



# CGS PTO Newsletter September 2011

## A Memo From Marybeth Moyer, Principal

It has been a great beginning for students at Coventry Grammar School! I would like to extend a special welcome to new families who have joined our vibrant school community. The delay in our start date only heightened the enthusiasm of our students as they eagerly began the school year. We were so pleased with the way the kindergarten students rode the bus, navigated the hallways and joined their teachers for new learning activities and exciting discoveries in their classrooms.

Our first- and second-grade students proudly led the way by confidently joining their new teachers, quickly settling into their classroom routines and becoming reacquainted with their classmates during lunch and recess. A new and exciting year has begun!

The custodial staff worked extremely hard to prepare for our opening. As you know, Coventry Grammar School was considered a “construction site” this summer while a new roof was put on our building. This project was successfully completed and was certainly tested during our recent tropical storm. We are grateful for this renovation and are thrilled that our building is shiny, bright and ready for another busy year.

In addition to the hours that our teachers spent getting ready in their classrooms, the CGS staff was also involved in staff development prior to the start of school. This focused on continuing work on the curriculum to expand student assessments while implementing and utilizing a variety of data collection techniques. With the support of the reading consultant and school psychologist, the staff will also focus on phonic skill instruction that will strengthen reading and writing achievement as well as strategies that will support our positive classroom and school culture.

Each year I remind parents about the many ways that they can support our school. CGS has an active parent – teacher group (PTO) that holds monthly meeting on the second Monday of each month. There is an opportunity at each meeting to gain insight into educational trends that are happening in our school from the principal, a team of teachers and parent members. These one-hour meetings are open to all parents, and childcare is provided. The PTO packet that recently came home is an informative resource that explains the many committees or volunteer opportunities. The CGS PTO provides tremendous support for many programs and resources... We are so thankful for this partnership!

In addition to becoming a PTO member, we encourage parents to become active school volunteers. When you attend our annual Open House on Tuesday, September 27, please plan to pick up an informational packet that lists the variety of ways to contribute throughout the year. Please consider sharing your time and talents at school or by assisting with projects that can be completed at home.

As your children settle into their school routine over the next few weeks, talk to them about their new and renewed school responsibilities. *What did you learn at Morning Meeting? Do you have jobs in your classroom? What is your job or responsibility this week? What classroom centers did you visit today? Did you have a special today? How can you be a bucket-filler at school tomorrow?* By initiating this daily dialogue, you will be connecting the key elements in your child’s day and will help us by showing your interest in the daily routine at CGS.

I hope to see all of you at Open House. We are looking forward to an exciting school year, one in which quality education is our focus. Our goal is to provide our students with the best possible education in a healthy and safe learning environment. Together, with your continued assistance, we know this will be a great year for all!

## Coventry Grammar School

3453 Main Street  
Coventry, CT 06238

Phone: 860-742-7313  
[www.coventrypublicschools.org](http://www.coventrypublicschools.org)

CGS PTO Newsletter  
September 2011



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**As your children settle into their school routine over the next few weeks, take the opportunity to talk to them about their new and renewed school responsibilities.**

## Kindergarten News

### Kindergarten Team

Teachers: Wendy Bayer, Terry Bitwinski, Heidi Bosco, Eileen Hosey, and Debbie Hurlburt  
Para-Educators: Debbie Carroll and Sue Lewis



**All About Me**  
The focus will  
be on the  
characteristics that  
make every child  
special and unique.

In kindergarten, we will be exploring the theme, **All About Me**, as our first unit that integrates literacy and social studies. The focus will be on the characteristics that make every child special and unique.

Children will be learning to give information about themselves ... their first and last name, address, phone number and birthdates. Please work with your child on these skills at home to reinforce their learning. It is important for your school-aged child to be competent with this personal knowledge.

Each class will have an **All About Me** project this month. Children are to design a poster or fill a box or bag with special items about themselves. This will be presented to their classmates during class-sharing times. Specific information regarding these projects will be sent home with your child.

We are getting started in our math program, *Growing With Mathematics*, by building math into classroom routines. Children will be introduced to a daily calendar, collecting and representing data as part of daily routines and participating in a variety of activities that have a connection to the theme of getting to know one another.

Now that school has begun, many parents will ask, "What can I do to help my child become a reader?" Here are some suggestions for kindergartners. Try to read together each day. Reread favorite stories. Children enjoy and learn from reading the same stories again and again. Talk about the stories. As you read, stop now and then to ask questions to get your child involved in the story. Let your child *read* to you. Your child may tell a story from the pictures or from memory, but s/he is using strategies that will help when s/he does begin reading words. The key is to enjoy this time together so that your child will grow to love and cherish reading.

*Foundations* is our new language program that provides a systematic and explicit approach to reading and spelling. We will combine this instruction with reading of good literature, which is just as important for your child's development.

Open House is a special time for your child to show you around the classroom and the school. We look forward to seeing everyone on the evening of Tuesday, September 27. Be sure to sign up for a November conference time on that evening.

We look forward to an exciting year in kindergarten with you and your children!



Let your child read to  
you... The key is to  
enjoy this time  
together so that your  
child will grow to love  
and cherish reading.

## First-Grade News

### First-Grade Team

Teachers: Megan Babcock, Bruce Gale, Colleen Hamblett, Patricia Klaneski, Matthew Kyer, Cristy Rau, and Ginny Taber

Para-Educators: Laurie Darling and Jennifer Ray



... you will find all the  
classrooms filled with  
Grade One children  
learning, laughing,  
and trying to remember  
all the routines of  
a full school day.

This year first graders were once again greeted by our first grade teachers! They are: Megan Babcock, Bruce Gale, Colleen Hamblett, Pat Klaneski, Matthew Kyer, Cristy Rau, and Ginny Taber. As you make your way down the B wing hallway you will find all the classrooms filled with Grade One children learning, laughing, and trying to remember all the routines of a full school day.

Children were also met our two para-educators Mrs. Darling and Mrs. Ray. These two experienced people are assisting us once again. Their duties are divided among all the first-grade classrooms. Mrs. Darling and Mrs. Ray's *hands-on* help with our children is always appreciated.

Due to the large number of children in Grade One, the children will eat lunch and have recess in two teams. Team 1 (Ms. Klaneski, Mrs. Rau, and Mr. Kyer) will be eating and playing between 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 pm, while Team 2 (Mr. Gale, Mrs. Babcock, Mrs. Taber and Mrs. Hamblett) will be eating and playing between 11:45 a.m. and 12:45 pm.

Our children have had an exciting start to their first year of a FULL day schedule. We have all been busy with class routines, rules, and, of course, reading. We always encourage parents to keep reading regularly with their children. You will find our home-school reading programs underway in the very near future.

(First Grade - continued)

Children will be having outdoor recess DAILY (except in rain). Please have them dress appropriately for all weather. During morning recess children may eat a snack from home, but due to possible allergies and other considerations, please discourage your child from trading or sharing snacks.

We anxiously look forward to seeing parents at Open House, September 27. Although it is early in the school year, we need to ask parents to help us by signing up for November conferences. This allows everyone to select a day and time that is convenient for both parents and teachers. With the great parents, programs, and personnel we enjoy at C. G. S., we can truly look forward to an exciting year together!



Children will be having outdoor recess DAILY (except in rain). Please have them dress appropriately for all weather.

## Second-Grade News

### Second-Grade Team

Teachers: Carolyn Bennett, Jerry Craig, Nancy Gwozdz, Erin Hazzard, Heather McPeck, Nancy Plaster, and Angela Puccia

Para-Educators: Gloria Barry and Heidi Holever

We are all quite excited about *finally* beginning our school year in second grade, and it was worth the wait because we are getting to know our wonderful students!

In all of our classrooms during September, we are fostering a strong community, and we are creating a collaborative list of rules that will help our classrooms run more smoothly for all students. Our rules center around respecting ourselves, others, and keeping our environment safe. This community building is the first significant task in our social studies unit.

In our first weeks of school, we are teaching the students how to independently select books that are just right for them, whether it be in the classroom, library, or home. Reading books that they can fluently read independently is one of the most important ways to increase both the love of reading and the ability to read. Our students have also begun talking about stories and books with partners while they listen to stories in our classrooms. They will be exposed to many mini-lessons throughout the month to help them listen more selectively and discuss specific parts of stories using various strategies. Students are also learning how to use their prior knowledge of a particular kind of story, author, or title. This helps the students comprehend and connect to a story before they read. Story elements such as where the story takes place, which characters are in the story, and events that move the story along are modeled and used through Guided retelling. Students are beginning to connect their writing to their reading and are working on creating complete simple sentences.

During this month, our students will be introduced to our formal spelling program. Each lesson is built on a phonetic element or syllable. In the initial lessons, the students work with words that contain short vowels. Although a spelling list will be sent home each week, the students will learn the patterns and syllable structures used with these words, and they will be exposed to many words that will follow these patterns and syllable structures.

In math, students started to review and build on math concepts introduced in first grade. Throughout September and into October, the students develop strategies to add and subtract, then they will apply these strategies to real life problems. Helping your child become more confident with the basic addition and subtraction facts through games such as Concentration or rolling dice and adding them to move on a game board will assist them with their accuracy.

In science, we are working with tasks related to soils. Students are sorting soils by color, texture, and water retention. They share their findings and thoughts in groups. This is a fun unit, but quite a messy one!

During each morning throughout the year, we will have a snack time, which is incorporated into the morning break. We thank you in advance for providing healthy snacks rather than sugary snacks to help the students maintain a high level of energy throughout the entire morning.

We are all excited about working with “our” students and with you throughout the school year. We look forward to meeting you on September 27 during Open House.



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## From Our School Psychologist ~ Mrs. Heather Zilora



School psychologists help children and youth succeed academically, socially, and emotionally.

My name is Heather Zilora. I am the school psychologist at Coventry Grammar School. You may wonder what my role is at the school. Here is a little information about my job and the role of a school psychologist in general.

### Who Are School Psychologists?

- School psychologists help children and youth succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. They collaborate with educators, parents, and other professionals to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments for all students that strengthen connections between home and school.

### What Do School Psychologists Do?

- School psychologists work to find the best solution for each student and situation and use different strategies to address student needs and to improve school and district-wide support systems.
- School psychologists work with students individually and in groups. They also develop programs to train teachers and parents regarding effective teaching and learning strategies, effective techniques to manage behavior at home and in the classroom, working with students with disabilities and preventing and managing crises.

## From the Reading Room ~



Take the time to share new words, and build your child's vocabulary. You'll be enormously glad you did!

### Reading Room Team:

Carol Bittner, Jennifer Jones, Nan Kandolin, Jennifer Oberlin, Hannah Pietrantonio, Mary Talaga

The Reading Room hopes everyone had a wonderful summer having fun and reading great books! Be sure to return your Summer Reading Logs to school with your child's name and his/her teacher's name on it by September 16. Those students who read 25 books or more will receive a FREE book!

Open House will be Tuesday, September 27. Be sure to come visit us in the Reading Room to check out the exciting things happening! We are in the Kindergarten wing, Room 4A.

### Building Your Child's Vocabulary (excerpt taken from: [www.ReadingRockets.org/atoz/vocabulary](http://www.ReadingRockets.org/atoz/vocabulary))

Talking to and reading with your child are two terrific ways to help them hear and read new words. When introducing new words to your young learner, keep the following helpful hints in mind:

1. **First, provide a simple, kid-friendly definition for the new word:** *Enormous* means that something is really, really big.
2. **Second, provide a simple, kid-friendly example that makes sense within their life:** Remember that really big watermelon we got at the grocery store? That was an **enormous** watermelon!
3. **Third, encourage your child to develop his/her own example:** What enormous thing can you think of? Can you think of something big you saw today? That's right! The bulldozer near the park was enormous! Those tires were huge.
4. **Last, keep your new words active within your house.** Over the next few days and weeks, take advantage of opportunities to use each new vocabulary word in conversation.

Take the time to share new words, and build your child's vocabulary. You'll be **enormously** glad you did!

CGS Open House  
Tuesday  
September 27  
6:00 - 8:00 PM



Coventry Grammar School

3453 Main Street  
Coventry, Connecticut USA  
06238  
Phone: 860/742-7313

## From Our Math Corner ~ Mrs. Stephanie Wissler, ASSIST Program

**Number Sense- What is it?** (from [www. teachervision.fen.com](http://www.teachervision.fen.com)) Number sense involves understanding numbers; knowing how to write and represent numbers in different ways; recognizing the quantity represented by numerals and other number forms; and discovering how a number relates to another number or group of numbers. Number sense develops gradually and varies as a result of exploring numbers, visualizing them in a variety of contexts, and relating to them in different ways.

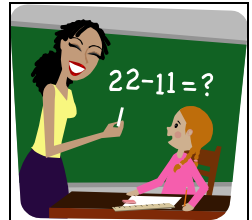
In the primary and intermediate grades, number sense includes skills such as counting; representing numbers with manipulative and models; understanding place value in the context of our base 10 number system; writing and recognizing numbers in different forms such as expanded, word, and standard; and expressing a number different ways—5 is "4 + 1" as well as "7 - 2," and 100 is 10 tens as well as 1 hundred. Number sense also includes the ability to compare and order numbers—whole numbers, fractions, decimals, and integers—and the ability to identify a number by an attribute—such as odd or even, prime or composite—or as a multiple or factor of another number.

As students work with numbers, they gradually develop flexibility in thinking about numbers, which is a distinguishing characteristic of number sense.

Here are some books that you and your family can read and discuss that cover the math concept of Number Sense. You can look for these books at the library at school or in town.

Enjoy!

<a href="#">A Million Chameleons</a>	Young	PK-3	Million; large numbers
<a href="#">Apt 3</a>	Keats	PK-3	Estimating
<a href="#">The Candy Corn Contest</a>	Giff	PK-3	Estimation; Thanksgiving; third grade class
<a href="#">Circus Shapes</a>	Murphy	PK-3	Estimation
<a href="#">Counting Crocodiles</a>	Sierra	K-2	Counting 1-10; summing all animals
<a href="#">Counting our Way to the 100th Day</a>	Franco	K-5	100 poems touching on the different patterns related to the number 100
<a href="#">It's Pumpkin Time</a>	Hall	PK-3	Seasons, counting, sequencing
<a href="#">Math Fables</a>	Tang	PK-1	Number sense; place value; subitization
<a href="#">One is a Snail Ten is a Crab</a>	Sayre & Sayre	PK-3	Tens and ones represented by number of feet
<a href="#">Underwater Counting: Even Numbers</a>	Pallotta	K-3	Even numbers
<a href="#">Ocean Counting</a>	Pallotta	K-3	Even and odd numbers



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## A Warm Welcome To New Staff

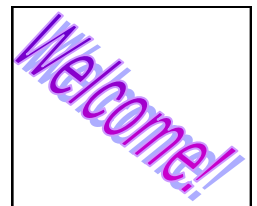
We have new faces in new places at Coventry Grammar School!

Mr. Neal O'Keefe – Social Worker

Ms. Sarah Cooper – Speech and Language Clinician

Mrs. Jennifer Oberlin – SRBI support

Mrs. Paula Sandahl – para-educator



We wish these fine professionals all the best in their new roles this year!

## From Our School Nurse ~ Mrs. Paula Curtiss

Welcome to Coventry Grammar School and a new school year. Here are some general guidelines to follow.

### Emergency cards:

- It is very important that we have current phone numbers and contact information for your student if an illness or accident occurs during the school day.
- Please contact the health office during the school year if you need to make any changes to the information on file.

### Absences:

- If your child will be absent from school, it is required that you notify the health office before 9:30am at 860-742-4558.
- You may leave a voice message at any time of the night or day.
- If we do not hear from you, a call will be made to your home.
- If the absence is planned please notify us in advance.
- If we do not hear from a parent or guardian on the date of the absence, it will be recorded as an unexcused absence.

### Medications

- Students are not allowed to carry medications of any kind either to or in school. Any medication that may be required during the school day must have a written authorization form (available from the nurse) completed by the child's physician, and the medication must be brought to the health office by an adult.

### Food Allergies

- There are many students at Coventry Grammar School with life-threatening food allergies and other dietary concerns. Always check with your child's teacher several days before sending in birthday or celebration food to share with the class.

### Clothing

- Due to the age of the students at CGS, we have many "accidents" during the day that may require a change of clothing. I encourage all parents/guardians to have a change of clothing in the bottom of their child's backpack if this become necessary.
- Donations to the health office (size 4, 6, or 8) of new packages of boys and girls underwear, neutral colored t-shirts, and neutral-colored sweat pants would be appreciated.
- Thank you in advance for any donations.

Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Wishing all students, parents and guardians a happy and healthy school year!

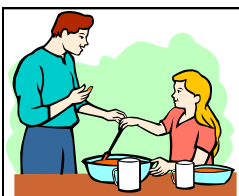
Paula Curtiss, 860-742-4558, [pcurtiss@coventryct.org](mailto:pcurtiss@coventryct.org),



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Sometimes telling the child a little something about your own day starts the ball rolling. The child may get the idea of sharing news and feelings about his or her day.

## From Our Friends at the Coventry Early Childhood Center

It is difficult for young children to recall and describe what they did during the day at school. Children are active and busy for the entire time, but they sometimes lack the words to tell others about their activities- or by the time you pick them up, they have moved on to other things.

Parents, of course, want to know about their child's day. Here are a few ideas to keep in mind when asking your child about his or her activities.

- Keep informed of planned events so you can ask specific questions. For example, "Did you get to go on the nature walk today, or was it too rainy?"
- With most children, avoid general questions like "What happened at school today?"
- Avoid questions that produce one-word answers.
- Ask specific questions such as:
  - ◊ "Whose 'sharing time' was it today? Tell me about what she/he shared."
  - ◊ "What was in the art center today?"
  - ◊ "Tell me about this drawing in your backpack."

Sometimes telling the child a little something about your own day starts the ball rolling. The child may get the idea of sharing news and feelings about his or her day.

CECC Staff

**ATTENTION PARENTS OF PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN**

**Preschool Screening  
Coventry Public Schools  
1700 Main Street  
Coventry, CT 06238**



**Free pre-school screening  
October 17 - 21  
9:00am - 3:00pm  
Central Fire House  
Main Street**

The Coventry Board of Education, through the Coventry Early Intervention Services (CEIS), is offering a **free pre-school screening** for all Coventry children ages three and four years. The screening will be held at the Fire Department across from the Town Hall, Main St., Coventry on Monday, October 17, through Friday, October 21, 2011, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Screens in areas of vision, hearing, speech, language, cognitive and motor development are provided as an opportunity for parents to learn more about their child's development. Also, parents will receive information which will assist in fostering their child's growth.

Parents are urged to take advantage of this service. **Children who will be entering kindergarten for the 2012-2013 school year should be brought to the screening.**

Watch for further details regarding scheduling appointments. The screening will take about forty-five minutes.



**Gardener Needed**

Do you like gardening?  
Do you enjoy landscaping projects?  
Do you have a little extra time?  
The courtyard and our front entrance need some extra attention.  
If you are interested in volunteering,  
please contact the school office at 860-742-7313.



***Weather-Related/Emergency Closings, Delays, and Early Release Notifications***

Announcements regarding these closings, delayed openings, and early releases will be made via our ALERTNOW calling system. In addition to broadcasting this information on selected TV and radio stations, all student homes are now phoned by ALERTNOW. If families would like a list of the selected media outlets, please see the website at [www.coventrypublicschools.org](http://www.coventrypublicschools.org).



***PTO Treasurer's Report***

Transactions June 7 - August 24, 2011

Beginning Balance	\$ 1,300.55
<b>Income:</b> Dolphin Dance \$561.00	\$ 1,318.90
<b>Expenses:</b> Babysitting (June) \$50.00 Ice Pops- Festival \$233.16 Teacher Gifts Adjusted \$75.00	(\$ 358.16)
Ending Balance	\$ 2,261.29



## PTO News

A huge welcome from the PTO to new parents, returning parents and students! We are thrilled to meet a lot of you at Open House on Tuesday, September 27, 2011. Please stop by and visit one of the three (3) PTO tables located in each grade-level wing, and share your ideas and thoughts to make this a fun and exciting school year. If you haven't already, please be sure to fill out your membership and volunteer forms. This will get you added to the PTO email distribution list so that you can stay on top of what is going on at CGS and what fun activities will be held.

The PTO will be sponsoring the annual Scholastic Book Fair during Open House in the CGS gymnasium. This is a wonderful time to see friends and get some great reading material. A few other upcoming events: Picture Day, September 28, Welcome Back to School Family Fun Bingo Night – date to be announced, Fall Fundraising information will be coming home in October. We will be doing a pie fundraiser and the Original Artworks fundraiser (turning your child's artwork into items that you may purchase as gifts) with delivery in time for the holidays. Our next PTO meeting will be on Monday, October 3, 2011.

### Help Needed



- Open House – Four (4) Volunteers to work two (2) of the PTO tables explaining what the PTO is, how we help and events that we put on, and help people to sign up. Note: You will alternate so that you WILL be able to enjoy walking around with your child, meeting his/her teachers and attend the Book Fair. First- and Second-Grade parents are preferred but not required.
- School Rewards Chairperson – This will involve staying on top of and working with Mrs. Christie in the submission of Box Tops and coordinating two (2) contests.
- School Pictures – Volunteers to help the children tuck in shirts, comb hair, etc., so they look their very best.
- Family Fun Bingo Night – Volunteers to help set up\clean up and hand out prizes.
- Spirit Wear – Volunteer to find new vendor and help order new spirit-wear.
- Fine Arts – Volunteers needed to present and teach students about different types of art and different ways of interpreting art. Note: Training will be provided with free childcare available.
- Scholastic Book Fair – Volunteers to help set up, work and\or break down the Book Fair during Open House.
- Fall Fundraiser – Volunteers for pick-up date on November 22, 2011.

### Items Needed

- 32 oz. empty/clean yogurt containers

**Look for the CGS PTO on Facebook and become a member today!**

#### **Haley Small, Co-President**

(860) 670-0137  
[haleysmall@vzw.blackberry.net](mailto:haleysmall@vzw.blackberry.net)

#### **Leslie Ryan, Co-President**

(860) 742-8066  
[imfweezin59@yahoo.com](mailto:imfweezin59@yahoo.com)

#### **Anita Hilinski, Secretary**

860-742-1907  
[doggroom21@cs.com](mailto:doggroom21@cs.com)

#### **Camilla Byam, Treasurer**

860-742-8682  
[camillabyam@hotmail.com](mailto:camillabyam@hotmail.com)



# Coventry Grammar School is Going Green!

All newsletters will be on our website! Go to [www.coventrypublicschools.org](http://www.coventrypublicschools.org), click on schools and then on to Coventry Grammar School. You can then scroll down to PTO newsletters in the left hand column. At the bottom of this page, you will find the latest newsletter information.

If you need a paper copy, please indicate that below and return the bottom portion of this form to CGS.

If you have more than one child in CGS, provide the name of the student in the highest grade level.

-----CUT HERE-----

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I would like a paper copy of the monthly CGS newsletters.

**Please return to the classroom teacher by 10/1/11. Thank you!**

**Child's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade level:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_

