationalize this.

Comment [DLS7]: This is what I mean when I say that I want you to teach reading in your content area.

political essay or the implications for local ecology of the points made in a science article) then say so, and help students to see through the facts to the deeper meaning.

Writing: Each teacher will be expected to assign **at least one major writing assignment each marking period** and to reinforce the use of the writing process. For information on specifics related to the writing process, consult your team's English teacher.

- Every major writing assignment should serve at least **two general purposes** in addition to the specific goals of the assignment. Those purposes are:
 - to develop skills that students will need to succeed in high school, college and on the job, and
 - to improve students' scores on the writing section of the DSTP.
- **Writing assignments should be an integral part of the ongoing regular curriculum. They should not be assignments which stop the normal flow of instruction or which are included merely to meet this requirement.** Make sure that the type of writing you assign reflects the overall goals of the school and reflects the writing done by professionals in your discipline. Also make sure that the writing you assign reflects the grade-appropriate level and forms being taught in your students' English class this year. Refer to the state English Language Arts standards and work with the English teacher on your team to make sure your expectations are at the proper level for your students.
- **Most assignments in courses other than English should take the form of responses to text-based prompts.** Assignments should be designed purposely to improve students' abilities to determine, interpret and extend authors' meanings.
- Students' writing in these assignments should be **critiqued, not just graded.** Errors should be marked (using proper judgment with papers with many errors – the goal is to help students to improve, not to convince them that they are hopeless) and accompanied by teacher comments and suggestions for how to correct the errors and/or to improve the quality of the writing. For larger assignments, you may wish to assign separate grades for different steps in the process or assign one grade for content and another grade for writing quality, for use of appropriate grade level and content specific reading and research techniques, etc. (A well developed rubric can be very helpful here.) Here again, refer to the standards and work with English teachers to make sure your expectations are sufficiently high.
- One of the best ways to reinforce good writing is to model good writing. **All writing done by teachers should be of highest quality and should model competent, error-free written expression.**

Math: Each teacher will be expected to assign **at least one major assignment emphasizing mathematics each marking period** and to reinforce the concepts currently being taught in students' math classes. Planning for this assignment will require communication and cooperation with your team's math teacher.

DSTPprep: *The sole purpose of this class is to improve students' DSTP scores.* With that goal firmly in mind, teachers are expected to experiment with different instructional strategies and student groupings. As long as there is a clear emphasis on the best interests of the students and on improving their test scores, innovations will be supported in individual classes, within teams, or across a grade level or the entire school. All changes must be approved by the principal before being implemented, however.

Essential Arts: Essential arts teachers are expected to integrate a reasonable amount of reading, writing and math into their lessons. While some subjects lend themselves to this more easily than others, there is no subject in which these fundamental areas cannot be an integral part of instruction at least to some extent.

Rubrics – Good assessments are a key both to measuring student learning and to assessing the effectiveness of instruction, and good rubrics are perhaps the most effective tool for assessing most kinds of student work. Therefore, we will continue moving toward having all major classroom assignments (projects, reports, presentations, etc.) scored with rubrics. All good rubrics contain at least 3 elements:

- A listing of all items (or elements, categories, etc.) for which a student may earn points.
- A listing of the number of points a student may earn for each item.
- A detailed description and/or examples of the requirements for earning each level of points for each item. In essence, these descriptions and/or examples that define or demonstrate what constitutes good work, mediocre work or poor work in each area covered by the rubric. (Many novice rubric writers do not include this element. However without this element you have a points list but not a rubric, and much of the instructional value of a true rubric is lost.)

Rubrics should support, but not replace, analytic grading (i.e., critiquing as well as assigning a grade) as required in the Writing section above.

Comment [DLS8]: While I want writing to be well integrated into each course across a broad range of student work, in each marking period in each course I specifically want one assignment in which the focus will be writing.

Comment [DLS9]: I'm not just being a pain about this – it's part of a bigger picture...

Comment [DLS10]: The global, "biggest picture" level...

Comment [DLS11]: ...and the very pragmatic purpose, at the whole-school level.

Comment [DLS12]: This is both a general and a specific point.

Specifically, these particular assignments should be integral to the lesson.

Generally, assessments should be integrated into instruction, not activities that halt the progress of instruction. This is a significant change in practice for teachers who were trained in a tradition in which teaching and testing were two different things.

Comment [DLS13]: Pushing for best practice and also linking to what students will be expected to do on the DSTP. Reinforcing the point made above that writing assignments should be integral to the course and should fit right in to the natural flow of the course rather than be an add-on that stops the momentum of the course.

Comment [DLS14]: Setting the expectation, upping the level. Making sure the staff knows that I'm expecting "implementation" as opposed to just "compliance" – that I'm expecting students to get more out of this than just a score at the top of the paper.

Comment [DLS15]: Setting the expectation for professionalism. I will follow up by letting staff members know when I find an error in anything that they write (lesson plans, instructional materials, parent newsletters, etc.).

NOTE: In order to do this, I must myself be able to tell good writing from bad, and in order to have credibility with my staff I also must model the highest quality in the work that comes out of my office.

Comment [DLS16]: Mirrors the expectations for reading & writing.

Comment [DLS17]: This was a course taught in C.R.'s middle schools, so this may not have much application outside of those schools.

Comment [DLS18]: When I said "Every teacher..." I meant every teacher.

Comment [DLS19]: Rubrics had been an on-going effort in my building. This section reinforces the expectation that this good practice is to continue, and that new initiatives build upon, rather than replace, previous initiatives.

Use the state holistic scoring rubric in grading their major written assignments in order to help students gauge their performance in writing and to support the development of a shared understanding and definition of what good writing is for our students.

Use rubrics for all major assignments.

Professional Development – What is presented in professional development sessions should be used. Thoughtful and informed comments and criticism of these sessions in the interest of improving future offerings is always appropriate, as is a staff member saying that he/she is not using a specific strategy or technique from a professional development session but is instead using some other strategy or technique that also has been shown to be effective in accomplishing the same goals. Simply ignoring what is presented in professional development sessions, however, is never appropriate or acceptable.

Focus on Classroom Assessments – Lesson planning should show clear evidence of “planning with results in mind.”

Planning should begin with instructional goals (addressing state standards and performance indicators), continue with the creation of a high quality assessment to determine whether students have met those goals, and only then progress to the creation of actual lessons which will enable students to acquire and/or enhance the skills and knowledge required to meet those goals.

Every time Jess and I do an observation, whether that observation is announced or unannounced, we will ask for copies of all assessments that are related to the observed lesson. This will include class assignments, quizzes, activities and any other graded assignment up to and including the final test or project for the instructional unit of which the observed lesson is a part. Consistent with what is stated above, we expect to see well developed rubrics, to see use of reading and writing strategies specific to the content area being taught, and to see instruction that is geared toward appropriately high levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy.

Reaching the Hard-to-Reach Student and Improving Performance of Problematic NCLB Cells – As we bring ever higher percentages of students up to performance levels that meet the state standards, it is inevitable that we will spend more and more energy and resources on fewer and fewer individual students. Mel Levine’s A Mind at a Time and Schools Attuned processes, Eric Jenson’s and Richard Allen’s workshops on brain based learning, Ruby Payne’s insights into reaching students in poverty, and Robert Marzano’s *Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement* are all relevant. You also have picked up a broad array of tips, tricks and instructional strategies from sources ranging from DATE conferences and CMP training to your annual state inservice day activities to your own professional reading. Through the year Jess and I will continue to explore with you what you have learned and how you are applying it, and we will engage you in this conversation individually, in team and content area meetings, and in meetings of the whole staff.

Our challenges for the year are clear and straightforward, at least in concept: learn and implement DPAS II and NWEA, and use these and whatever else we can to get out of Academic Review and once again earn at least a Commendable rating. Meeting those challenges, however, will require no less than the best we all have to give.

Comment [DLS20]: Again, reinforcing the expectation.

Comment [DLS21]: If I take your professional time or if I spend the money to send you to a workshop, I expect not only that you will participate fully and learn what is to be learned in the session, but that you will apply/implement it in your classroom and in your professional practice. If the content of the PD is not narrowly focused on your content area and/or student population, I also will expect you to share your learning with your colleagues.

Comment [DLS22]: Teaching has specific goals (bringing the students up to grade-level standard in your content area), and planning should show how the teacher intends to get students to achieve those goals.

Comment [DLS23]: Taking away the “I didn’t know. You never told me.” excuses.

It will be important for both the assistant principal and the assistant principal both to follow up and to present to the staff a solid team

Comment [DLS24]: This whole document is setting the tone and the main content for the professional conversations that will take place over the year to come. Don’t just put this on the shelf – we (the principal & AP) will be bringing this conversation to you all through the year, and we expect you to be able to keep up your end of the conversation.

THE MONDAY MORNING MAIL



What's up at
Fifer Middle School
 for the week of
October 20, 2003

- Every student up one level! -

DEADLINES:

- None this week.

IMPORTANT:

- **Remember the standing directive to all teachers to read the DSTP.** No one may read any test before the first morning on which it is to be administered (10/20 for science, 10/23 for social studies), but you have until the end of the make-up period next week to get the job done. Regardless of your content area, you need this perspective.
- **Anyone who sees an accident should notify Karen Cabaud ASAP.** Recently the office has received a number of calls from parents making accident claims. Some of these calls are coming months after the accidents, and sometimes there are significant questions about specific circumstances or even about whether the accident really occurred on school property. Our standard accident reports help, but some accidents that happen outside of classes or sports practices go unreported. At last week's Principals' Cabinet meeting, we were asked to e-mail Vic Valeski every time any accident was witnessed on school property, and I want Karen Cabaud to coordinate this process for FMS. There is, of course, a whole spectrum of things that could be classified as accidents. The difference between the insignificant and the serious is often unclear, but for now please err on the side of over-reporting.

Character Word of the Week
dependability

Quick Stats:

OCR stats are not quite ready. Look for them in next week's MMM.

Final (pending audit) Sept. 30 th Enrollment [numbers in parentheses are from Sept. 30, 2002]					Discipline Referrals YTD 10/17/03	
Grade	Reg Ed	SpEd F/T	SpEd P/T	Totals	Grade/Prog	#
6	217 (212)	53 (40)	3 (3)	273 (255)	6	14
7	219 (194)	43 (45)	1 (3)	263 (242)	7	21
8	197 (213)	36 (37)	6 (0)	239 (250)	8	18
Totals	633 (619)	132 (122)	10 (6)	775 (747)	Sp. Programs	32
					Totals	85



News & Notes:

- **I have information from the Elks regarding a regional essay contest they are sponsoring.** There are two separate contests, one for 5th & 6th graders and another for 7th & 8th graders. The theme for both age groups is, "Why I am Proud to Say the Pledge of Allegiance." The information packet is now posted on the bulletin board outside of my office.

Web Site of the Week: <http://www.dcet.k12.de.us/teach/galgano/midcurriculum.htm>

This site was prepared by and is updated by Shari Galgano to provide CR middle school teachers with a one-stop source of links to web sites for all (or nearly all) content areas. This site requires either brevity or great length for its description, so I'll opt for brevity. Check it out. You'll be glad you did.

Looking Ahead: National School Bus Safety Week!

Monday – 20 th	Tuesday – 21 st	Wednesday – 22 nd	Thursday – 23 rd	Friday – 24 th
DSTP Science	DSTP Science		DSTP Social Studies	DSTP Social Studies
Content Area Meetings 3:00-3:40		Performing Arts Assembly 7 th grade only (see schedule in separate memo)		Sweet Treats (Blue 7) Stress Busters Happy Hour 4:30, Lone Star Steak House Dance (Blue 7) 6:00-9:00, cafeteria

Coming Up: Red Ribbon Week October 27-31

- 10/27 – **Staff Meeting**, 3:00; Mike Stetter from DOE presents on NCLB ← Note change of date!
- 10/29 – **School Picture Make-up Day**
- 10/30 – **End of 1st Marking Period**
- 10/31 – **Professional Development Day**; no classes

Long Term:

- 11/5 – **Report Cards** to students, 7th period
- 11/6 & 7 – **Parent conferences** Thursday evening (6:00-8:00) & Friday afternoon (1:00-3:00)

From Chester:

- Report cards are just around the corner. Make sure to have your grade reports up to date so we may run student reports without delay. If you're having problems now, let Holly know a.s.a.p.

Parting Comment:

- Both in formal observations and informal classroom visits, Chester & I are seeing some incredibly good teaching going on. In addition to planning solid and focused lessons, you are making creative use of our building's technology and you are getting better and better at integrating it seamlessly into your instructional strategies. Very impressive! Keep up the good work!
 → Special congratulations go to special ed teachers for getting us through last Monday's audit with no audit exceptions! ←



THE MONDAY MORNING MAIL



What's up at
Fifer Middle School
 for the week of
May 24, 2004
- Every student up one level! -

DEADLINES:

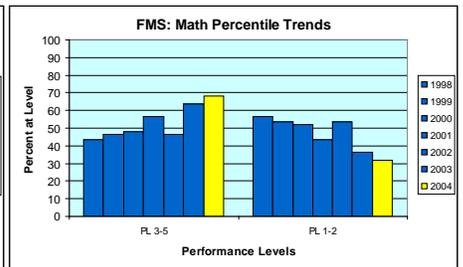
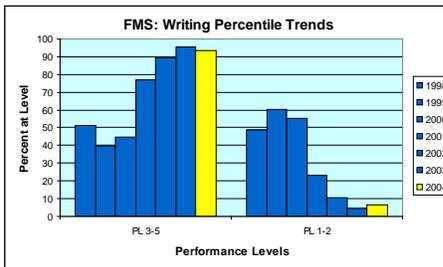
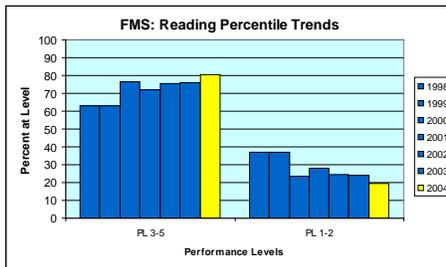
- None this week.

IMPORTANT:

- **March DSTP scores are on the DOE web site!** I had other plans for what I would include in this issue, but when I went looking on the DOE site for confirmation of the release date, I found the scores instead. Some highlights:
 - » Overall, scores are up.
 - » We cracked, if just barely, the 80% barrier for students meeting standard in reading (80.4%)
 - » We met the state target in special ed math! (34% of special ed students met standard; target is 33%)
 - » We missed the target in special ed reading, but we improved by 13.9%. (36.1% in '03, 50% in '04)
 - » We have some achievement gap work to do, now in reading as well as in math.

Character Word of the Week
truthfulness

REMEMBER
 This information is embargoed until it is released to the public by DOE.



- **Chester & I will be wrapped up with interviews** from just before noon until the end of the day on Monday. If you need us for anything, please get to us early in the day.

Web Site of the Week: http://www.doe.state.de.us/download/pdf/de_edactabilty.pdf

In the spirit of the day, here's the pdf file of DOE's official public brochure on school accountability. This is information that we all "know," at least until someone questions a detail. A refresher before students and parents start asking those questions couldn't hurt.

Looking Ahead:

Monday – 24th
Content Area mtgs.
 3:00-3:40

Tuesday – 25th

Wednesday – 26th



Thursday – 27th
Job Shadowing Day
 8th grade only
Performing Arts Assembly
 7th & 8th grades only
 details from M. Smith

Friday – 28th
Sweet Treats!
 courtesy of Blue 8

Coming Up:

- 5/31 – **Memorial Day**, schools & offices closed
- 6/2 – **National Board Certification informational meeting**, 3:30-4:30, CRHS Trailer C
- 6/2 – **National Junior Honor Society induction ceremony**, 7:00, cafeteria
- 6/3 – **Student Council elections**, voting during social studies classes
- 6/5 – **CRHS Commencement**, 10:00 a.m.

Long Term:

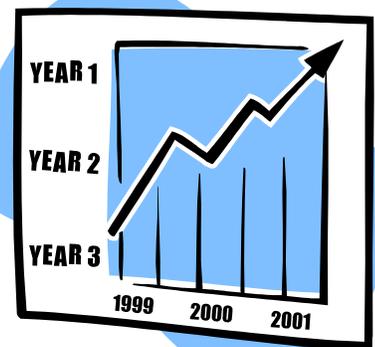
- 6/7 – **Team Leaders meeting**, 3:00, professional library; **Grades uploaded** by 4:00
- 6/9 – **Abbreviated day**, students dismissed at noon
- 6/10 – **Last student day**, students dismissed at noon; **Report Cards** to students, 7th period
- 6/11 – **Last teacher day**
- 6/12 – **3rd Annual FMS Golf Classic**, Jonathan's Landing

From Chester:

- Thanks to all those who came out the 8th grade dance and helped make it so. (Think Jean-Luc Picard... – Dave)

Parting Comment:

- We are coming into what can be our toughest time of the year. We have lots of tedious details to manage. We are pushing students to stay focused & engaged right to the end. We see our hopes for some students realized, while other students suddenly realize that they should have started working long ago. We have, of course, been telling them that for roughly nine months now. Even more frustrating are the parents who have been vacationing somewhere in Absentia since September and who now surface and want to blame all of their kids' problems on us. 'Twas ever thus. Trust your judgment. Keep students working until the last day – the school year is coming to an end, but next year's teachers are counting on the work you do now. Keep up the good work!



THE MONDAY MORNING MAIL

What's up at
Fifer Middle School
for the weeks of
May 30, 2005
- Every student up one level! -



DEADLINES:

- None this week.

Important:

Character Word of the Week
maturity

- **7th & 8th grade lunches will be reversed on Wednesday, June 1st.** The 8th grade teams are participating in a half-day poetry presentation at the high school, and they need to have the middle lunch to split the day evenly.
- **The summer training calendar is out.** I have placed hard copies in the library and on the counter under the mailboxes in the copy room. I've placed the e-version in the Documents folder on the public drive. It's an Adobe document titled "2004_2005SummerCalendar". See the "Web Sites of the Week" below for registration help.
- **DSTP data analysis for June 13-14** – By now many of you are deep into your own personal efforts to analyze the March DSTP data. 8th grade English and math teachers know where they stand with respect to PLs and percentages of students meeting standards, and most have done student-by-student checks comparing this year's raw scores with last year's. 6th & 7th grade teachers have done much the same, although without PLs. For now all I ask is that you continue this on your own, looking at whatever aspect of the data interests you and drawing what conclusions you can. I plan to distribute a sheet next week on which I would like you to enter some specific bits of information. During the afternoons on the 13th & 14th we will compile and begin our group analysis of this and other information.
- **I am looking for volunteers to explore the concept of "exhibitions of mastery."** There is far more to this than I can get into here and now, but the basic idea is that instruction should lead up to some means for students to show what they know. Generally we think of tests and quizzes as serving this function, but the vast majority of tests and quizzes do not begin to demonstrate the levels of mastery implied by exhibitions. (Would you trust a surgeon who had only passed the written exam?) I am looking for teachers who would be willing to plan through next year with the goal of partial implementation by spring '06 and full implementation beginning in August '06. I will work with anyone who is interested, but I would love to find a team or two that is interested in working up to some high level multidisciplinary exhibitions. Please let me know if you are interested. I would like to have an initial meeting either before the last teacher day or early in the summer. [For more on exhibitions, see the Coalition of Essential Schools article at http://www.essentialschools.org/cs/resources/view/ces_res/138. The article is long but very informative.]
- **Repeat items from last week:** Please don't forget about reviewing the *Faculty & Staff Handbook* and the pages of potential SIP items distributed at the May staff meeting.

Web Sites of the Week: <http://10.84.2.15/instr/eduws/Entry.asp> ; <http://10.84.2.15/instr/eduws/Teacherlist.asp>

Two related sites this week. The first is for the district's Teacher Workshop Registration page. As you might expect, you go to this page to register for any of the summer workshops being offered by the district. You'll need to enter your SSN to get in, but then registering is just a matter of entering a few bits of ID information and choosing sessions from a drop down menu. The second URL lets you access a page that lists all workshops for which you have registered. If you haven't registered for any, your page will be blank. If you have registered for workshops, your page should contain a complete listing of your summer CR workshop plans. If you have registered online but the workshop doesn't show up on your listings page, that's a sign that you need to make a call to the Instructional Division. Use both of these URLs in conjunction with the training calendar & accompanying info mentioned above.

Looking Ahead:

Monday – 30th
Memorial Day
schools & offices closed

Tuesday – 31st

Wednesday – 1st
Week Without Walls
activities begin, 8th grade
7th & 8th grade lunch times reversed

Thursday – 2nd

Friday – 3rd
8th Grade Dance
7:00-10:00, cafeteria

Coming Up:

- 6/4 – CRHS Commencement, 10:00 a.m.
- 6/6 – Team Leaders mtg., 3:00
- 6/7 – **DEADLINE: 4th marking period grades & final grades** uploaded by 3:30; **Honor Society initiations**, 7:00 p.m., cafeteria
- 6/10 – **Last student day**, abbreviated – students dismissed at noon; **Staff Progressive Luncheon & End-of-Year celebrations**

Long Term:

- 6/11 – 4th Annual FMS Golf Classic
- 6/13-14 – **Professional development days**, schedule TBA
- 6/15 – **Final check-out day**

From Jess:

- "Character is not made at a time of crisis, it is demonstrated."
Just a friendly reminder – Other Indicator folders will be collected during one of our last three in-service days.

Parting Comment:

- 8½ school days left! Student energy levels are rising even as motivation levels are dropping. Still, those 8½ days represent nearly 5% of the school year – time enough for significant teaching and learning. It ain't over 'til it's over!



THE MONDAY MORNING MAIL



What's up at
Fifer Middle School
for the weeks of
October 3, 2005
– *Every student up one level!* –

DEADLINES:

- None this week.

Important:

- **Senator Carper will be visiting us again on Tuesday afternoon.** While arranging the Senator's visit with students last spring I asked for and received a promise that he would return sometime later to meet with staff to discuss accountability issues in general and NCLB in particular. Given that we are under review for missing targets in our special ed cell and that what I'm hoping for is a round table discussion rather than an address from the Senator, I have asked our special ed teachers to represent the staff as a whole for this meeting. Please see me, Jess or one of your special ed colleagues if you have issues or concerns that you would like to have brought up.

News & Notes:

- **Bus evacuation drills will be run on Wednesday** immediately after student dismissal. If you can help, please come to the front of the school as soon as students have left your area. Jess or I or Penny Barkley will give you instructions at that time.
- **All forms for the DPAS II Pilot are now available in the FORMS folder on the public drive.** Teachers and specialists should need only the Data Work Sheet and the Pre-Observation Form, but the complete set is here for all just in case.
- **██████████ has been accepted to participate in the People to People World Conference in Washington, D.C.** Participation is rather expensive, however, and ██████████'s family will appreciate any fundraising help it can get. Please see ██████████ or contact his parents if you have ideas or would like to make a contribution.

Web Site of the Week: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/703727.stm>

In the "We are not alone" department, here's a short BBC story about crowding in a Welsh elementary school. It begins, "A west Wales primary school is so short of space that children take their playtimes in shifts and the staff room has been moved to a cupboard under the stairs." This story's worth reading if only to catch the name of this Welsh-language school.

Looking Ahead:

Monday – 3rd

Tuesday – 4th

Wednesday – 5th

Thursday – 6th

Friday – 7th

NWEA Testing in library & library computer lab

Team Leaders mtg.
3:00, library

Bus Evacuation Drills
2:45, front parking lot

DPAS II Volunteers
3:00, library

Coming Up:

All week: NWEA Testing in the library (ends FRI 10/14); **National School Lunch Week**

- 10/10 **Team meetings**, 3:00-3:40
- 10/15 **DEADLINE: TB Test results due to District Office** (*only* for those who answered "Yes" on the state TB survey)

Long Term:

- 10/17 **DSTP Science**, 6th grade only
Staff meeting, 3:00, library
- 10/18 **DSTP Science**, 6th grade only
Special Ed team meeting, 3:00, library
- 10/20 **DSTP Social Studies**, 6th grade only
- 10/21 **DSTP Social Studies**, 6th grade only
- 10/31 **DEADLINE: IIP's** completed, signed & filed

– ENROLLMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY –

The 866 students who made up our official Sept. 30th roster constitute our initial accountability list – the DSTP scores of any student on that roster who is still with us at the end of the school year will count toward our SY'06 school rating. With this in mind, I have batch printed multiple copies of the Individual Student DSTP Profile for all 866 students. The batch printed profiles list students' accommodations and provide clearer reporting of science and social studies scores than the individually printed profiles. I will distribute and discuss these profiles at Monday's team leader meeting.

From Jess:

- Interims went out on Wednesday, and we have received many calls from parents stating that they were unaware of their child's grade. Communication is key! Let us be proactive and not reactive. In the beginning of this school year, Ylester sorted through the entire stack of the blue cards to find those with email addresses. She then typed the addresses into SASI for your teacher use. IGPro is an excellent resource for keeping parents up-to-date on current grades, missed assignments, etc. It takes a few steps to setup your grade book for email mailing progress reports:
 1. Log into IGPro
 2. Setup
 3. Communication
 4. Under the General Tab — type in the your name, TAB to the next line to type in your email address
 5. Under the Email Tab — type in the email server, imail.k12.de.us, TAB to the next line to type in your nameI strongly encourage you to utilize this resource as it is a wonderful tool of communication, saving valuable time that might be otherwise spent conducting parent phone calls or conferences.

☞ "I try to take one day at a time, but sometimes several days attack me at once." ☞

Parting Comment:

- The September 30th count is only just completed, but already 1/8 of the school year is behind us!



THE MONDAY MORNIN MAIL



What's up at
ifer Middle School
 for the weeks of
ctober 17 & 24, 2005
- Every student up one level! -

DEADLINES:

- None this week.

Important:

- **Remember that the order of periods is changed for Tuesday, Thursday & Friday** because of the DSTP. See the separate schedule distributed last week for details.

Web Site of the Week: <http://www.doe.state.de.us/englangarts/assessment.htm>

The existence of this section of the DOE web site should be old news to any Delaware teacher. DOE has posted Item Samplers since 1999, but these new ELA pages are the first of the next generation of offerings. English teachers should be (or soon become) thoroughly familiar with these updated pages, but there is virtually nothing here that does not apply in some way to any reading or writing done in any course. For teachers of other content areas, I recommend starting with the Reading Stances and the Item-Specific Rubric Development Guidelines. Writing Prompts from the DSTP and the Reading Item Sampler are particularly valuable resources for understanding both expectations at each grade level and how those expectations increase between levels.

Looking Ahead: National School Bus Safety Week

Monday – 17 th	Tuesday – 18 th	Wednesday – 19 th	Thursday – 20 th	Friday – 21 st
DSTP Science	DSTP Science		DSTP Social Studies	DSTP Social Studies
Staff meeting 3:00, library	Special Ed Team mtg. 3:00, library			Stress Busters Social Hour / Movie Night 5:00, Atwoods

DSTP Notes: • Bells will be turned off after 8:00 and will stay off until each day's testing is completed.
 • Please take a minute each morning to remind students of the changes in their lunch times.

Monday – 24 th	Tuesday – 25 th	Wednesday – 26 th	Thursday – 27 th	Friday – 28 th
Content Area mtgs. 3:00-3:40	Chorus Concert 7:00, gym	Band Concert 7:00, gym	PTO meeting 6:00, library	Sweet Treats! courtesy of Gold 7 School Picture Re-Take Day
				Dance (Blue 7) 6:00-9:00, cafeteria

Coming Up:

- 10/31 **End of 1st Marking Period; DEADLINE: IIP's** completed, signed & filed
Child Abuse Detection training, MANDATORY FOR ALL STAFF, 3:00, library
Stress Busters Cake Auction, professional library
- 11/4 **Professional Development Day** (quarterly assessments & interpreting NWEA results)
- 11/7 **Team Leaders meeting**, 3:00, library
- 11/9 **Report Cards** to students during 7th period
Abbreviated day, students dismissed at 12:30
Evening parent conferences, 6:00-8:00
- 11/10 **Abbreviated day**, students dismissed at 12:30
Afternoon parent conferences, 1:00-3:20
- 11/11 **Veterans' Day**, schools & offices closed

Long Term:

- 11/14 **Team meetings**, 3:00-3:40
- 11/15 **Referendum Day**, polls open noon-9:00
Fall Sports Awards Program, details TBA
- 11/16 **DSTP Writing field test**, grades 6-8
- 11/17 **PTO meeting**, 6:00, library
Turkey Bingo, 6:30, cafeteria
- 11/18 **Dance** (Gold 7), 6:00-9:00, cafeteria
- 11/21 **Staff meeting**, 3:00, library
- 11/23 **Thanksgiving break begins**, work day for 12-month employees only

From Jess:

- We have completed our first session of the NWEA. As you begin to analyze the math and reading reports, verify to see if there are any correlations between the NWEA and the DSTP's assessment of students' needs.

☞ "Life is short, and it is up to you to make it sweet." ☞

Parting Comment:

- Being visible in the halls will be extra important this week. Let's make sure the changing order of our class periods does not create any more disruption than is absolutely necessary.



THE MONDAY MORNING MAIL



What's up at
Fifer Middle School
 for the weeks of
January 2 & 9, 2006
— Every student up one level! —

DEADLINES:

- None during these 2 weeks

Important:

- **The October science & social studies DSTP scores** were posted just before the break. I've only been able to give the score summaries a quick glance, but we appear to be above the state percentages and in a respectable position with respect to the district. This will be of particular interest to science and social studies teachers, but I also expect all other teachers at least to take a look at the summary reports and at the scores of at least a selection of individual students. The more eyes we have cruising the data, the more likely we are to spot trends and critical needs. **NOTE: These scores and related information are embargoed until the presentation to the State Board on FEB 16th.**
- **Quarterly assessment expectations** – I have had several questions as to whether teachers are or are not required to give quarterly assessments. Most questions have begun with something like “I've heard that...”, but I've discussed the matter with Lou Ann and the bottom line is clear: teachers directly involved in the NWEA pilot are encouraged but not required to give the quarterly assessments; all other teachers are expected to give the quarterly assessments for their content areas and to participate in the scoring of those assessments during the January 17th inservice day.
- **Please welcome Jason Kane**, as he returns to us this week as our new (old? returning?) School Resource Officer!

Character Word of the Week

1/2 – cooperation
 1/9 – tolerance

Web Site of the Week:

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/data/forecasts/DEZ002.php?warncounty=DEC001&city=Dover>

It doesn't have all the bells & whistles that the commercial sites do, but the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) does provide about the best weather forecasting available. There are no sales pitches and no pop-ups, just no-nonsense information that's good to have during these unpredictable winter months. Here's the URL for the Kent County forecast.

Looking Ahead:

Monday – 2nd
New Year's Holiday
 schools & offices closed

Tuesday – 3rd
Schools Reopen

Wednesday – 4th

Thursday – 5th

Friday – 6th

Monday – 9th

Tuesday – 10th

Wednesday – 11th

Thursday – 12th

Friday – 13th

NWEA Testing in library & library computer lab

Team Leaders Meeting
 prof. library, 3:00

End of 2nd MP

Coming Up:

- 1/16 **Martin Luther King Day**, schools & offices closed
- 1/17 **Stress Busters' Fundraiser at Chicago Uno**
- 1/17 **Professional Development Day**, NWEA workshops & scoring of quarterly assessments
- 1/17 **Team Meetings**, 3:00-3:40
- 1/18 **Special Education Staff meeting**, 3:00, library
- 1/18 **DEADLINE: Newsletter articles** by 4:00
- 1/19 **PTO mtg.**, 6:00, library
- 1/20 **Dance** (Blue 6), 6:00-9:00, cafeteria
- 1/23 **DEADLINE: 2nd MP grades** uploaded & verified by 3:00
- 1/23 **Staff Meeting**, 3:00, library
- 1/25 **Report Cards** to students, 7th period
- 1/26 **Abbreviated Day**, students dismissed at 12:30
- 1/26 **Evening Parent Conferences**, 6:00-8:00
- 1/27 **NWEA Testing ends**



Long Term:

- 1/30 **Content Area Mtgs.**, 3:00-3:40
- 2/1 **Stress Busters' Valentine carnation sale** begins
- 2/6 **Team Leaders mtg.**, 3:00. prof. library
- 2/6 **8th Grade Visitation @ CRHS**, 7:00 p.m.
- 2/8 **DEADLINE: Newsletter articles** by 4:00
- 2/8 **District Spelling Bee**, 7:00 p.m., Allen Frear cafeteria

From Jess:

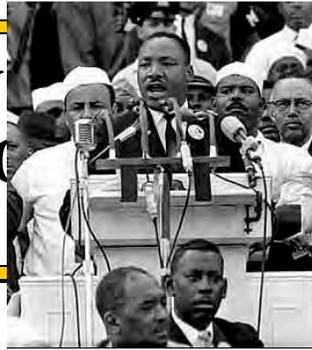
- Happy New Year and welcome back from your well rested break! The second round of NWEA testing will begin on the 9th.

☺ “All work is a seed sown: It grows and spreads, and sows itself anew.” - Carlyle ☺

Parting Comment:

- It's a brand new year. Let's make the most of it!

THE MONDAY MORNING MAIL



What's up at
Fifer Middle School
 for the weeks of
January 16 & 23, 2006
- Every student up one level! -

DEADLINES:

- 1/18 – **Newsletter articles** by 4:00
- 1/23 – **2nd MP grades** uploaded & verified by 3:00
- 1/27 – **Remove unneeded & outdated files from public drive**

Character Word of the Week
 1/16 – **competent**
 1/23 – **independence**

Important:

- **It's time to purge the public drive!** Sometime between now and the 27th, please remove any files that belong to you and no longer need to be available to all staff. On the 28th or 29th I will place all files that I think should be removed into a "Purge" folder, then I'll give you one last chance to rescue files before I delete them for good.
- **Access to classroom wings will be highly restricted on game days** (generally Mondays and Thursdays). The elevator as well as the fire doors on the first floor will be locked sometime around 3:30. I apologize for the inconvenience, but we have had far too many students lately who want to go to lockers or just wander the halls during and after games. With that in mind, **please take a minute in 7th period on Thursday to remind students** that they should treat game days just like any other day when they are dismissed at 2:45.

News & Notes:

- **DelDot has a new sign law.** This law 1) regulates where signs created by individuals, organizations and others (including political candidates) may be placed; 2) gives DelDOT power to remove improperly placed signs; and 3) creates a fine of \$25.00 **per sign** removed by DelDOT. Check the library or the bulletin board outside my office for details. Coaches, club sponsors and anyone working with a group that might innocently post a sign for a car wash or similar fund raiser should take note.

Web Site of the Week:

<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/11/11292005.html>

Here's a 4-paragraph press release from Margaret Spellings marking the 30th anniversary of I.D.E.A. (If you don't know what that is, just ask any special ed teacher.) There's lots of fodder here for making meaning from text, although I think that our professional reading of her statement may yield meaning that's very different from what the general public will get.

Looking Ahead:

Monday – 16 th	Tuesday – 17 th	Wednesday – 18 th	Thursday – 19 th	Friday – 20 th
Martin Luther King Day schools & offices closed Stress Busters' Fundraiser @ Chicago Uno Pizza	Prof. Dev. Day see agenda distributed separately	Special Ed Staff Mtg. 3:00, library DEADLINE: Newsletter articles by 4:00	PTO Meeting 6:00, library	Dance (Blue 6) 6:00-9:00, cafeteria
Monday – 23 rd	Tuesday – 24 th	Wednesday – 25 th	Thursday – 26 th	Friday – 27 th
DEADLINE: 2 nd MP grades by 3:00 Staff Meeting 3:00, library	DEADLINE: Interim grades uploaded & verified by 3:00	Report Cards to students, 7 th period	Abbreviated Day students dismissed at 12:30 Evening Parent Conferences 6:00-8:00	NWEA Testing Ends DEADLINE: Public drive file purge

Coming Up:

- 1/30 **Content Area Mtgs.**, 3:00-3:40
- 2/1 **Stress Busters' Valentine carnation sale** begins
- 2/6 **Team Leaders mtg.**, 3:00, prof. library
- 2/6 **8th Grade Visitation @ CRHS**, 7:00 p.m.
- 2/8 **DEADLINE:** Newsletter articles by 4:00
- **District Spelling Bee**, 7:00 p.m., Allen Frear cafeteria

Long Term:

- 2/15 **DEADLINE:** Interim grades uploaded & verified by 3:00
- 2/20 **Presidents' Day**, schools & offices closed

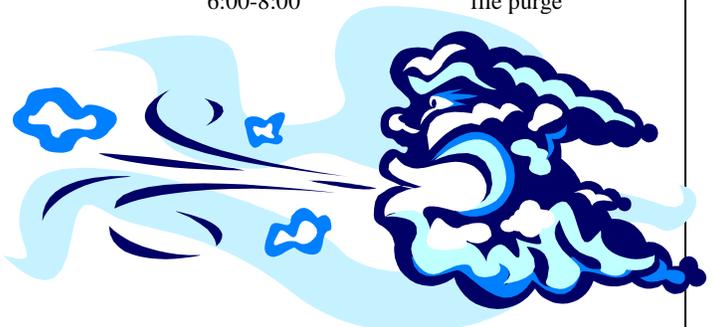
From Jess:

- Teachers, thank you for reviewing the school's dress code with your students. First period teachers: if you see students that are not dressed appropriately and do not have a change of clothes, please send them to the main office.

☞ "Act the part and you will become the part." - ☞

Parting Comment:

- Last March I made my annual statement of my view that the 1st class day after the DSTP marked the real beginning of the new school year. From that perspective, we have just entered the final quarter of what we might call the "assessment year." While every marking period brings new and vital student learning, by now our students should have nearly all of the skills and knowledge they will need when they take the DSTP just 8 short weeks from now. As we engage in Tuesday's professional activities, let's keep our focus on where our students are, where they need to be by March 16th, and what we – all of us, together, across grades and schools and content areas – must do to get them there.



Monday Morning Mail

School Logo
Here

What's up at
School Name
Here
for the week of
Month XX, 20XX

DEADLINES:

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IMPORTANT:

.

News & Notes:

.

Web Site of the Week: (URL here)

xxx

Looking Ahead:

Monday – 14th

Event
time & location

Tuesday – 15th

Event
time & location

Wednesday – 16th

Event
time & location

Thursday – 17th

Event
time & location

Friday – 18th

Event
time & location

Coming Up:

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Long Term:

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Parting Comment:

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