



EXPLORATIONS

Blue Hill Consolidated School

60 High Street • Blue Hill, Maine 04614

March 17, 2016

From the Principal — Testing Time

It's that time of year again! Maine's public school students in grades 3-8 (and in the third year of high school) will be assessed in the areas of math and ELA as required by state and federal legislation. You may recall that the Smarter Balanced Assessment from last year was thrown out by our legislature due to a lot of discontent from parents, school boards, and educators throughout the state. It has been replaced by an assessment called eMPower ME, a computer-based assessment developed by Measured Progress - the same testing company that develops Maine's science assessment. The Maine Department of Education had this to say about the new test, "In selecting a new MEA for mathematics and ELA/literacy, the Maine Department of Education set out to reduce the amount of testing time while still providing the detailed information educators and parents need to inform school and student progress toward meeting standards."

The testing window is four weeks long beginning Monday, March 21 and ending Friday, April 15. Students will sit for seven separate tests ranging from 50-80 minutes. BHCS students in grades 3-5 and 7-8 will begin testing early next week, and sixth grade the following. Due to the need for one-to-one computers for testing, grades 3-5 will be sharing the 14 computers in the library, and it will take us three weeks to get those grades all the way through the testing.

Teachers have had students practice using sample questions online provided by the DOE. If you'd like to view some of the sample items, they can be viewed here: <http://www.maine.gov/doe/assessment/math-ela/administration/index.html>.

We recognize that no single test can give a complete picture of achievement for our students, nor our school. The purpose of standardized testing is to give us as educators and you as families a better understanding of areas of strength and weakness to improve. If we were to receive test results in a timely manner, we might be able to use them to help us determine where our school needs to review and improve curriculum along with particular areas our individual students need more support. However, if I'm being honest, most often we receive this data for our

school far too late to actually use it efficiently. I hope that this year the new testing company will follow through with their promise to provide more timely results.

We are committed to supporting student achievement. We are confident that, with the quality instruction delivered by our committed, dedicated educators, and your support, our students can meet and exceed these expectations. I encourage you to reach out to Dawn Robbins, School Union #93 Curriculum Coordinator, or myself with any questions you may have about the MEA.

Warmly,
Shelly

Kudos

Kudos to fourth grade teachers Patty Clapp and Melissa Norwood! These two hard-working teachers coordinate a "Senior Partner" activity each year with their students. Last Thursday, each student in fourth grade met at school with a senior citizen to interview them about their lives. Within the next month, these students will write biographies to present to their partners at the Senior Partner Tea. It is a wonderful activity connecting curriculum to our community! Thank you, Patty and Melissa!

PTF News

The next PTF Meeting will take place at 2:45 PM on March 17. We will be discussing upcoming events such as Blue Hill Town Meeting childcare, Screen Free Week activity support, and Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week. We would love to hear your ideas and input! Contact Sarah King at ptf@bhcs.org with any questions.

Young Author's Camp

This summer there will be an opportunity for students in grades 5-8 to participate in the Maine Writing Project Young Authors Camp. This is the first year the camp is being offered here at BHCS and we are very excited about the program. The session will run from June 27-July 1. Please see the attached flier for complete information.

School News from the Communication Club

This Saturday our jazz bands are going to the state jazz festival. They will be performing at Nokomis High School. The 88's will perform at 3:30 PM and the Ever Ready's will perform at 2:00 PM. Good luck to the jazz bands!

BEEM Bash

Come figure out whodunit... was it you? Or are you just an innocent bystander? Watch the mystery unfold or take an active role--find out more at the *BEEM Bash: Mystery Edition* at Barncastle on April 8! This great, adults only event helps raise funds for the innovative learning happening at BHCS.

- Interactive mystery theater
- Silent auction
- Dancing with DJ Gary Milliken

Tickets: \$35 at the door, \$30 if purchased before 3/31; BHCS staff and guest are \$15, if purchased before 3/31. Come in Caribbean attire and receive a free beverage. Buy online at www.bhcs.org/beem or bring money to the school office.

More information can be found on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/beembluehill).

Attachments

Be sure to check out the attachments this week. There are many amazing opportunities happening around our community.

Dates to Remember...

Thur., Mar. 17	Chess Team St. Patrick's Day Dinner Fundraiser, 5:00
Fri., Mar. 18	Semi-formal Dance, Blue Hill, Gr. 6-8, 6-9 PM
Sat., Mar. 19	Jazz Band to States - Good Luck
Fri., Mar. 25	No School - Teacher Inservice
Tue., Mar. 29	Gr. 6 Spanish Class to Milbridge
Fri., Apr. 1	Don't forget to vote!
Sat., Apr. 2	Town Meeting, 9:00 AM BHCS Gym - PTF will be providing childcare

Support BEEM! Join us on Friday, April 8 for the BEEM Bash: Mystery Edition at the Barncastle.



Did you know that Friday, March 25th was an in-service day at BHCS? Don't worry, PMAL's got you covered!

From 8 am till 3 pm PMAL will be transforming into a lab for mad scientists! Ever wondered how to make your own rocket, or how to make a battery out of a potato? Those are just a few of the fascinating experiments that we will be doing! If your K through 5th grader is interested, please register before March 22nd. Registration is \$50 per student.

Please feel free to email us at renee@pmalcenter.com, or call us at 374-5255.

Free for picking it up:

Kimball piano, 20 years old, in Bucksport.

Contact Dick Howard 374-2420

Transgender, Family and Friends Group (TGFF) provides support for families, friends and transgender people of all ages. TGFF meets twice monthly, next meeting is March 24 at 7:30 pm, at First Congregational Church, Blue Hill. Details, contact Susan Yaruta-Young, [\(207\) 460.6155](tel:(207)460.6155) or email: syyoung@myfairpoint.net. In case of stormy or icy weather, please contact Susan to see if the session is on.

Blue Hill Heritage Trust & Blue Hill YMCA

Present the 1

HOP! Trail Run & Egg Hunt

Saturday, March 19

Race Registration- 8:15am \$5 suggested donation (t-shirts for the first 30)

Race Start Time- 9am,

Trail Run Terrain- Roads, Sidewalks, and Woods Trail (3K)

Egg Hunt- 10am (12 & Under)

For more information, please contact Chrissy at the Blue Hill Heritage Trust [\(207\)374-5118](tel:(207)374-5118) or chrissy@bluehillheritagetrust.org