

Wachusett Regional School District
Chocksett Middle School

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***Principal's Message
April 2011***

Dear Parents/Guardians,

May MCAS Schedule

Not every day will be used for testing at each grade level. Several days are set aside for any make-up testing that is needed. (Due to any unexpected conflicts, these dates may be adjusted within the testing period.)

May MCAS Testing Period: May 10-24

Grade 8: May 11&12 – Math; May 16&17 - Science

Grade 7: May 18&19 - Math

Grade 6: May 11&13 - Math

Grade 5: May 10&12 – Math; May 17&19 - Science

Bullying and Internet-Cyber Safety

On April 4th, our students attended presentations on bullying and Internet-Cyber Safety by MARC; Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center. Since social networking is an important component, it is an opportune time for us, as parents, to be reminded of this important issue.

Social Networking

As technology continues to morph around us, it provides undreamt opportunities for teaching, learning and student interaction. The Chocksett Middle School prides itself on embracing new technology, insofar as it provides students with engaging ways to learn. If knowledge is truly power, our children have the chance to grow, intellectually, far beyond the capacity of previous generations.

Social networking sites such as; Facebook, Myspace, Twitter and Bebo are growing at exponential rates, across all demographics of our society. Social Networking allows for members of an online community to share materials of interest and communicate, in some cases instantaneously, with vast numbers of people. This is the new reality and as such has implications for schools.

The Chocksett Middle School's position on Social Networking is that while we recognize and welcome our obligation to provide 21st century skills for our students, it has been our experience that a majority of pre-adolescents are emotionally unequipped to use these tools in respectful and responsible ways. Think back to your own pre-adolescence; remember the conflict you struggled with in establishing your identity and the awkward moments as you navigated through different peer groups. Now, take those feelings and

moments, and, by virtue of this technology, make them so public that friends of friends of friends have access to your thoughts, pictures and words. By virtue of this technology and the instantaneous, passive, detached, sometimes anonymous, environment it provides, friends and friends of friends can or may respond to you in highly inappropriate ways. For these reasons, most Social Networking Communities have age restrictions. *Facebook*, for example, insists that students are **at least 13 years of age**. They also “strongly recommend that minors 13 years or older ask their parents for permission before sending any information about themselves to anyone over the Internet”.

We are aware that many of our Middle Level students have *Facebook* and/or other accounts and that many of them have written and posted things that they would never say or do in a face to face interaction. Social Networking sites are blocked through our District’s Network.

It is our strong recommendation that you talk with your children about Social Networking and, if you don’t know, ask if your child has a Facebook or similar account. If they do, make them show you their page, profile and the pages of their friends. We’re confident that you’ll agree on the importance of open communication as a bridge to helping your child develop the necessary skills to make informed decisions.

NCLB Report Card

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education - No Child Left Behind report cards for our school and district are available on our school website in the virtual back-pack. Our school website is <http://www.wrsd.net/chocksett>. A hard copy of the report can be sent home with your child upon request.

School Store

Our school store will reopen the week of April 26th. The store is operated by students under the advisorship of Ms. Grondin. As it “gets started” it will be open to grades 5 and 7 on Tuesdays and grades 6 and 8 on Wednesdays. The school store will be selling school supplies and school spirit items. Students will receive more information regarding the store hours, etc. from their homeroom teachers.

Inappropriate Personal Attire

Now that the warm weather is upon us we ask that you review our Inappropriate Personal Attire section of our handbook, pg. 16, with your child. It specifically refers to items that are distracting, i.e. the length of shorts and skirts and appropriate foot wear. Thank you for your cooperation.

“Principal’s Coffee & Chat”

A combined PTO and “Principal’s Coffee & Chat” will take place on Tuesday, May 17th @ 6:30 pm in the Chocksett School Library. This is time for us to meet informally to discuss any school related issues. It also gives us an opportunity to get to know one another, disseminate information and share ideas.

As always, if you have any questions or if I can be of any assistance, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Margaret

Margaret Morgan, Principal