

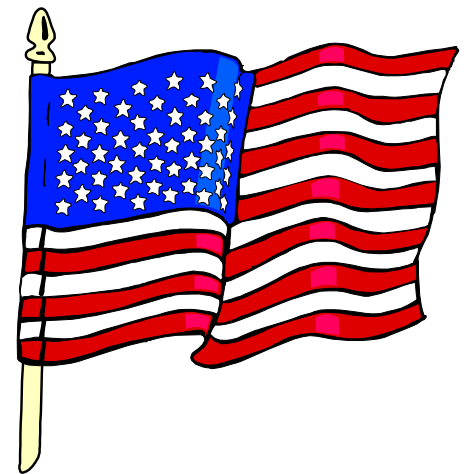


# THE DIXSON/GRADY HAPPENINGS

MAY/JUNE 2009

The Dixson/Grady Happenings provides you with a quick glance of what is going on in both schools. You will notice a description of plans/themes by grade level as well as information from each 'special' area.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 592-8962.



Mr. Harders,  
Principal



# DIXSON/GRADY HAPPENINGS

While the swine flu has not reached epidemic levels, it is important to be aware of ways to prevent the spread of this virus, or any other one.

1. **WASH** your hands frequently. Proper hand washing includes wetting your hands, applying soap, lathering up, rub your hands together (sing HAPPY BIRTHDAY slowly to yourself), rinsing, and drying your hands.

2. **COVER** your nose and mouth when you cough/sneeze. **DON'T** cough/sneeze into your hand. It is a good practice to use your arm.

3. If your child has flu symptoms, s/he should stay home to avoid spreading the illness.

4. If severe symptoms develop (i.e.: high temperature for more than 24 hours, difficulty breathing,...) take your child to the hospital.

BE SAFE!

Make it a great day, or not, the choice is yours!

Wayne S. Harders  
Principal  
Dixson Primary/Grady Elem. Schools

## DIXSON HAPPENINGS



*Spring is Here!*

We have been very busy at Dixson this year and await a number of exciting upcoming events that will take us to the end of the school year. Please see the list of events, dates and times below.

Now that the warm weather is upon us, please dress your children appropriately. Choose comfortable shoes that will be safe for playing during recess and during gym classes. Children should NOT wear flip-flops to school.

Please make every effort to search through our "lost and found" bin in the cafeteria/gym. All belongings will be discarded two weeks after school has ended.

We hope to see you at some or all of our upcoming events.

* Muffins for Moms	May 8 <sup>th</sup>	8:00 AM
* First Grade Trip to Museum	May 15 <sup>th</sup>	8:00 AM
* Dixson Walkathon	June 4 <sup>th</sup>	TBA
* Dixson Carnival	June 18 <sup>th</sup>	TBA
* Donuts for Dads	June 19 <sup>th</sup>	TBA
* First Grade Graduation	June 24 <sup>th</sup>	TBA

Happy Summer!

Ms. Barbosa

## PRE-KINDERGARTEN

We will begin the month of May with our traditional "Muffins for Moms" celebration on Friday, May 8th. We will continue throughout May and June with "Science Labs", "Second Step" and "Literacy Workshops". Thursday, May 21 will be "Breakfast in Bed" day. We will end the month of June with The Funny Bunch Family Picnic on June 11th, the Dixson School Carnival on June 18th and "Donuts for Dads" on June 19th.

Mrs. Funny--Teacher  
Mrs. Williams and Ms. Oliva --Teaching Assistants

# KINDERGARTEN

The Kindergarten classes had a wonderful trip to Stepping Stones Museum on April 28th. The students were involved in a series of hands on experiences and a good time was had by all. We would like to give a special thank you to all of the parents who volunteered to chaperone the trip. We couldn't have done it without you! In May, we will be learning about different types of plants and we will provide the students with a hands on activity of planting seeds. The planting will provide the opportunity for the students to learn the parts of a plant and what it will need to grow. We will also begin a unit on butterflies. For Mother's Day, the children will be busy creating special surprises for that wonderful lady in their lives. We hope that you will join us for "Muffins for Moms" on Friday May 8th.

June is almost here! In math, we will continue with addition, subtraction, and measurement. On Friday, June 19th, we will be celebrating Father's Day with "Donuts for Dads". We hope you can join us. In Science, we will continue our unit on butterflies. The children will have the opportunity to observe the life cycle of a butterfly in each classroom. We will also be discussing summer safety. It has been a wonderful year and we would like to wish everyone a wonderful and healthy summer.

Ms. DeBlasio, Mrs. Hamel, Mrs. Krasnici, Mrs. Young  
Kindergarten Teachers

# FIRST GRADE

The final months of the school year promise to be busy and exciting ones! We will celebrate Mother's Day with our annual "Muffins for Moms" celebration on Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup>. On May 15<sup>th</sup> we are going on our class trip to the American Museum of Natural History. We are all so excited! The first graders will dive into our unit on sea life. They will select a sea creature to conduct research on and write about. Our research unit will help focus the students' fact finding and writing strategies. In math, we are exploring positional words and will be making change with money. The children are learning all about plants, animals and oceans in our science unit. In reading, we will continue to strengthen our strategies, comprehension and fluency. We will begin to transition from learning to read to reading to learn. Our annual Carnival will take place on June 18<sup>th</sup>. We hope to see you there! Happy Graduation and have a fun and reading –filled summer!

The First Grade Teachers  
Ms. Plati, Mrs. Podhaiski, Miss Sanese, Mrs. Velardo

# ELL

In May, the kindergarten and first grade English Language Learners will be participating in the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). Students will apply their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills that they have learned and practiced throughout the year.

In June, the kindergarten English Language Learners will be participating in a unit on poetry. The first grade English Language Learners will be learning strategies and skills needed to explore the world of nonfiction. During these units, both the kindergarten and first grade English Language Learners will continue to practice their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills through a variety of activities.

Miss Buonassisi  
Miss Mendoza  
ELL Teacher

# GRADY HAPPENINGS

## SECOND GRADE

It is May and we are enjoying the beautiful flowers all around us. It was a pleasure spending time with so many parents and sharing the progress made during this year at our Parent/ Teacher conferences. We are looking forward to our trip to the Bronx Zoo on June 12th. It should be a wonderful experience which will allow the children to see the animals in their natural habitats.

**A Reading Summer Project** will be sent home to be completed over summer vacation. In addition, please continue daily reading and practice math facts, time and money, during the summer months. Have a safe and enjoyable summer!

The Second Grade Team  
Mrs. Leibel, Mrs. Nelsen, Dr. Short, Mr. Volpe

## THIRD GRADE

During the past month the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes enjoyed reading and writing poetry. We also had a great time visiting the Jacob Burns Film Center for our "See, Hear, Feel Film" exploration. The third grade classes have also spent some time focusing on non-fiction units through their study of animals and ecosystems. For the next two months all classes will be very busy. We will be wrapping up our last unit in social studies with a concentration study on Italy. We will take a look at the country's economy, history, culture, and government. We will also coordinate our ELA/SS units by incorporating Italian fairytales and folktales. Each student will use the writing process to create his/her own story. We will also continue to master our math facts and work on problem solving skills. In science we will learn all about matter. During the month of June each class will learn to write persuasive letters. We will also enjoy completing our last unit of "See, Hear, Feel Film" within our classrooms. It has been a wonderful year. Make sure your children continue to read and write throughout the summer. Thank you for all your support!

The Third Grade Teachers  
Mrs. Budzynski, Mrs. Fulgione,  
Mrs. Morrow, Mrs. Potenza

## FOURTH GRADE

The Fourth Grade has been working hard to prepare for our New York State Science Test. We completed units on magnetism and electricity. The students created fantastic electrical circuit projects independently and presented them to their classes. We are currently working on simple machines. In mathematics, the students are tackling long division with great success.

The Fourth Grade visited Philipsburg Manor in Sleepy Hollow as a culminating activity to our Colonial New York unit. We will now be studying the American Revolution. In our leveled Reading groups, we are all working on novel studies and writing literature response essays. We will be starting a poetry unit in our homeroom classes. In addition, we are anticipating duck eggs this month and Mr. Hopper is preparing their "nest". This is a very exciting springtime unit for our fourth graders!!

The Fourth Grade Teachers  
Mrs. Breen, Mrs. Byrne,  
Mrs. Capocci/Mrs. LaSala, Mr. Hopper

## FIFTH GRADE

Greetings! In reading, we continue to work on grammar skills and improve our writing. Our reading theme to finish the school year is "Animal Encounters". We have been reading short stories, nonfiction articles, and fictional stories related to that theme. All classes will have read and completed a different novel to finish the year.

Fractions and geometry have kept us very busy in math. We look forward to working on probability, percent, and ratio.

Mrs. Katsetos social studies' classes are studying the three sub regions of Latin America today. All students will be working in the library to complete a research project on a Latin American country.

Mr. Carolini's science classes are currently studying meteorology, which includes weather systems, the water cycle, and the changing seasons.

Final exams will be administered in June. The final exams are comprehensive. Students will be given an outline to assist in preparing for the final. Please check student planners for the scheduling of each final exam. Finally, please check for your child's textbooks in each class (Reading, Math, Science, and Social Studies). They will be collected at the end of the school year and students will be held responsible for missing or damaged books. **Math textbooks at home** will need to be returned in June. **PENCILS, PENCILS, PENCILS!!** Please help re-stock your child's school supplies (pencils, paper, erasers, sharpeners) as we work towards a strong finish to end the school year.

The Fifth Grade Teachers  
Mr. Carolini, Mrs. Cleveland, Mrs. Hopper, Mrs. Katsetos

## SIXTH GRADE

In the Sixth Grade reading classes we are using active reading strategies with the novels Number the Stars, Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, and Number the Stars. In science we will be learning about Newton's Laws of Motion and how to use microscopes. In social studies, we will begin to study The Middle Ages. We will learn about feudalism and what life was like in a medieval town. Classes will discuss the causes and consequences of the Crusades, as well as trace the Black Death and its effects on European society. Finally, in math we are working on statistical analysis.

The Sixth Grade Teachers  
Mr. Carpanzano, Mr. Donepp, Mr. Fernandez,  
Ms. Proctor, Ms. Wygant

# ART

It's Spring!!!!

Much of the artwork the students have been making is on display in the "District Art Show" from May 6th- June 4th... please stop by and see their beautiful projects!!!

Geometric line drawings, spring parakeets, self portraits, masks, sculptural fish, still life, landscapes, collages, contour drawings, and mixed color paintings are just some of the types of work to be seen in the show!!! ALL of the students should feel very proud of the work they have done.

We will continue making art...caterpillars inspired by Eric Carle, one-point perspective drawings, Aztec mosaics... through the end of the year!

Mrs. Sanft  
Art Teacher

# PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The weather is starting to warm-up and the action is non-stop inside the Grady gymnasium! We have two units going on at the same time. The 4-6 graders are involved in a "European Handball" unit while the 2-3 graders are participating in a "Movement" unit. On May 22, we have our annual "Hoops for Tradition" event in which students and staff will participate. We have our "Field Day" on June 19 in which it will be the gold vs. blue teams. It has been a wonderful school year thus far! If you have any questions, comments, or concerns remember that the gym doors are always open.

Sincerely,  
Mr. Watson & Mr. Tiernan  
Physical Education Teachers

# COMPUTERS

Second graders are finishing up their PowerPoint presentations about insects. Soon they will learn touch typing basics like how to sit and how to place their fingers

on the homerow keys. Third grade students will begin to research Rainforests. They will learn about one of the millions of species of animals and plants that call the rainforest habitat home. Fourth grade students will learn how to evaluate website design and content. They will look at four types of sites; those that were designed to educate, inform, persuade and entertain. Fifth grade students are touchtyping using Type to Learn. I hope they don't forget to practice over the summer using websites like Dance Mat Typing.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing/> Sixth grade students will use Microsoft Excel to create an invoice that calculates sales tax and shipping as they compete in an online shopping spree.

Have a great summer everyone!

Dr. Davis  
Computer Teacher

# INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

The band program is gearing up for our end of the year activities. The Advanced Band has many exciting performances in the next few weeks: Awards Assembly on May 5, the Spring District Concert at 1:30pm and the Milton A. Williams District Concert at 7pm on May 19. These performances will feature a variety of songs including classic pieces, patriotic, and western to name a few.

In addition, many Advanced Band members will perform at the annual NYSSMA solo festival at Sleepy Hollow High School on Friday and Saturday, May 15 & 16. Each student will perform in front of a judge who will evaluate them on three musical categories: scales, solo performance and sight-reading. Good luck to all of them.

The Beginner Band is a fantastic group of students. The largest I've ever had. We've learned to play quarter, eighth and dotted half notes as well as the symbols for repeats and first/ second endings. The Beginner Band will perform on Thursday, May 7, at 10:00am in the Grady Gym. I look forward to meeting all of you at the performance.

Recorder classes are also going very well. All students have begun to memorize the songs for the annual Recorder Concert. This will take place on Thursday, May 7 at 10:00am in the Grady Gym. Please remind your son/ daughter to leave their recorder in their desk at school so that they have it on the days we have classes. I look forward to a fun and musically exciting finish to our school year.

Mrs. Shapiro  
Instrumental Music Teacher

## VOCAL MUSIC

Spring is here, my favorite time of year!  
The birds all sing, bees all buzz,  
Ev'rybodies happy 'cause - Winter's over!

We have recently started a unit on Instruments of the Orchestra. Students will learn how to classify instruments by family groups (strings, woodwinds, brass and percussion). Students will be able to identify the major instruments by sight and sound. The unit will culminate in an exciting Instrument of the Orchestra Challenge.

The Grady chorus has been rehearsing new music for our up-coming District Spring Concert on May 19, 2009. Please mark your calendars and make plans to attend.

Happy Spring!

Mr. Brown  
Vocal Music

## LIBRARY

Hello to all – spring has finally arrived in the library! We are enjoying the wonderful view of the courtyard with its crocuses and daffodils.

The “Author of the Day” program is well underway! We have enjoyed several student author “visits”, have scheduled more, and we are looking forward to sharing the books that have been promised (I get 6 just today!). If your child would like to participate in this program, I still have plenty of flyers that describe the project. Basically, students can write, illustrate, and cover an original picture book and bring it to the library to schedule their “visits”. They share their books with their class, and then the book is cataloged and displayed in the library for the remainder of the school year. Authors’ pictures go up on the wall, and we will have a special authors’ party in June. Please encourage your children to participate and help them with their creations!

It amazes me how well the Kindergarten and First Graders are doing with the independent reading component of our library sessions. In May and June, they will continue their exploration of fiction and non-fiction books as well as story structure, including characters, setting, plot, problem and solution. We are reading books on exciting topics that follow along with their classroom curriculum, while also mixing in plenty of picture books just for fun.

May will bring challenges for the second grade as we begin dictionary skills, the first step in the development of research skills in the library. Third grade will start to learn about different reference sources and they will begin to use the library’s online catalog. Of course, we will

continue to have fun with different kinds of literature in both grades. The library will also be the scene of lots of research for grades 4, 5, and 6 in May and June. Students will use books, encyclopedias, atlases and online resources as they conduct research and learn to avoid plagiarism by citing their sources.

A word about the Ardsley Public Library – in a previous issue of Happenings, I let you know about plans to have an, “Elmsford Get Your Library Card Day” at the public library. Unfortunately, the renovation of the library is still underway, and we have been asked to wait until September to have the special day. You are certainly encouraged, however, to take your children to the Ardsley Public Library to get their library cards and use their wonderful children’s collection. In addition, the APL has a fantastic summer reading program that will be introduced to the students in June.

I have so enjoyed meeting and getting to know your children this year. Have a wonderful summer break!

Ms. Sparber  
Library Media Specialist

## ELL

May and June are busy months for the ELLs. During May, all of our students will take the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test. In addition the beginners will study language and vocabulary related to the spring and summer seasons.

Our second grade students in Mr. Volpe and Dr. Short’s classes have been reading biographies and working on writing their own. Our second grade students in Mrs. Leibel and Mrs. Nelsen’s classes just finished a unit on insects and spiders. They are now learning about Mammals, Reptiles and Amphibians. Third grade has been reading and writing about amazing animals. Fourth grade is gearing up for the New York State Science Test. They are having a great time with all the different experiments and hands-on activities. In fifth grade the ELLs are studying South American countries. The sixth grade students have been studying Medieval Times. We wish everyone a happy and healthy summer!

Mrs. M. Kelly, Mrs. Cronin, Mrs. Alicea, Mrs. Montgomery  
ELL Teachers

# A.I.S.

## READING and WRITING

Summer is just around the corner! Please be sure your child reads for at least fifteen minutes a day while they are away from school. Practice is necessary for anything you would like to do well - including reading! By reading to and with your child on a daily basis you will help strengthen their vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and decoding. In addition you will have fun while you accomplish all of this!

This June your child will be bringing home a book and a literature circles packet to read and complete over the summer. The book has been selected by your child's 2009 - 2010 teachers and will be discussed in the fall. Enjoy reading, writing, illustrating, and talking about the book with your child this summer. We can't wait to see what they learned in September!

This spring the second graders in Mrs. Leibel's and Mrs. Nelsen's classes are studying earthworms. We are creating non-fiction books on these creatures and look forward to sharing them with you in late May. Mr. Volpe's and Dr. Short's classes are reading a book a week and participating in literature circles each Monday. The conversations about their reading have been wonderful! Please ask your child to share their literature circle packets with you; you will be amazed at all they know!

The third grade is finishing up a study on dragons. We have read Dragons of the Red Dawn and My Father's Dragon. We are also finishing a LONG read aloud, Dragon Rider. It has over 500 pages! Please ask your child about the adventures of Firedrake, Sorrel, and Ben. The children have enjoyed reading about them.

Have you ever heard of human photosynthesis? In the book, Top Secret, Allan Brewster discovers a way to stop world hunger. The fourth graders recently completed this book and are now coming up with new ways to solve world problems. Ask your child about some of their solutions!

Please feel free to stop by or call the reading room to discuss any concerns or questions you have about your child and their reading. Our number is 592-2272.

Thank You,

Ms. Wygant, Mrs. Francis  
Reading Specialists

Kindergarten is working on a plant unit where students are being exposed to various language/vocabulary (terms) that will help them throughout their experience. Students will also be reading and listening to

books about plants and the lifecycle of a plant. Writing will be ongoing.

First graders will continue to work with guided reading and will soon learn more about poetry. Students will then be asked to create poems based on what they have learned about style, language, and verse.

Sixth grade students are doing an author study on Mildred D. Taylor. We will be reading a few of her books including The Gold Cadillac and The Well. After reading, students will be directed to analyze each of the books that were read for similarities in plot and theme, setting, main idea, characterization, mood and order of events (sequence). Also during ELA block, students will be completing a research project of their choice based on different themes. We will be working on this project both in school and at home. Students are encouraged to use the school library, Westchester libraries, the computer, and any other appropriate sources for information. The completed project will include facts and information, questions to be answered, inquiry boxes, a glossary, and a bibliography.

Mr. Craig Carpanzano  
Reading Specialist

## MATH

First, I would like to commend the students in grades 3 through 6 for all of their hard work on the state math exam. All of the students worked hard to prepare for this exam and I am proud of their efforts.

My 6<sup>th</sup> grade students are finishing up the unit on statistics and probability. Next we will be moving on to algebra and integers. Final exam time will be here soon. All students are encouraged to review their notes nightly.

I have begun to push in to the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms. During this time we will be working on developing skills and strategies that will be crucial in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Most recently we have been looking at attributes and working on an activity called "Guess My Rule." This activity was enjoyed by all and they have looked forward to it. Next, we will be working on writing and solving word problems and even some algebra.

The remaining groups that I am working with continue to work on mastering the skills that are being covered in their classes. We are also working on activities to improve number sense.

Parents, please continue to help your children at home to master their basic facts. It takes just a few minutes a day to ensure success. Have a great summer.

Miss Hittner  
Math Specialist