From the Superintendent's Office:  I wish to introduce myself to the Sanderson Academy School Community. My Name is Patricia Bell and I am happy to return to the Mohawk Trail family of schools as the Interim Superintendent. Some of you may remember me from my seven years in the district serving as the Director of Pupil Personnel Services starting in 2007. My mission now is to support all the wonderful projects and instructional practices currently in place in Sanderson Academy until a permanent appointment is made to the superintendent’s office.

If you need my assistance in any way, please contact the Central Office to request my attention.

Upcoming Events:
All School Meetings are held at 9:00 on Fridays.
Monday, March 16: Jabali Afrika Program at 2:00
Tuesday, March 17: Students Return from Mexico
Wednesday, March 18: Kindergarten Family Luncheon
Wednesday, March 18: 1:50 Release
Tuesday, March 24: 4th grade to Berkshire East
Wednesday March 25th : school inspection
Friday, March 27: School Play - Holka Polka at 6:00
Saturday, March 28: Snow Date for School Play

News from the PTO:
Greetings!
The Sanderson Academy PTO would like to share highlights from the March meeting.
The current PTO leadership team will be 'retiring' from their positions. They are excited to welcome a new PTO leadership Team for 2020-2021. Nomination forms will go home in the Thursday weekly folder March 12 and are due back by April 9. Please consider nominating yourself or a friend!
Please watch for Teacher Appreciation day activity ideas to help students show their gratitude for the teachers.
Please plan to support the annual teacher luncheon on Tuesday May 5. Info coming!
Thank you for your continued support!
Sanderson PTO
Preschool News from Mrs. Freeman: Preschoolers love Spirit Week! We talked about our plans for outfits and hair, and looked forward to seeing each dressed up. 100% of the class wore green on Tuesday and we wish everyday was pajama day!

This week we also worked and played in the woods. Several trees fell in our play area over the winter and we have been clearing the branches. Several children worked at chopping a rotten log with sticks and rocks. Others enjoyed playing in the fort and climbing on rocks and trees as a part of their imaginary play. We noticed the vernal pool is still covered with ice, and we look forward to exploring more when it melts.

Preschool News from Ms. Melanie: As learning extends to the outdoor classroom, children are noticing all of the amazing shapes that nature has to offer. They have seen trees with triangle bases, tree cookie circles and rectangles made from fallen tree branches. They also discovered that many of the items they use daily in the outdoor classroom are familiar shapes, for example the garden has a square border, the picnic table is a rectangle, the chalkboard is a rectangle and the tree stumps we sit on at meeting are circles. The children just love to happen upon a shape they had not noticed in their surroundings in the past.

They have also delighted in finding new muddy areas to explore. The excitement has been contagious and most children have spent a majority of our outdoor learning time creating food, art and fairy houses with mud. The joy in such a simple medium is amazing to witness. They are so ready to welcome spring!

Kindergarten News from Ms. Sarah: In science, we are learning about the three states of matter: solids, liquids, and gases. Last week, we did several experiments to explore solids and liquids. This week, we focused on gases. We learned that gases change their shape to fit their container and spread out to fill the whole container—even escaping if there is no lid! To see this, we put a balloon over a bottle of seltzer water and watched it expand. We filled plastic bags with air and popped them. And we inverted cups filled with air (and with a dry paper towel in the bottom) into a bowl of water to see how the air prevents the water from entering the cup (and reaching the paper towel). These experiments showed us that gas really is there, even though we can’t see it!

First Grade News from Ms. Pedersen: This week the first graders have enjoyed Dr. Seuss read alouds in honor of Dr. Seuss’s birthday. This has been a fun week combined with spirit week. In our Fundations program we started a new unit learning blends and words with 4 sounds. We are also focusing on our fluency and voice intonation as we read in our small reading groups. In writing we are learning to proofread and edit our writing. This week we focused on capitalization, sentence structuring and punctuation. In math we are continuing addition and subtraction on a number line, adding multiples of 10 (up to 80) and another 2-digit number. Our new workplace is called Super Frogs where we are adding and subtracting within 100.

Empathy has been our current theme in our social/emotional learning. We are currently discussing what to do when accidents happen between friends and how to handle angry emotions when we are upset.

Second Grade News from Ms. Robertson: We have been busy as readers and writers this week, as we are completing old themes and beginning new ones. As our reading theme on poetry nears its end, we are turning our attention to being poets ourselves as we write “I Am” poems about a favorite animal. As a prewriting activity we brainstormed adjectives to describe our animals and actions that our animals do. After using these adjectives and actions to create our poems, we are learning about the revising step of the writing process. We will be revising our poems to make them stronger by adding in new details, by changing the order of our ideas, and by making stronger
During our reading block we have turned our attention learning more about nonfiction texts. Using a nonfiction big book called Amazing Animals, we are enjoying learning interesting facts about different animals as we focus on learning about nonfiction text features, such as captions, boldface and italic print, and sidebars. By learning about these parts of a nonfiction book, we can better utilize them as we read nonfiction text. Our interest in animals has been extended to our theme time, as we have started a new science unit on habitats. To begin our unit, we brainstormed a list of domesticated animals and wild animals and thought about the different habitats where these animals make their homes. We are currently exploring the question “What is a habitat?” and what makes a habitat healthy or unhealthy. Our math time finds us solving story problems using the theme of parcels and presents. (The parcels represent groups of ten while the individual presents represent groups of one.) After using a variety of strategies to solve different parcel and present problems, we have enjoyed sharing our strategies with each other and explaining our work. We are now working on creating our own parcels and presents story problems to share with each other.

**Second Grade News from Ms. Wyckoff:** Over the past two weeks our wonderful SCA members, Biz and Patrick, led us in discussion about beavers and how they change the landscape. After learning about beaver dams and what bevers use to create their beaver dam, second graders were given the task to create their own. The first step was to sketch out a dam design using a list of materials such as, gravel, sticks, river rock, clay and mulch. After designing their dam they had to decide what materials they wanted to purchase. With a budget of only $50 per group they had some decision making to do! After submitting their dam design and budget they were given the supplies and told to begin! For 30 minutes second graders worked together to collaborate, brainstorm, problem solve and compliment one another until Patrick said “STOP!” The final phase was to test the beaver dam to see how much water it would hold back. The results were fabulous and second graders were eager to see just how many seconds would pass before water seeped through. Great job second graders!
Third Grade News from Ms. Fisher: Third graders are turning their math focus to measurement for a few weeks. This week we are looking at measuring time. Do you know what A.M. and P.M. stand for? If not, ask your third grader to teach you some Latin. We are shoring-up our ability to read analog clocks to the minute, and we are also working on using timelines to calculate elapsed time. Next we will be focusing on both metric and standard units of mass, weight, and liquid volume.

The MCAS dates have been scheduled, and third graders will be taking the English Language Arts MCAS on April 16th and April 28th. They will be taking the Math MCAS on May 18th and 20th. Please check your calendars and make sure your third grader does not have any appointments scheduled for those days as he/she will need to be at school the entire day to complete the assessments.

Fourth Grade News from Mrs. Lagay: Students have chosen topics for their informational research writing. Although some students have chosen places (Maine and Canada), activities (downhill skiing and ark), and different fields of study (rocket science), it looks like I will be learning a lot about different animal species (peregrine falcon, tuxedo cat, sugar glider, Atlantic white-sided dolphin, snapping turtle and bermese python) in the coming weeks. Our next reading book is The Castle in the Attic, an epic fantasy. On Tuesday, we spent time learning about the epic fantasy genre and compared/contrasted it to the realistic fantasy. We read the blurb today to see what we could learn about the characters, setting, and problem. We are all very excited to begin reading tomorrow! The MCAS dates have been scheduled, and fourth graders will be taking the English Language Arts MCAS April 7th and April 14th. They will be taking the Math MCAS on May 5th and 12th. Since the assessments may take the entire school day, please be sure appointments are scheduled for alternate days.

Fifth Grade News from Ms. Johnson: The MCAS dates have been scheduled. Fifth graders will be taking the English Language Arts MCAS April 10th and April 15th. The science assessment will be given on May 7th and 8th. They will be taking the Math MCAS on May 14th and 15th. Since the assessments may take the entire school day, please be sure appointments are scheduled for alternate days.

Sixth Grade News from Mrs. Schreiber: Sixth Grade has been busy while our ambassadors are away in Mexico City. We have been working on STEM projects looking at early man in the Paleolithic time as well as archeologists tools used to discover artifacts and learn about the past. We have also been writing a creative writing story and reading the book The Witches by Roald Dahl. We are looking forward to learning all about Mexico from our world travelers when they return.

Math News from Mrs. Prew: You will likely see your children using money in mathematics class! Using coins is helpful for many things such as counting, structuring/building to friendly numbers, modeling fractions, and converting between decimals and fractions. Money is a real-world math skill that students use at all grade levels, and in real-life outside of the classroom. Follow the link below for directions to 5 different math games (Money Toss, Dollars and Dice, Money Matching, Hide and Seek, and Shopping Center) that you can play at home using just coins and other things that you already have at home. Enjoy!

https://www.thebalance.com/use-coin-based-games-to-teach-money-skills-2085683

Music News from Mrs. Shippee: Chorus has been working hard on learning four songs to be sung at the annual Kids in Concert event. The first rehearsal for this is on Friday, April 3 at 1:00. Students will be bussed from Sanderson to the high school. Students need to be picked up from there at 4:00. Yellow permission slips have gone home and need to be signed and returned ASAP. Thank you.
Health Office News from Nurse Loranna: We continue to monitor daily (hourly) any updates and information regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19) through reputable sources such as Massachusetts Dept of Health (DPH), and the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as well as the local Board of Health. We have a strong team who are providing the most up to date information/recommendations and if things change we will be in contact. We have increased hand washing in classrooms as well as overall sanitation throughout the school. It is important to be mindful about how we discuss this illness with our children. I have been looking at different resources that provide tools for us to use when discussing with our children and wanted to share some of my findings.

1. Don’t be afraid to discuss with your children, children worry more when kept in the dark - however it is important to not burden them with difficult information so something simple and concrete will be better such as “the coronavirus is in the same family as the cold viruses we get every year, most people have very mild symptoms and recover fully”

2. Take cues from your child, you know your children best and a good way to diminish any fears they have about this virus is to start by asking them what they know about it first and then provide reassurance.

3. Deal with your own anxiety - children pick up on our emotions - try to talk with your child at a time where you feel calm yourself.

4. Focus on what we are doing to stay safe - one way to reassure your children is by telling them what we are doing to protect ourselves such as increasing hand washing and disinfecting surfaces.

5. Stick to routines - children do best with consistent structure - try to stick with regular bedtimes, meals and home schedules as much as possible to help our children feel grounded.

5. Monitor screen time/radio/TV and try not to have it on when your children are around, while it is important to stay informed the media has certainly been adding a level of panic that we do not want to burden our children with.