



# The McMurray Star

## In This Issue

[Principal's Pen](#)

[A Note from the PTA  
President](#)

[8 Habits](#)

[Box Tops](#)

## McMurray PTA Executive Board 2009-2010

Lisa Briegel, President  
Carol Planitzer, 1st VP  
Barb Calfo, 2nd VP  
Andrea Michalski, 3rd VP  
Margaret Rauscher, 4th VP  
Nan Campbell, Treasurer  
Jodi Hannah, Asst.  
Treasurer  
Cathy Vargo, Secretary

## YEARBOOK SALE

**LAST CHANCE TO  
ORDER BEFORE PRICE  
INCREASE!!!!!!**

Orders received before  
Thanksgiving Break, \$18.

## November/ December 2009 PTA Newsletter

### Principal's Pen

*by Blair Stoehr*

#### **Assessment: What is it? What is its purpose?**

We in the educational field make reference to assessment a great deal, but do not always take the time to explain exactly what we consider assessment to be or what function it serves. In truth, there are too many types of assessment to mention here in this article, but here is a brief summary of some terms that you may hear throughout your time here at McMurray.

In the most traditional sense, most assessments that you may hear about are summative in nature and used for grading your children. Summative assessments are typically given in the classroom as a means to ascertain whether or not a student has grasped a set of objectives after instruction geared toward this desired outcome. These assessments can be presented in many different forms, including, but not limited to: a traditional paper and pencil test, long range projects, research papers, oral/multimedia presentations, PSSA tests, et cetera. These measures of accountability are evidence as to whether or not students have met a collection of content standards at a particular point in time. These summative assessments are most often criterion referenced. This means that these tests contain questions that are representative of a body of material that is to be obtained during a specific time period of instruction. We use these tools not only to assess your children, but also to help evaluate the effectiveness of programs, school improvement goals, alignment of curriculum, and student placement in specific programs.

If received after Dec. 1st,  
the price jumps to \$21.

There will be no orders after  
Dec. 15th.

**YEARBOOKS MUST BE  
ORDERED!**

No extra yearbooks will be  
available for purchase at the  
time of delivery!

If you have any questions  
please call Dedra Rantovich  
at 724-942-5582.

Make checks payable to  
McMurray PTA-yearbook  
**NO CASH.**

**Abitibi Paper Recycling**

Please drop off :

Magazines, shopping  
catalogs, newspaper,  
office & school papers, junk  
mail,  
and shredded paper in plastic  
bags.

Recycling bin is located at  
the entrance  
to the school on the right.

**Thank you!**

This recycling project benefits  
PTA  
sponsored programs for our  
children.

**SAVE THE DATE:**

**MARCH 17 & 18**

The assessments that you may be less familiar with may be those that we consider to be formative. These assessments are typically more informal than the aforementioned summative assessments. Teacher observations, anecdotal records, questioning strategies, pretesting, self and peer assessment, and student progress monitoring could all be considered formative assessments. This form of assessment allows teachers to tailor their instruction according to what their students understand and can apply. All of our students bring different content specific talents and capacities to each learning experience. Those talents and capacities may manifest themselves in different ways depending on the tasks at hand. These informal assessments are meant to help ensure our students achieve targeted standards-based learning goals within a set time frame.

Formative assessment helps teachers determine next steps during the learning process as the instruction approaches the summative assessment of student learning. Using student work, classroom tests, or examples of what is expected helps students understand where they are, where they need to be, and an effective process for getting there. This data can be recorded and used as feedback for students about their learning, shared with them (and their parents) during individual conferences, and utilized in order to tailor instruction to capitalize on student strengths or address areas of need.

When students are in charge of contributing to this data for self and/or peer evaluations, they often see each other as resources. When students are responsible to check for quality work against previously established criteria it helps contribute to their understanding and ability to apply what they have learned. What is most important about the data that is gathered through the process of formative assessment is what is done as a result.

We strive to utilize a healthy balance of the aforementioned types of assessment, amongst others, to enable your children to reach their utmost potential.

**A Note from the PTA President**

*by Lisa Briegel*

This year, the Peters Township School District has been incorporating Stephen Covey's Eight Habits of Highly Effective People into each of the schools. At our November PTA meeting, Dr. Freado presented several videos demonstrating these habits. I was particularly impressed with the video entitled, "Big Rocks," about Habit 3: Put First Things First. In this video, a man named Charlie is given a tank, some tiny rocks or sand, a bunch of large rocks, and a note that reads, "Everything has to fit! You figure it out." A note on the tank says, "Your week, Fill Me!" while the rocks are labeled with things like, "Important Client" or "Exercise." During the course of the video, Charlie learns that in order to make everything fit, the large rocks must go in first, and then the smaller stuff goes in last.

## McMurray Elementary

### Talent Show

Entry forms will be  
due: February 4,  
2010

Order forms will  
be available online at  
the beginning of  
January.

### GIANT EAGLE APPLES FOR STUDENTS:

Register your Giant Eagle Advantage card for McMurray Elementary. The link below will direct you to the Giant Eagle website. You will need the McMurray account number: 0683.

#### Apples for Students

For parents with students in other Peters Township buildings, you can register your card for up to five different schools.

## SPIRIT DAYS!!!

**November 20th**

**December 18th**

Show your Spirit!!!  
Wear Red and White.

2010 PTHS CHEER  
CLINIC

As a PTA, we need to consider this lesson. We need to focus on the needs of our members and their children. We need first to develop programs that accomplish our goals of encouraging communication between parents, teachers, and administrators, of offering programs that help to improve the well-being of the students and allow them to be successful in their learning, and of providing a way for parents to be involved with or informed of their child's education. Sometimes in the actual planning of an event, we forget these goals and focus instead on the "small stuff," like what color napkin we're using at a party or whether we have the right tablecloth or decorations at Spanning the Globe. As a PTA and as members of the PTA, we need always to remember to put those big rocks in first!

As we approach the very busy holiday season, this is a lesson we should all review. Sometimes we get so caught up in the smaller details of trying to make everything perfect, that we don't leave room for the important things. We all know what the "big rocks" are in our lives, and we know what the smaller stuff is too. Sometimes, we need a reminder to stop and consider our ultimate goals and....put first things first!!

Visit this website to view the video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j6m9WnNdpSw>

## The 8 Habits of a Highly Effective PTA

### Habit 1: Be Proactive

Volunteer to be a chairperson instead of waiting to be asked.

### Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind

PTA is for all children.

A good heart and a good mind make a great combination.

### Habit 3: Put First Things First

Decisions should be made in the best interest of all children.

### Habit 4: Think Win/Win

Our best work happens through team effort.

### Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood

Get all of the facts before making a decision.

### Habit 6: Synergize

There is strength in numbers. Teamwork speaks volumes.

### Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw

Don't forget to put your family first!

### Habit 8: Find Your Voice and Inspire Others to Find Theirs

Lend your voice to the PTA and inspire others to do the same.

## Box Tops® for Education

### Collection Contest!

Contest takes place monthly from the 1st of the month to the last day of the month. Winners are picked monthly by random drawing. There will be 4 winners per grade each month. (2 Winners from Group A and 2 Winners from Group B). Each monthly winner will receive a \$2 coupon for the McMurray School Store.

#### **HOW TO ENTER:**

Collect 10 unexpired Box Tops® from participating products. Paste or Tape on authorized collection sheets; only collection sheets qualify for contest. Include your name, date, room number, and grade on the collection sheet. Give sheets to homeroom teacher.

**Additional collection sheets** can be found in the main office and online at:

[www.ptsd.k12.pa.us/PTA/PTA\\_McM\\_announcements.htm](http://www.ptsd.k12.pa.us/PTA/PTA_McM_announcements.htm)

#### **END OF YEAR GRAND PRIZE:**

One (1) Winner with most overall Box Tops® this year. (Prize has not yet been determined).

The PTHS Cheerleaders will host their annual cheer clinic on Saturday, January 30, 2010 at the PTHS. This event is open to all students age 5 through grade 6.

Come learn PT cheers, a dance and stunts from the PTHS cheerleaders and coaches. All clinic attendees are invited to use their new cheer skills as a halftime performance at a boys or girls home basketball game after the clinic.

Look for your registration flyer to be sent home in early January. Pre-register by January 20 for only \$25. Price includes a t-shirt, snack and drink at the clinic.

For more information or additional registration forms, email Debbie Sion at [sjsion@comcast.net](mailto:sjsion@comcast.net)

Hope to see you there!

### IN THE SPIRIT OF *THANKSGIVING*...

A Special Thank You to All:

#### **REFLECTIONS**

*Beverly Opferman for organizing. We had 160 entries!*

#### **TEACHER APPRECIATION**

*Ann Bondi, Mary Ellen Bruce, and Mary Pat DeRienzo for organizing the conference day teacher dinner. Also a thank you to everyone who contributed food and beverage for this event.*

#### **BRUNCH WITH THE PRINCIPALS**

*Jonna McConaughy, Gina Wells, Minna Allison, Mary Pat DeRienzo, and Deb Antonucci. Thank you also to those who provided refreshments.*

#### **SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR**

*Maureen Brugger, Sandy Levin, and Val Johnson. This book*

*fair helped raise many funds for our library.*

**SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE**

*Jen Gaudlip for organizing all of the delicious refreshments.  
Thank you also to all of the cookie bakers and servers.*

**BOX TOPS®**

*Tracey Lusk for preparing 11,000 Box Tops®  
for the October deadline. Thanks to all of the families who  
continue to send in Box Tops® too!*

**HALLOWEEN PARTIES**

*All grade coordinators, homeroom parents, and party  
volunteers who helped. The children had a great time.*