Dear Smith Families,

Well, it has certainly been a snowy one! …Winter, that is! I, for one, am glad to thaw out and hopefully move on to some mud sales, outdoor walks, and barbecues.

One sign of the seasonal change that is upon is spring testing. Our students are always enthusiastic and hard-working, displaying a positive attitude each day of testing. I was very impressed by the daily effort that they all put forth last year, and expect this year will be the same! Please read the important reminders about testing below.

We discourage families from making any plans for family trips during these dates and also would like to remind you that any trip/excused day requests must go through our office (on a pre-approved educational trip form) in advance of the absence.

Cell phone/electronic device usage or possession in any testing room/environment is strictly prohibited and can incur serious disciplinary consequences. Please discuss with your child the importance of any phone or electronic device to be placed in their locker and turned off immediately upon entering school daily.

Your commitment to sending your child to school daily, encouraged and well-rested, makes all of the difference!

PSSA Testing Dates
- Math/Reading (Grades 6-8) – March 25-28
- Math/Reading Make-Ups – March 31-April 4
- Writing (Grade 8) – April 8-10
- Science (Grade 8) – April 29-30
- All Other Make-Ups – May 1-6

We have a great opportunity for you to encourage your child in a very personal way! Please stop in the school office between March 17 and 21 to write a personal, SURPRISE, encouraging note to your child that will be hand-delivered to him/her on the day(s) of testing.

We believe in each of our students at Smith Middle School! Our teachers are working hard daily to meet their individual needs, ensuring that they are able to make progress academically. Students’ efforts really pay off when they are able to shine during testing time!

Sincerely, Mrs. McLaughlin
Assistant Principal
Christina_mclaughlin@solanco.k12.pa.us
PTO Update:

It has been a long snowy winter, but that has not stopped PTO! The 6th and 7th grade parties were a success, thank you to those who helped. Once again the student vs. faculty basketball game was a big hit. Thank you to the many people who helped make this event a night for our kids to remember.

We are preparing for our ONLY fundraiser, Be Wise Exercise. We needs lots of help in the coming weeks for this. There is a job for everyone. Please contact Colleen Davis @ 717-723-5619, call or text to see what you can do. PLEASE LIKE OUR PTO FACEBOOK PAGE, Smith Middle School PTO, for updates and information regarding your children.

Think Spring!!
colleendavis20@yahoo.com

Colleen Davis, Smith PTO President

Counselor’s Corner

Hope everyone is defrosting from all of this crazy weather! As we trek through the rest of the cold, wintry season, Spring is just around the corner! And so are PSSA’s! Here are a few tips for parents to help students do their BEST FOR THE TEST!

- Discuss the test openly and in a positive way.
- Have realistic expectations of your child's performance while encouraging his/her best efforts.
- Emphasize that the test is only one measure of academic performance.
- Emphasize that test scores do not determine a person's worth.

On Testing Day:

- See that your child is rested and eats breakfast.
- See that your child arrives at school on time and is relaxed.
- Encourage your child to do the best work possible.
- Do not send your child to school if illness is apparent.
- Do not remove your child from school on test days for appointments.

Soon, your student(s) should be coming home with more information about upcoming tests. If you have any questions, let me know! Contact Mrs. Gallagher at lynnette_gallagher@solanco.k12.pa.us

6th Grade Team News

Language Arts- In Mr. McDowell's class, students will focus on utilizing PSSA test taking strategies for multiple choice and open ended questions. Emphasis will be on completeness and accuracy in answering questions and prompts. Students will focus on reading and comprehension strategies along with vocabulary usage within the context of the text in the classroom novel, Trouble River.

In Miss. DeGrasse’s class, students will focus on types of questions as well as open ended practice as it relates to PSSA preparation. Authentic literature will continue to be used to extend and refine reading strategies and enhance vocabulary skills.

LEAD- LEAD students will be working on text structure and ways that non-fiction text can be organized and recognized. Students will begin work on a book project for the third marking period.

Math- In math class, students will be continuing to look at different aspects of Geometry. We will be discussing different triangles and quadrilaterals, and also be looking into the “find a pattern” strategy.

Science- Students will continue to study protists (protozoans, bacteria, plant like protists). After protists students will learn about plants. We will continue to study the process of photosynthesis. We will also examine the inner parts of plants (annual rings, phloem & xylem tubes, etc.).

Social Studies- Students will be starting a unit on ancient Greece. Geography, Greek gods, achievements, government, economics and social levels of the civilization will be discussed as well as the Persian Wars, Peloponnesian War and the Trojan War.

Front: Mr. McDowell, Miss DeGrasse, Mr. Himmelberger, Miss Stermer, Mrs. Noll
Back: Mrs. S. Lee, Mr. Little
7th Grade Team News

Math/Math Extensions: In March, students will be completing a unit on multiplications including rates, area, volume and rotations. They will also be reviewing several math concepts in preparation for the upcoming PSSA math test.

LEAD: Students will continue to teach reading strategies for the purpose of comprehension and emphasizing test taking strategies.

Social Studies: Students will be learning about the early colonial period, triangle trade, and the beginnings of slavery in the Americas.

LA: Students will be continuing to work with informational non-fiction. We are currently centering around persuasive essays, bias, and propaganda. We will be focusing on persuasive essays, testimonials, editorials, and feature articles.

Science: In March students will be continuing their learning on the cell by exploring cellular processes such as metabolism, and the cell cycle.

8th Grade Team News

Social Studies: In March we will be learning about the Civil War with a concentration on the Battle of Gettysburg.

Language Arts: During the month of March, attention in 8th grade English will focus on the study of punctuation and basic grammar along with a review of capitalization. The Writing Process will be reviewed in preparation for the upcoming PSSA writing test.

LEAD III: During the month of March, LEAD III will continue its emphasis on reading and test taking strategies in preparation for the PSSA reading test which will be administered the last week of March. Upcoming units will include inferential thinking skills and vocabulary skills.

Science: In Science for the month of March we will be finishing the Earth Systems unit and beginning our unit on the ‘Characteristics of Life’. We will learn in depth about how living things respond to their environment, grow and develop, reproduce, use energy, and the characteristics of the type of cells of which they are made. We will then continue on into the ‘Structure of Life’ unit, looking at the molecules of life, namely carbohydrates, lipids, proteins, and nucleic acids.

Algebra: In March, the students will solve systems of equations using graphing, substitution, addition and multiplication with the addition method. Then, the students will prepare for the upcoming PSSA exams by practicing open-ended solving.

Integrated Geography: In March Grade 8 Integrated Geography students at G.A. Smith Middle School will be working toward the completion of our North America Unit. They will be doing so by closely examining the history, economics, and demographics of Canada, The United States, and Mexico via a number of web-based lessons, videos, and other interactive materials. The unit will culminate with the completion of an extensive 50 States Project focusing on the United States.

Summer Reading!!!

Isn’t summer a great time to bask in the sun, reading a great book?

All Smith MS students will be assigned a reading book to be taken home this summer. The book will be provided by the school. Once they return to school in August of 2014, they will be engaging in activities and assignments regarding their required summer reading book.

We are planning exciting activities at the school and through technology over the summer to ensure that your child receives the support or encouragement that is needed.

Sixth graders will be reading Peak by Roland Smith. Seventh graders will be reading Wonder by R.J. Palacio. Eighth graders will be reading Fever 1793 by Laurie Andersen.

Stay posted for more information!
Unified Arts Team News

MUSIC - 6th grade students will begin their study of American Composers and review parts of the music staff. 7th grade students will study the music of Modest Mussorgsky. 8th Grade students will learn about Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frederic Handel.

HEALTH - Mr. Long and Mrs. Falduts health classes are both in the beginning stages of the Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Unit. Over the next few weeks, students will be learning various risks and negative side effects of Drugs and Alcohol.

FITNESS - 6th, 7th, and 8th grade fitness classes are starting the basketball unit. Students will learn various skills and strategies that are needed to play a game of basketball.

COMPUTER TECH - 8th graders are beginning to use functions in Excel. 7th graders are beginning a letter collaboration unit with their LEAD classes and 6th graders are continuing to master the keyboard and typing technique.

ART - Eighth graders are continuing their study of dimension by drawing a corner of the art room in two-point perspective. Grade 7 students will be applying their lettering layouts to their art folders and planning a patterned design within the letters. Students in Grade 6 will be building an art folder and planning a design of themed repetition for the front. This year, art works by Jacob St. Clair (Grade 8) and Faith Rineer (Grade 7) were selected to be part of the Lancaster County Young Artists Show to be held the month of March at the Demuth Museum.

INTEGRATED TECH - 6th Grade students will continue to use the Concepts of Design to create different projects including a business card (with their Logo) and a Digital Photography project. 7th Grade will be applying the Design Process to solve increasingly complicated technical problems. 8th Grade will continue to use sensors to guide the Lego robots in solving problems. Then we will learn how math can help us to program the robots more precisely.

TECH ED - New 6th Grade students will learn about problem solving and design while building a mousetrap-powered vehicle. New 7th Graders will learn about Manufacturing while building a Digital Media Center woodworking project. New 8th Graders will learn about the most common electronic components and how they function in electronic devices.

MEDIA CENTER - Individual book projects and assignments for all grades will continue throughout the month.

Small reading groups are using their time to the fullest when they come into the reading lab. With all these snow days, we are treasuring every minute and working hard to move forward in the quest for grade level comprehension and fluency!

Sixth grade READers have just finished up a unit on writing informational passages in response to reading comprehension questions. In the coming weeks we will continue working on skills building for the spring testing cycle and reading a humorous story designed to build on making inferences, called Detective Donut. We will add a little laugh to our reading experiences with a unit on idioms, and will share some original idioms here in the newsletter next month.

The seventh grade READ class will be reading more non-fiction with a unit on Ernest Shackleton and the Endurance. The students enjoyed understanding about life in below zero temperatures, especially now that they have experienced it firsthand! Shackleton’s story exemplifies courage, perseverance and leadership. We will respond to these character traits with writings that make connections between them and our own lives.

Eighth graders are finishing up the novel in verse called "Shakespeare Bats Clean Up," the story of a middle school ball player, who misses six weeks of school due to illness and has to sit out a whole season. This unlikely poet finds himself loving writing, while he is unable to play ball. Working on writing, and summarizing will be a focus for the end of the month.

Upcoming Dates:

Progress Reports Sent Home with Students - March 11
Unified Arts Parent Night - March 13 - 6-8:30 p.m.
6th- 8th Grade Reading and Math PSSA Testing : Mar 25-28
National Jr. High School Induction Ceremony - March 27th
8th Grade Writing PSSA Testing : April 8-10
8th Grade Science PSSA Testing - April 29-30
PRIDE Lesson Days - March 12 and 26, April 2 and 9
School is now in session: April 18 (half day), April 21st all day
Last Day for Students: June 11