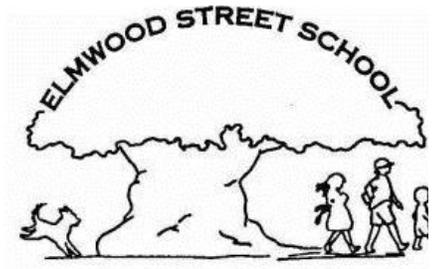


# Elmwood Street School

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Dear Elmwood Community,

Spring is finally here and we have a busy few months ahead of us. Starting with MCAS and culminating in our Field Day, April and May will be a whirlwind of activity. With the many activities outside of school students engage in (sports, dance, scouts, etc...) and here at Elmwood, this can become an overwhelming time for many of our students. In many of our classes this year, we have been working with our students on ways they can reduce stress, anxiety and regulate their emotions through Mindfulness.

Mindfulness is defined as "a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique." In other words, it is a way for us to teach students to close their eyes, breath, focus their minds and calm their bodies so they can focus on their work. From the website [www.mindfulschools.org](http://www.mindfulschools.org), they list the following as benefits to mindfulness with students.

**Attention:** Numerous studies show improved attention<sup>1</sup>, including better performance on objective tasks that measure attention.

## Upcoming Events

**April 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup>**

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade ELA MCAS

**April 11<sup>th</sup>**

Immigration Celebration

**April 12<sup>th</sup>**

Positive Post-It Day

**April 14<sup>th</sup>**

Book Swap

**April 17<sup>th</sup> – April 21<sup>st</sup>**

Spring Break

**April 24<sup>th</sup>**

Literacy Challenge Ends

**April 26<sup>th</sup>**

PK-3 Half Day

**May 15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>**

Book Fair

**May 16<sup>th</sup> – May 17<sup>th</sup>**

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Math MCAS

**May 25<sup>th</sup>**

Field Day

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**Emotion Regulation:** Mindfulness is associated with emotion regulation across a number of studies<sup>3</sup>. Mindfulness creates changes in the brain that correspond to less reactivity<sup>4</sup>, and better ability to engage in tasks even when emotions are activated.

**Compassion:** People randomly assigned to mindfulness training are more likely to help someone in need<sup>5</sup> and have greater self-compassion.

**Calming:** Studies find that mindfulness reduces feelings of stress<sup>8</sup> and improves anxiety and distress when placed in a stressful social situation.

So how can we practice mindfulness with our own children at home? Below are a few simple ways we can help our children through this busy and stressful time of year from the Huffington Post.

1. Listen to the bell. An easy way for children to practice mindfulness is to focus on paying attention to what they can hear. You can use a singing bowl, a bell, a set of chimes or a phone app that has sounds on it. Tell your children that you will make the sound, and they should listen carefully until they can no longer hear the sound (which is usually 30 seconds to a minute).

2. Practice with a breathing buddy. For young children, an instruction to simply "pay attention to the breath" can be hard to follow. Each student grabs a stuffed animal, and then lies down on their back with their buddy on their belly. They focus their attention on the rise and fall of the stuffed animal as they breathe in and out.

3. Make your walks mindful. One of my children's favorite things to do in the summer is a "noticing walk." We stroll through our neighborhood and notice things we haven't seen before. We'll designate one minute of the walk where we are completely silent and simply pay attention to all the sounds we can hear — frogs, woodpeckers, a lawnmower. We don't even call it "mindfulness," but that's what it is.

4. Establish a gratitude practice. I believe gratitude is a fundamental component of mindfulness, teaching our children to appreciate the abundance in their lives, as opposed to focusing on all the toys and goodies that they crave. My family does this at dinner when we each share one thing we are thankful for. It is one of my favorite parts of the day.

5. Make a Mind Jar. A mind jar is a bit like a snow globe - shake it up and watch the storm! But soon, if we sit and breathe and simply watch the disturbance, it settles. As do our minds.

Here is a link to a great article from Bay State Parent <https://www.baystateparent.com/2017/02/14/how-mindfulness-can-lead-to-a-more-calm-relaxed-family-life/> by our good friend Melissa Shaw

**-Andy Hall, Principal**

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## From Mr. Burke: Walk and Talk Time

Mr. Hall and I would once again like to invite parents, guardians, and community members to join us on a "Walk and Talk" at the Elmwood Street School. Over the past two years Walk and Talks have provided us with an opportunity to share some of the wonderful instructional practices that are happening in the building. They have led to great conversations, giving us an opportunity to answer questions and address concerns, and giving you all the opportunity to understand the school better and share your experiences as stakeholders. On several occasions our Walk and Talk conversations have led to positive changes for our students based on your feedback.

Mr. Hall and I both feel this is an extremely valuable experience for all involved and hope that you consider taking advantage of this opportunity. This year we will hold four Walk and Talks. They will be on **Wednesday, April 12** and **Friday, April 14** with one at 9:30 and one at 2:00 on each day. The sessions are limited to 8-10 people in each group as this allows us to have a more in depth conversation on the walks. We meet to briefly go over expectations for the walk and then spend about 30 minutes walking the building. We then meet afterwards to continue any ongoing discussion or clarify any questions that may have come up during the walk.

We will be sending home sign-up sheets this week and hope to see you in April. As always, if you have questions or concerns in the meantime, Mr. Hall and I are available by phone or email and truly enjoy working together with families to continually improve the Elmwood Street School experience.

Sincerely, Corey Burke, Assistant Principal

## From Ms. Beahn – Elmwood Guidance Counselor

In the month of March, our school focused on Perseverance. Students and teachers discussed, learned, and ultimately demonstrated the importance of not giving up, no matter how difficult the task may be. Now that April is upon us, our 3rd graders will take that determination into MCAS testing. Although standardized tests can be a source of anxiety for many students, we hope that we have →



## Community Shout Outs

### Mobile Dentist Program

Thank you again to Melissa Guilford for working with Mrs. Romeo to bring in the Mobile Dentist program. The dentist saw 24 children, 18 sealants were done, 7 fillings, with over 48 school days saved by having the Dentist see children while they were at school.

They are scheduled to return October 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>.

### Preschool Literacy Night and Concert

We want to thank all the families that came to our preschool Literacy Night in March. The students did a great job singing. Thanks again for all of your contributions. We were able to raise over \$700 for our Wee Woolies Program.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade "Little Citizens Chorus"

Our 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Chorus had the privilege of singing at the Statehouse in March. Led by Mrs. Rottman, they did a great job representing Elmwood.

prepared them with the mindset and strategies that they will need, to not only complete the test, but to feel they have put forth their best effort! So, to reinforce these efforts, our theme for April is **Self Esteem**. By providing our students with unconditional encouragement, opportunities to succeed, and praise for expected behaviors, we are also providing them with a sense of self-worth. As the adults in our students' lives, it is our job to help foster our children's self-esteem. Some tips for boosting a child's self-esteem include:

- Supporting your child with schoolwork and school life. Show interest by asking what your child has done during the day, what homework they are working on, and whether they need any help.
- Focus on your child's strengths and the effort they put in. Praise your child for what they're good at, and let them know you're proud of them for trying things that may be difficult. (Be a role model - acknowledge your weaknesses and talk with your children about ways that you can overcome them).
- When possible, provide choices for your children. Allow them to take responsibility for making, and sticking with, what they chose.
- Teach your child about fair play. All children need chances to win and lose.
- Give your child the chance to try new activities and learn new things.

Some literature choices related to self-esteem:

This is also a great time to revisit Social Detective/ Expected Behaviors. When we exhibit expected behaviors, others feel good about us, and we feel good about ourselves!

Other great reads:

- Cupcake by Charise Mericle Harper is the story of how a plain cupcake realizes that being plain is what makes her special. I have this book if anyone would like to borrow it.
- Spagetti in a Hot Dog Roll - Having the courage to be who you are, by Maria Dismondy
- Bad Case of the Stripes, by David Shannon - Read Along Audio book at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v65NRt-wqM>

## Andrea Ostrosky – Preschool Coordinator

The Friends of the Wee Woolies is up and running! Last month, the group participated in our Preschool Literacy Night, with raffle baskets and a bake sale. Fundraising efforts will support future preschool events and programs. Please join us for our next meeting on May 1st at 4:00PM, at Elmwood Street School. Look for updates on our Wee Woolies Facebook page. This is a great opportunity to support our preschoolers!

