

# Rocket Review



College Grove Elementary

News From Dr. Lowe



October, 2009

Dear Parents,

Thanks for your part in making the first few weeks of school such a success. We have several new teachers who joined our staff this year. They include: Lisa Hamilton, Pre-Kindergarten teacher, Courtney Presley, Kindergarten teacher, Emily Ferguson, second grade teacher, Iris Russell, fourth grade teacher. We also welcome Bonnie Tucker to our Student Support Staff. I hope you'll introduce yourself to these new staff members when you see them.

We're also gearing up for Rocket Run, our primary fundraiser, on Friday, October 9. If you haven't asked friends, family and business associates for donations, please do so. All donations go directly for the school program and we depend on your support. The fun starts at 9:00 AM. We would love for you to attend and cheer on our students as they run. Room parents and PTO officers are recruiting help, so if you can, please plan to attend.

Parent Connection is a great way for parents of students in 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade to keep up with their child's progress. If you haven't filled out a Parent Participation Agreement and established an online account, please start the process. If you need help, please call the office.

We have several upcoming events that you'll want to plan for. Fall Break is October 17-20. Students will return to school on Wednesday, the 21st, and report cards will be sent home on that day. Fall Parties will be on Friday, October 30; plan to contact your child's teacher for ways you can help.

Included in this newsletter is a letter about student illness and preventing the spread of germs. Take a moment to read over it. As cold and flu season approaches, please be vigilant in keeping your child with fever, vomiting, or other symptoms at home until 24 hours after the symptoms have disappeared. This will help everyone stay healthy and able to come to school.

The gym floor has been refinished with a brand new "Rockets" logo and striping. It looks fabulous, and I know that our students will enjoy it for many years to come. Help us keep it looking great by sending your child to school on PE days wearing tennis shoes.

It is our privilege to serve you and your family. We appreciate the trust you place in us. Let us know if we can do anything more on your child's educational journey.

Sincerely,

Melonye Bartlett Lowe, Ed. D.

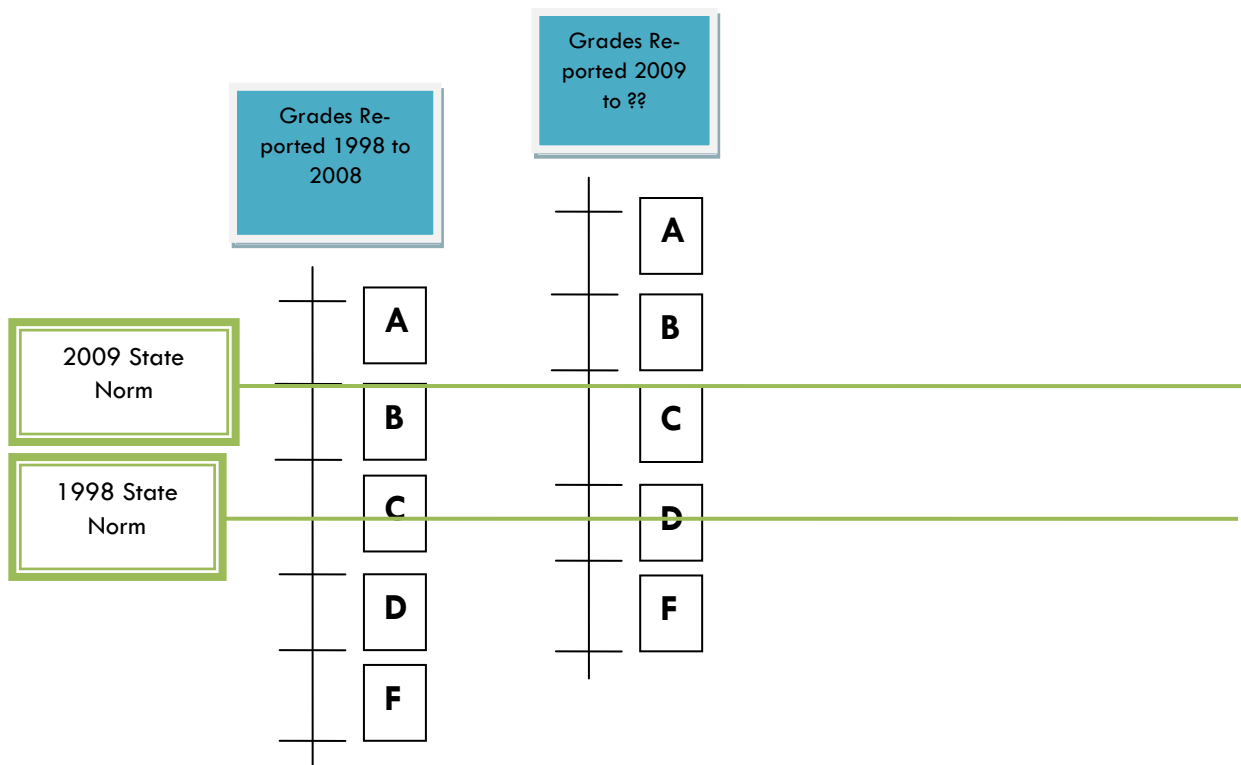
Principal

## The “new” TCAP Scoring Story

This year, the state of Tennessee rolled out a set of new content standards (*what students should know and be able to do*) in Literacy, Mathematics, and Science. These new standards are nationally-based and are more rigorous, rely more on thinking and problem-solving, and go deeper into learning. To assess these new standards, the state also designed a new version of the TCAP test ensuring that students will be tested on what they are now expected to learn.

TCAP scores have been reported based on how students perform for that year compared to a state norm (*a state average*). These state norms were calculated in 1998 ---10 years ago. As a result of everyone’s hard work across the state, our students have been doing better and better and our “grades” reported to the public have continued to climb.

The state reset the norms using the May, 2009 TCAP. This may affect the grades that schools will receive in when scores are sent out in November, 2009. In other words, a school whose performance may have earned them a B last year may result in a C this year even if though their progress is the same.



Dear Parents,

As you may be aware, cold and flu season has already begun in our schools. Nurses are noticing a variety of illnesses including but not limited to strep, various strains of flu, the common cold, etc. As a precaution and in an effort to keep your child protected, we hope you will encourage good health habits like washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes, and staying home when sick.

In addition:

Keep sick children at home and always check for a fever before sending a student with any complaint to school.

Please do not give your child any over-the-counter medication to bring a fever down in order to send your child to school when that child has a fever or complains of not feeling well at home.

Please do not send your child to school who has complained to you that they are not feeling well and ask them to be checked by the nurse to see if they are sick or not.

Rely on your health care provider if you need specific guidelines on when to keep your child out of a public setting.

Know that if your child becomes sick at school, we will notify you and expect for you to pick up your child from school as soon as possible.

Remember a new strain of flu is in the illness mix this year, H1N1 flu. Symptoms for H1N1 include: fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue, and diarrhea/vomiting (in some cases). It is expected that a vaccine against the new strain of flu will be available later this fall.

Please follow the most current recommendations regarding the flu for Williamson County Schools located on our school district website at [www.wcs.edu](http://www.wcs.edu).

For more information you can check with your health care provider or visit the following Web sites:

[www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

[www.state.tn.us/health](http://www.state.tn.us/health)

Thank you for your cooperation in helping keep our children protected.

*Dr. Melonye Lowe*

**Music Notes with Ms. Oliver:**

The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will be performing “The American Dream” on Thursday October 1, 2009 at 6:30pm in the College Grove Elementary gym. This program includes events and famous people from our American history beginning with Christopher Columbus, and ending with the industrial revolution.





## From the Learning Lab and Learning Villa

Student Support Services have added another location to provide services. Mrs. Amber Brown, student support teacher, is working out of the Learning Villa which serves grades 3-5. Mrs. Sandra Presley, our other SSS teacher, continues to serve students in the Learning Lab. Bonnie Tucker has joined the team as a part time paraprofessional. The team is working diligently to support students and staff as we all work toward reaching our personal and academic goals.

Dear Parents,

Conflict or disagreement is normal and often happens when children get together. However, hurtful words, gestures, or physical attack are unacceptable ways to deal with conflict and disagreement at school.

Our goal is to teach students several positive ways to deal with these difficult situations. To do this, we are asking students who have minor problems to try at least two of the following ideas:

1. Go to another game or activity.
2. Share and take turns.
3. Respectfully talk it over and listen to each other.
4. Walk away from the problem.
5. Ignore the problem behavior.
6. Tell the person to stop the problem behavior.
7. Apologize.
8. Make a deal or compromise.
9. Wait to cool off.



This process can be done before asking for adult help. When a request for adult help is made, it will include the two ideas tried--"Mrs. Jones, Tad is teasing me about my glasses. I tried ignoring him, and I've told him it hurts my feeling when he makes fun of me. He's still calling me names." The duty supervisor at school will get involved and help solve the problem using our playground discipline plan.

Of course, the duty supervisor will immediately handle any serious conflicts that cause a child to feel threatened or frightened. By using this plan, we believe that our students will develop effective problem-solving skills that they can use again and again. It will help them to deal with conflict in a positive manner and to make appropriate decisions. Knowing what to do will help students reduce the stress and number of conflicts they have at school and in their neighborhood.

This program will begin soon at school. Colorful charts illustrating ways to deal with conflict will be posted so all children will know their choices. We encourage you to become familiar with this program and use it in your home. By working together, we can develop a healthy life skill for young people to use at home and at school.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Debra Hadzor, School Counselor

In art classes at College Grove, Kindergarteners have been working on their Art Books about the Elements of Art. First Graders have made self-portraits and are now painting and printing trees (First Grade's art theme is Nature). Second graders are finishing up their Self-Portraits with Animals (Second Grade's art theme is Animals). Third graders just finished a mixed-media collage Self Portrait and are beginning a Sunflower Painting in the spirit of Van Gogh. Fourth graders are finishing self-portraits in the spirit of Andy Warhol and are about to begin a silk-screen printing Self Portrait. And, finally, Fifth grade just finished a Self Portrait in Clay! We've been busy in the art room!



## Getting Back to the Joy of Reading

Deep anxiety abounds in schools across our country today about children's ability to read. While we all want children to read well, something critically important has oftentimes been lost in the pursuit of reading excellence, and that is the 'joy of reading.' What we fear – and what research indicates – is that many students are growing up to become what some have called 'school readers' (that is, students who seldom crack open a book once they've left school).

In 'Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America,' 17,000 adults over a 20-year period (1982-2002) were surveyed. It's principal finding was that "literary reading in America is not only declining rapidly among all groups, but the rate of decline has accelerated, especially among the young." (NEA, 2004)

Electronic media, including TV, Internet, video games, and portable digital devices, have increasingly drawn Americans away from reading books. It's not that electronic media is necessarily bad; in fact, the Internet has given us access to an extraordinary range of useful information. The problem is that often these pursuits take less concentration, less active engagement, and less attention than reading. They tend to foster shorter attention spans and may desensitize students to less dramatic classroom activities. Used without some appropriate limits, electronic media can become a factor in the decline of reading.

As reading specialist at College Grove Elementary, I will be working to support our classroom teachers - not only to help them introduce some great literature to our students, but also to stimulate students' minds to 'go deeper' by inviting them into active discussion with peers about what they are reading and into personal reflection about what they are thinking.

*Happy Reading!*

**Tom Tjernehoj**

**Reading Specialist**



### **News from the Library:**

Well, we are off and reading for the 2009-2010 School Year. Our Wall of Fame theme is: WANTED READERS. Our goal is for all to students to be reading every day. Many of you have asked why your child is reading on the same level or below their level last Spring. Please don't be alarmed since this is fairly normal after summer break. We give these students the STARS test the first week of school and usually the score is lower than in the Spring. Your child will be able to move up as long as their average percent is above 90%. Please have your child tell their teacher when their average is above 90%, and they will be allowed to move up. As you know, last year we were asked to conserve ink; therefore we turned off the TOPS reports for all students. Your child's teacher will send home progress reports to let you know how their AR goal is progressing.

Second through Fifth graders wrote their goal and color levels in their agendas. The students in K-3 will have a carnival at the end of the year for all of those making their AR goal at 85% or higher. The students in Grades 4 & 5 will have a Wii party at the end of the year for those making their AR goal at 85% or higher. Our goal is to have 100% attendance by all students. Please help encourage your child to read no matter what their level is since the more they practice, the better readers they become. As always, I would highly encourage each of you to read to, and with, your child whenever possible. Sometimes students tell me they are reading chapter books at home with their parents, and they really enjoy that time together. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

*Happy Reading!*

Mrs. Terri, Librarian

