



*Pen and Pencil – April, 2017*

*Ralph S. Maugham Elementary School*

March has come and gone too quickly; I can't believe the end of the year is rapidly approaching. March was an exciting month beginning with Read Across America to celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students jump roped for heart this month and we had some wonderful content specific assemblies for our students.

Mrs. Casteline and I had an opportunity to stop into the 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes last week to talk about phones and the pull of technology. We had a great conversation about the pros and cons of phones... what are the challenges of having one and what are the benefits of having one. We also discussed whether or not they had a contract (whether it be written or verbal) with their parents regarding their phone/ipad usage.

I came upon a great article from the New York Times called, "How to Manage Media in Families". Regardless of the age of your child, it is a good read and asks the important questions. Here is the article and its link <https://nyti.ms/1CDq7Bv>

How to Manage Media in Families

This Life

By BRUCE FEILER MARCH 20, 2015

Parents have a love-hate relationship with firsts. Some they like: the first smile, the first steps, the first sleeping through the night. Others they dread: the first flu, the first tantrum, the first broken bone. As children get older, the firsts become more nuanced, generating both joy in our children's independence and fear of their slipping away: the first summer away, the first date, the first driver's license.

But few firsts generate more ambivalence than the first cellphone.

On one hand, many parents welcome this milestone. Now they can keep track of their children when they're out and notify the children if they're running late. Also, parents gain leverage. One mother told me, "I've found the phone has given me newfound power as a parent, because I can take it away!"

On the other hand, children tend to disappear through the looking glass when they get their first phone. They become vulnerable to the dark side of the Internet, and once comfortable routines get upended. "We used to be a family before they got phones," one father complained. "Now we're never together."

(This challenge has taken on new urgency in New York this month as children can now carry cellphones to city schools after Mayor Bill de Blasio [lifted a ban](#) that had been enforced by the Bloomberg administration.) How should parents handle this transition? Some discuss freedom and responsibility, hand over the device, then respond as situations arise. But others try to do more, laying down a set of rules.

The Obamas, for example, said they did not give their daughters cellphones until they were 12, barred their use during weekdays, kept the girls off Facebook until 17 and gave them what the first lady deemed “days of lectures” on the dangers of talking to strangers. Janell Burley Hofmann, a mother in Massachusetts, wrote her 13-year-old son [a letter](#) when he got his first phone listing 18 edicts, including: “If it rings, answer it. It is a phone. Say hello, use your manners. Do not ever ignore a phone call if the screen reads ‘Mom’ or ‘Dad.’ Not ever.”

The Internet is bursting with dozens of multi-plank contracts for parents to execute with their children. As the father of tweens, I like this idea, but I’m also realistic enough to know that a three-page contract will be swiftly ignored and even it can’t keep up with the last parent-avoiding app. What I craved was a handful of overarching rules that could guide our interactions.

### **I’m Still Your Parent**

Yalda Uhls, a psychologist at Common Sense Media and the author of the forthcoming [“Media Moms & Digital Dads,”](#) said parents should set guidelines in advance: “I believe that when you first give your child something that gives them unlimited access to the Internet and their friends, it is important to make it clear that you own the device, you pay for it, and if there is any behavior that you feel is not true to your family values, you can take it away.”

Part of this deal is that you will respect their boundaries, she said, but you also have the right to join any social network they join, know their passwords and check their texts. This can create awkward situations, she said, like when her daughter mentioned on a friend’s Instagram page how funny it was when he shoplifted. “I was horrified,” Ms. Uhls said, “but I chose to focus on the impact on him. ‘This is a public forum,’ I said. ‘His parents will be seeing this.’” She removed the comment.

Though it seems as if children know everything about social media, Ms. Uhls said, actually they’re still learning. “They’re so focused on themselves and their friends,” she said, “they don’t understand that other people are watching.”

### **Step Away From Your Phone**

Of the 10 contracts I examined, one item appeared most frequently: “Phones will be turned off and put away at certain times of the night.” Research backs this up. A [study from the University of Basel](#) found that teenagers who kept their smartphones on at night were more likely to watch videos, text and have poor sleep habits and higher depression. Lynn Schofield Clark, a professor at the University of Denver and the author of [“The Parent App,”](#) told me that setting physical limitations may be easier than enforcing time restrictions.

“When parents say, ‘You can use the phone only from this hour to this hour,’ it’s hard to manage,” she said. She recommends that all phones go in a box by the door when children enter the house, or all devices go in the center of the table during mealtimes, including at restaurants.

“Whatever rules you adopt,” she said, “make sure you put the chargers in a public place, so the phones have to be out of their possession at night.”

## Read Every Text Twice

One role of parents is to explain that digital communication can easily be misconstrued. Ken Denmead, the publisher of [GeekDad.com](http://GeekDad.com) and the author of several books, said that he tells his teenage sons that text-based conversations have no emotional nuance unless you take the extra step to insert it. “You can use smileys and emoticons to add flavor to what you’re saying,” he said. “It’s also about word choice or adding #enthusiastic. The bottom line: Before you send a message, go back and read it without context. Consider if that exclamation point could be read as aggressive.”

## The Grandmother Rule

Everyone agrees on the need to prevent children from sexting, bullying or posting something inappropriate. But how to convey that? One parent told me she requires her children to put potential posts on the refrigerator and get a majority vote from the family. [Mr. Denmead](#) tells his sons, “Always pretend you’re speaking in front of a crowd.”

Ms. Uhls recommended giving children a visual. “Think about your grandmother,” she said. “Think about the principal. Think about the most embarrassing adult in your life. Before you hit send, reflect on how that person would react.” My daughters independently suggested the same rule, and when I asked what the consequences should be for violating it, they said, “Actually show the post to Grandma!”

## No Phones at Family Time

Everybody I spoke with had certain rules about family time. Ms. Uhls said: “When I was younger and took parenting classes, everybody said, ‘Just 10 minutes on the floor with the children.’ Now I say the same thing. ‘Just 10 minutes. No devices. That’s our time together.’ ”

In Mr. Denmead’s family, the first 20 minutes of every car ride are reserved for conversation. After that, devices can be plugged in. “I think we’re overly nostalgic for ‘spot the license plate,’ ” he said. “It’s just a substitute for abject boredom.”

Ms. Schofield Clark went so far as to add family time to the contract she wrote with her children. That item reads: “We will have weekly technology-free activities, like hiking, biking or walking the dogs. Occasionally, we will take technology-free retreats, like when fishing or camping.” The contract also includes weekly movie night, with the proviso, “When Mom watches horror or fantasy films, she’s not allowed to say, ‘Ewww,’ ‘Oh no!’ or ‘Gasp!’ ”

## Do Unto Yourself

One surprising thing I heard about these agreements: They should include restrictions on the parents, who are the most egregious technology abusers of all. Ms. Schofield Clark’s daughter insisted on the clause, “When I have something to say, Mommy has to close the laptop and listen.”

Her son added a rule. Beginning when her children were young, Ms. Schofield Clark took their photo with Santa every Christmas. She forced them to do it when they were teenagers, then posted the photo on Facebook. Within seconds, her otherwise hibernating 14-year-old son came bolting from his bedroom. Their agreement now includes the plank, “If Mom wants to post a photo with a kid in it, she needs to ask.”

This story also holds perhaps the final lesson of managing media in families: No technology agreement can be written in stone. It needs to be revised with every new child, every new phase, every new device and every new app.

I hope you have the opportunity to have these important conversations with your children and set your expectations as a family of what is appropriate use of the cell phone.

**PARCC UPDATE**

**PARCC testing schedule:**

**5<sup>th</sup> Grade – April 18<sup>th</sup> – April 25<sup>th</sup>**

**4<sup>th</sup> Grade – April 26<sup>th</sup> – May 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> grade will also be taking the NJASK Science on May 31<sup>st</sup>**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade – May 4<sup>th</sup> – May 11<sup>th</sup>**

Warmest Regards,  
Jennifer Ferrara, Principal

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**Calendar**

- |                                         |                                                                |                    |                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wed. 4/05                               | 5th Grade Program:<br>Motions & Machines<br>9:30 AM/Auditorium | Fri. 4/21          | 2nd Grades to visit<br>Nature Center-AM                         |
| Fri. 4/07                               | 4th Grade Program:<br>Human Body<br>1:45 PM/Library            | <b>Mon. 4/24</b>   | <b>5th Grade PARCC Testing</b>                                  |
|                                         |                                                                | <b>Tues. 4/25</b>  | <b>5th Grade PARCC Testing</b>                                  |
|                                         |                                                                | <b>Wed. 4/26</b>   | <b>4th Grade PARCC Testing</b>                                  |
|                                         |                                                                | <b>Thurs. 4/27</b> | <b>4th Grade PARCC Testing</b>                                  |
|                                         |                                                                | <b>Thurs. 4/27</b> | Grades 3-5 only<br>Assembly: Poetry Alive<br>2:10 PM/Auditorium |
|                                         |                                                                | <b>Fri. 4/28</b>   | <b>4th Grade PARCC Testing</b>                                  |
| Monday, April 10th – Friday, April 14th | SPRING BREAK – SCHOOLS CLOSED                                  |                    |                                                                 |
| <b>Tues. 4/18</b>                       | <b>5th Grade PARCC Testing</b>                                 |                    |                                                                 |
| <b>Wed. 4/19</b>                        | <b>5th Grade PARCC Testing</b>                                 |                    |                                                                 |
| <b>Thurs. 4/20</b>                      | <b>5th Grade PARCC Testing</b>                                 |                    |                                                                 |
| Thurs. 4/20                             | 2nd Grade Field Trip<br>8:45 AM – 3:00 PM                      |                    |                                                                 |
| Thurs. 4/20                             | HSA Meeting<br>2:00 PM/Library                                 |                    |                                                                 |
| <b>Fri. 4/21</b>                        | <b>5th Grade PARCC Testing</b>                                 |                    |                                                                 |

# APRIL 2017 Library Pen & Pencil

## APRIL IS NATIONAL POETRY MONTH!!



Spring has sprung and there's no better way to welcome spring than with a good poem!

The great philosopher Voltaire once said that *"Poetry is the music of the soul"* so in honor of April being **National Poetry Month**, we will be doing a school-wide unit on poetry in our library classes. It's amazing to see how many students are natural-born poets or become poets during this unit. We'll be exploring all different kinds of poetry and look forward to seeing the students' finished work.

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On Friday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, we celebrated **"Read Across America"** and Dr. Seuss in the library with our K-2 grades. Mrs. Lynn Trager, our Superintendent, arrived to help make slime or "oobleck" for our students, based on our reading a Dr. Seuss classic **"Bartholomew and the Oobleck"**. Mrs. Ferrara also inspired the Kindergarten students to put on their "engineering" hats and come up with a strategy to stack 10 red cups without falling over, based on the Dr. Seuss classic **"Ten Apples Up on Top"**. A great time was had by both kids and adults!

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The long cold days of March were also productive in the library as our 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders were introduced to **Ozobot!** These smart, tiny, toy robots empower learners to code, play, create and connect the physical and digital worlds. We had a lot of fun learning how to use them! To learn more about the Ozobot, visit [www.ozobot.com](http://www.ozobot.com)

*Happy Spring!*  
*Mrs. Herbst*



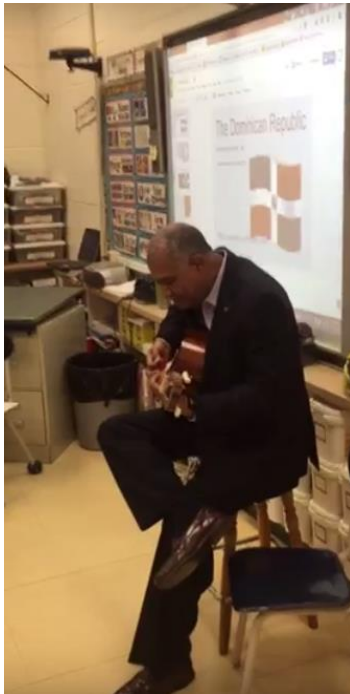


**Tales of the Traveling Vice Principal**  
**April 2017**

**International Week at Mackay**

I had the honor of working with the International Committee at Mackay. This year, the school learned about Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, and Cuba. Throughout the course of the week, students participated in Museum Day, an international buffet, a baseball demonstration, an assembly with a live band, and a student led performance where students celebrated their cultures. On Museum Day, we welcomed Mr. Jose Novas, an accomplished writer and historian of the Dominican Republic, who came in and spoke to the students about the rich culture of the Caribbean.

I had the privilege of working with a dance troupe who performed at the assembly. Our group consisted of 24 students who worked with me once a week to learn a salsa and merengue dance. We had so much fun and I was very proud of their performance! It was a wonderful week filled with dance, music, great food, and fantastic collaboration. Thank you to the entire International Committee for their amazing work!



## **Curriculum Work**

**Science** - Across the district, the science pilot program is going well. We have several 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers working on the implementation of the McGraw Hill Inspire-Science program. The overall feedback is positive and the students seem to grasp the concepts being taught, all while having fun! The core concepts of the program connect the science being taught to the core subjects students are studying. By integrating science, literature, and math, students master key concepts that impact science and beyond.

## **Literacy**

Grade 1 teachers will be receiving professional development in the upcoming months to support the implementation of Schoolwide curriculum. Our first grade team is excited about the opportunity to collaborate with one another and share best practices with regards to literacy instruction.

## **Mindfulness**

Several teachers throughout the district had the opportunity to take part in a workshop entitled, **Educate 2B**, a program developed by Zensational Kids. The program is designed to provide all students and teachers with short breaks throughout the day to relax and re-charge the mind and body. I have witnessed the implementation of this program across the four schools and teachers and students alike are THRILLED with the impact it has made.



## **HSA Pen & Pencil March 2017**

Spring is here! The HSA has been busy bringing fantastic programming and fundraising to Maugham Elementary. The HSA parents organized International Day, the Book Fair with a visit from the Tenafly Nature Center for family night, the teacher's luncheons for parent-teacher conference days, coordinated after school clubs, and served school lunch. We are looking for volunteers to get involved in the Spring events and for the upcoming year ahead.

### **International Day**

The HSA is thrilled to have had a successful International Day Festival to teach Maugham children about the world around them. International Day took place with an international food buffet on March 10th and a festival of tables on March 13th. This year highlighted Brazil, with a focus on the Amazon rainforest, maps and landmarks from various cities, and the culture of this beautiful South American country. The Brazil table had arts and crafts projects to make rainforest animals and flowers, soccer trivia, salsa music and dancing, and a Brazilian marketplace. The table featured interesting facts and pictures of Brazil geography, mining, carnival, the Amazon rainforest, and exporting coffee, sugar and chocolate. The children felt the two day festival was impactful and enjoyed each part.

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, the International Day buffet exposed children to foods from around the world. Each country table had food samples of staple foods from each place, and many of the children filled their plates to try new flavors and tastes. The tables were beautifully decorated to reflect the culture and eating styles of each country. Thanks to all of the volunteers who taught the children about the foods and culture of the countries.

On March 13<sup>th</sup>, the festival of tables took place, with the Brazil host table anchoring the panorama of countries in the gymnasium. The children could interact with each country table, learning about people, geography, culture, language, sports and music. Volunteers at the tables dressed up in traditional clothing of the country, demonstrated activities and taught the children key phrases in different languages. The children gained an appreciation for international diversity and for the similarities that weave all of us together.

### **HSA Updates**

**Board of Education Meeting on School Air Conditioning.** The Board of Education will be holding a meeting on April 5th to discuss the possibility of air conditioning for Tenafly public schools. This meeting will be the only opportunity for the community to voice its support or concerns to the Board of Education concerning the air conditioning initial construction and annual maintenance costs. Parents are encouraged to attend and participate in this meeting before a community referendum is considered. If parents cannot attend the meeting, please email the Board of Education members with your opinions, support and/or concerns by the April 5th deadline.

**Yearbook Committee.** The yearbook will be adding additional parent advertising and space in the back of the book for wishing congratulations to the graduating children. The deadline to submit for the yearbook will be extended to allow all families to participate. The advertisements will be \$10 per space. The yearbook committee is working with the HSA to create a Google drive to submit school pictures throughout the year and to compile pictures for various previous years.

**Teacher Conferences, Tenafly Nature Center & Book Fair.** Parent teacher conferences took place on March 23rd and 24th, with the HSA hosting the first annual Family Night. During the conferences, the Tenafly Nature Center participated along with the HSA Book Fair to bring to life the theme of "Happy Camper," with an arts and crafts project, a special guest book reader and a live owl and fancy rat for the children. The HSA Book Fair was a success,



and children from all of the classes were able to browse and purchase books from the huge Scholastic selection.

**Treasurer’s Report.** The HSA budget is in good shape, with numerous activities fundraising for the school. The 5th grade TREPS marketplace earned \$3,500, which will be given to two charities. The Book Fairs earned higher than budgeted. The library author visits have earned \$1,800 to date. The school lunches have earned better than budgeted for the first two semesters, which the school clubs are close to budget but have not yet reached the targeted goal. We will have an updated budget next month, which will include all Maugham merchandise to date.

**Beautification Committee.** The 5th grade committee has agreed to donate \$3,500, along with additional donations from the HSA, to beautify the front of the school. The funds will be utilized for an updated sprinkler system to keep the grass and plant beds watered, new plantings and flowers, and for removing trees that encroach the entranceways.

**Important dates to mark on your calendar:**

|                                         |                                       |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Board of Educ. Air Conditioning Meeting | April 5                               |
| Spring Break – No School                | April 10-14                           |
| Field Day- Maugham Playground           | May 12                                |
| Maugham Spring Event                    | June 9 (rain date June 16)            |
| Next H.S.A. Meeting:                    | Thursday, April 20 at 2 PM in Library |

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions, comments or concerns at [maughamschoolhsa@gmail.com](mailto:maughamschoolhsa@gmail.com).

Thank you in advance for helping out the HSA and Maugham School.

Executive Council: Michelle Roglieri, Chie Williams, Susan Carlin and Michele Goldberg  
Co-Treasurers: Doreen Hawkins and Natalya Michaels  
Co-Secretaries: Andrea Weitzner and Lauren Dayton

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Dear Parents,

International Day 2017 was undoubtedly a huge success! Kids had so much fun learning about Brazil, our featured country. The International Day Committee would like to give a big “thank you” to all the parents who dedicated their time to make this event a success— whether by hosting tables during the festival or by bringing delicious signature dishes from their respective countries for the international buffet. It was obvious that our students enjoyed the event very much and just as importantly, they learned a lot! Our kids are so lucky to live in such a diverse and volunteering community where parents of different backgrounds are so willing to share a bit about our respective cultures for the enrichment of our students!

Thanks again.

Your International Day Committee,  
Alissa Epstein  
Jennifer Damashek  
Erica Park