



Big Flats News

April 2015



Dear Parents and Guardians,

Happy spring! I know many of us have been patiently and anxiously awaiting the arrival of the warmer temperatures and the wonderful sights and promising growth of the spring season. In education, we aren't too far off in sharing our excitement of the season, by seeing the incredible growth that our students have made since the beginning of the school year. As I have been observing classrooms throughout the school year, I am in awe of our students and teachers growth this year. As you may recall, one of our district initiatives this past school year was for everyone to learn the Rigor, Relevance, and Relationship Framework. As adult learners we continue to learn how to make our daily lessons relevant to our students and their future so that we increase student engagement and higher level thinking and learning of our student learners. Our teachers at Big Flats Elementary have worked tirelessly at not only learning these instructional strategies themselves, but at implementing them into their daily lessons. This new adult learning is now carrying over into the classrooms and we are beginning to see the increased rigor in our student conversations, writing, mathematical applications, and in their scientific experiments. It is very exciting to see our classroom instruction move from a traditional classroom of lecture and reciting knowledge to inquiry learning, and then being able to apply that knowledge, and to critical thinking as to how I can use this knowledge in solving a real community or world issue. I am very appreciative of our staff and students as we move forward in our continual learning and growth as student and adult learners.

May you all have a wonderful spring break! I look forward to the remaining months of the current school year and all the amazing growth that it will continue to bring.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth M. Scaptura
Principal



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GENERAL INFORMATION:

Big Flats Office Hours

7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Monday through Friday

Office Phone Numbers

(607) 739-6373

(607) 795-2550

(607) 795-2555 fax

FRIENDLY REMINDERS:

❖ **New Safety Features**

As we mentioned in the last newsletter, the Main Office has moved, and doors were added to the lobby as an added level of security. For these to be most effective we all need to know who is coming into the building. When you buzz in please state who you are and why you would like to come in the building, and **most importantly**, please do not hold the door open for someone who is following you. We need to be able to identify everyone who comes in the door before they can be admitted to the office. Thank you.

❖ **Changing your Child's Dismissal Plans?**

Thank you for helping us ensure students are dismissed the correct way each day by using our blue note pads. We acknowledge that changes can occur during the day which impact your child's dismissal plans. We have seen an increase in calls near the end of the day, and it is often difficult to make these adjustments at the last minute. We ask that whenever possible you call before 12:00 so that we can assure a smooth dismissal and to keep our students safe. Thank you!

❖ **Consolidation Feasibility Study and Facility Study Update:**

Stay up-to-date with the Elmira Heights Consolidation Study and Facilities/Program Consolidation Study on the district website under the Featured Links:
<http://community.horseheadsdistrict.com/heights-feasibility-study/SitePages/Home.aspx>

❖ **Board of Education Budget Workshops and Q&A Sessions:**

Budget Workshop - 4/9, 6:00 Broad St.

Q&A Sessions (all meetings start at 7:00)

4/27 - HH American Legion

5/4 - Erin Town Hall

5/18 - BF Community Center

Main Office Updates:

Classroom Placements for 2015-2016 School Year

Big Flats Elementary:

In the near future we will begin to look at classroom placements for the year 2015 - 2016. We use a team approach for class placements and it is a long process. As you might imagine, we must take many things into consideration when making placements. **Please do not write letters requesting a certain teacher. We will not honor requests for specific teachers, but we do value parent concerns and thoughts about the needs of their children.** If you have any information/concerns about your child that we are unaware of, please put it in writing and drop it off to the main office by Friday, April 17.

Intermediate School:

If your child will be attending Intermediate School next year, they will soon be completing 2015-2016 classroom placements for students. They create class selections with the intent to achieve a mix of students by ability, gender, personality, and individual special needs. Their process is the same as ours, so if you have specific information about your child's needs which should be taken into consideration or a specific previous personal experience, please put them in writing and send them to the Intermediate School by Friday, April 10.

Big Flats Spelling Bee

Dear Parents:

We are excited to announce that this year's annual Spelling Bee will be held on Thursday April 30th at 7:00 pm in the Big Flats auditorium. This year we have made an exciting change and have allowed students to electively participate in the spell-down and spelling bee, and have had a great turnout! Thank you to all the teachers and volunteers for their continued support that make activities like this a success!

Yours truly,
Big Flats PTO

NOTE: New date - April 30



The annual Hunt for the Gold Shoes event is back!



Each year the Hunt for the Gold Shoes event encourages the residents of Chemung County to step out of their homes and get involved with outdoor activities at local parks and other sites of interest. This acts to promote healthy lifestyles by encouraging residents to partake in out-door, physical activities. During this massive scavenger hunt beginning on May 2nd, approximately 350 painted shoes will be hidden near hiking trails and in parks within our local community with the hopes of being found before May 30th. Everyone who finds a gold shoe is encouraged to attend the culminating event at Tanglewood Nature Center on May 30th where they will be eligible to win prizes that promote good physical and mental health.

ATTENTION PARENTS AND GUARDIANS OF 3RD AND 4TH GRADERS

To provide schools and parents with an assessment of student achievement, New York State has developed the New York State Testing Program. These standardized tests challenge all students in grades 3 through 8 to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. Please visit the site at <http://engageny.org/parent-and-family-resources>. If you are interested in viewing this site but do not have access to the Internet, please call the school office so that we can make arrangements for you to see this guide.

NYS Testing Dates:

3rd and 4th grade ELA- April 14 - 16, 2015

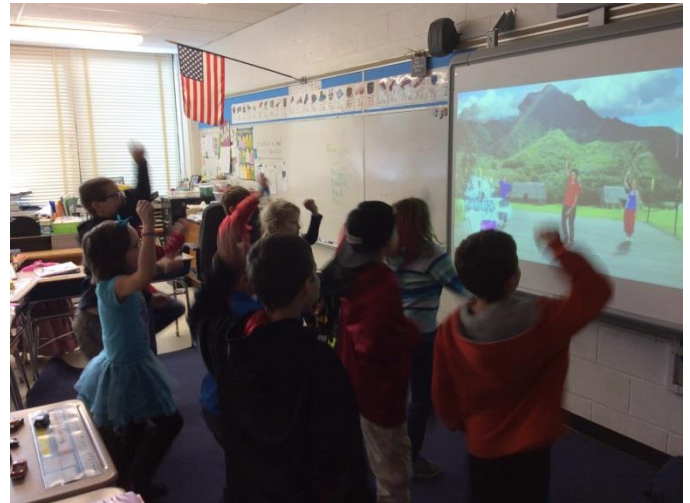
3rd and 4th grade Math - April 22 - April 24, 2015

4th grade Science Performance Test - May 20 - 21, 2015 4th grade Science Written Test - June 1, 2015

Students in Action!



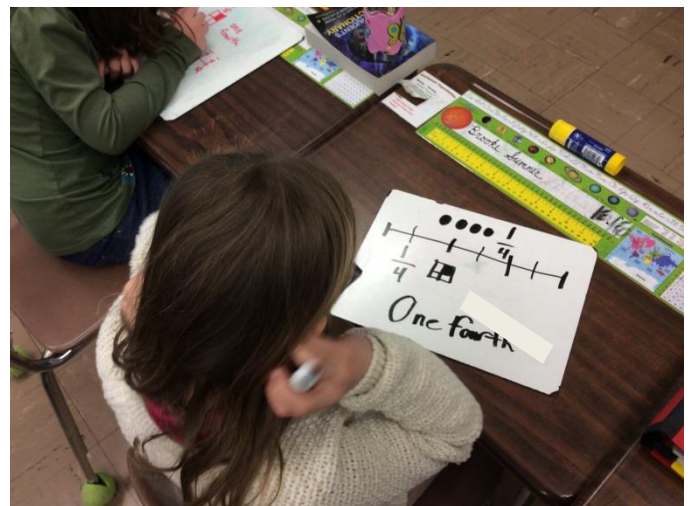
First Grade students engaged in 100th Day activities in Mrs. Schrage's room



Second Grade students take advantage of a stretch break between classes



Second Grade Math Talks with Mrs. Henry and Mr. Sumner



A Third Grade student provides math evidence



Fourth Grade students sporting their Mix/Match Spirit Day apparel



Students engaged in Read Across America

Mark Your Calendars

Principal Chat

April 7

6:00 to 6:30 p.m.

Big Flats PTO

April 7

6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

CSE Meetings

April 8

Community Budget Workshop

Broad Street School Cafeteria

April 9

6:00 p.m.

3rd & 4th Gr. NYS Assessments

ELA - April 14 - 16

End of Marking Period

April 17

3rd & 4th Gr. NYS Assessments

Math - April 22 - 24

Board of Education Meeting

April 22

6:00 p.m.—Ridge Road

Report Cards Go Home

April 24

BoE Budget Q&A

HH Legion

April 27

7:00 p.m.

Spelling Bee

April 30 (NEW DATE!)

6:30 p.m.

Common Core Corner

There are many parent resources available online. We will be linking full brochures and items to our online newsletter and providing excerpts in our newsletters as the year goes on.

While we have been using Common Core materials for many months now, there are still some myths about it that can be addressed:

- **MYTH:** Adopting CC means standards are moved to the lowest common denominator, which would mean states with high standards would take a step backwards.
 - **FACT:** In preparing all students for success in their future, all standards move up to the next level, and no states would lower its standards.
- **MYTH:** CCSS are not internationally benchmarked.
 - **FACT:** Standards from top-performing countries were used in the development of math and ELA standards; there is an appendix listing the international standards that were consulted.
- **MYTH:** ELA standards are just vague descriptions of skills
 - **FACT:** The standards include sample texts that demonstrate the level of text complexity appropriate for the grade level.

For more, read the whole article attached to our online newsletter.



Horseheads Schools @HhdsSchools
and Mrs. Scaptura @escaptura1



Follow Big Flats Elementary
on Facebook!

Bus Drivers Needed

The Horseheads Central School District is in need of bus drivers. If you are interested in becoming a bus driver, or know someone who is, please contact Pete Wilcox in the Transportation Department - 607-795-2560.

Character Education trait for April is: RESPONSIBILITY

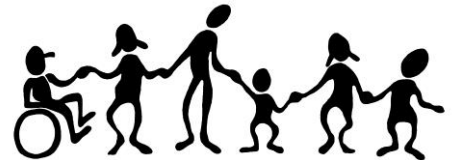
Ideas to support Responsibility include:

- ❖ Persevere: keep on trying!
- ❖ Always do your best
- ❖ Use self-control; be self-disciplined
- ❖ Think before you act - consider the consequences
- ❖ Set a good example for others
- ❖ Be accountable for your words, actions, and attitudes

Let's PULL TOGETHER for the Ronald McDonald House



Bring in tabs from now through May.



BIG FLATS

E L E M E N T A R Y

543 Maple Street
Big Flats, New York 14814-9707
607-739-6373

Elizabeth Scaptura, Principal

Dignity Act Coordinator

The Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC) for Big Flats Elementary is Elizabeth Scaptura. Complaints regarding discrimination, harassment, or bullying of any student should be referred to Mrs. Scaptura at 607-739-6373.

The Dignity Act Coordinator for the Horseheads Central School District is Judith Christiansen. Mrs. Christiansen may be reached at One Raider Lane, Horseheads, NY 14845, or 607-739-5601 x4211.

The Horseheads Central School District offers educational programs without regard to gender, race, color, national origin or disability. Inquiries regarding this policy may be made to Judy Christiansen, Title IX Coordinator, or Kim Williams, Section 504 Coordinator, Horseheads Central School District, One Raider Lane, Horseheads, NY 14845 (607) 739-5601

Myths vs. Facts about Common Core

Successful implementation of the Common Core State Standards requires parents, educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders to have the facts about what the standards are and what they are not. The following myths and facts aim to address common misconceptions about the development, intent, content, and implementation of the standards.

Myths About Content and Quality: General

Myth: Adopting common standards means bringing all states' standards down to the lowest common denominator. This means that states with high standards are actually taking a step backwards by adopting the Common Core.

Fact: The standards are designed to build upon the most advanced current thinking about preparing all students for success in college, career, and life. This will result in moving even the best state standards to the next level. In fact, since this work began, there has been an explicit agreement that no state would lower its standards. The standards were informed by the best in the country, the highest international standards, and evidence and expertise about educational outcomes. We need college- and career-ready standards because even in high-performing states, students are graduating and passing all the required tests but still need remediation in their postsecondary work.

Myth: The Common Core State Standards are not internationally benchmarked.

Fact: Standards from top-performing countries played a significant role in the development of the math and English language arts/literacy standards. In fact, the college- and career-ready standards provide an appendix listing the evidence that was consulted in drafting the standards, including the international standards that were consulted in the development process.

Myth: The standards only include skills and do not address the importance of content knowledge.

Fact: The standards recognize that both content and skills are important.

The English language arts standards require certain critical content for all students, including classic myths and stories from around the world, America's founding documents, foundational American literature, and Shakespeare. Appropriately, the remaining crucial decisions about what content should be taught are made at the state and local levels. In addition to content coverage, the standards require that students systematically acquire knowledge in literature and other disciplines through reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

The mathematics standards lay a solid foundation in whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, and decimals. Taken together, these elements support a student's ability to learn and apply more demanding math concepts and procedures. The middle school and high school standards call on students to practice applying mathematical ways of thinking to real-world issues and challenges. They prepare students to think and reason mathematically. The standards set a rigorous definition of college and career readiness not by piling topic upon topic, but by demanding that students develop a depth of understanding and ability to apply mathematics to novel situations, as college students and employees regularly do.

Myths About Content and Quality: Math

Myth: The standards do not prepare or require students to learn algebra in the 8th grade, as many states' current standards do.

Fact: The standards do accommodate and prepare students for Algebra 1 in 8th grade by including the prerequisites for this course in grades K-7. Students who master the K-7 material will be able to take Algebra 1 in 8th grade. At the same time, grade 8 standards also include rigorous algebra and will transition students effectively into a full Algebra 1 course.

Myth: Key math topics are missing or appear in the wrong grade.

Fact: The mathematical progressions presented in the Common Core State Standards are coherent and based on evidence.

Part of the problem with having different sets of state standards in mathematics is that different states cover different topics at different grade levels. Coming to a consensus guarantees that, from the viewpoint of any given state, topics will move up or down in the grade level sequence. What is important to keep in mind is that the progression in the Common Core State Standards is mathematically coherent and leads to college and career readiness at an internationally competitive level.

Myths About Content and Quality: English Language Arts/Literacy

Myth: The standards are just vague descriptions of skills and do not include a reading list or any other reference to content.

Fact: The standards do include sample texts that demonstrate the level of text complexity appropriate for the grade level and compatible with the learning demands set out in the standards. The exemplars of high-quality texts at each grade level provide a rich set of possibilities and have been very well received. This provides a reference point for teachers when selecting their texts, along with the flexibility to make their own decisions about what texts to use.

Myth: English teachers will be asked to teach science and social studies reading materials.

Fact: With the ELA standards, English teachers will still teach their students literature as well as literary nonfiction. However, because college and career readiness overwhelmingly focuses on complex texts outside of literature, these standards also ensure students are being prepared to read, write, and research across the curriculum, including in history and science. These goals can be achieved by ensuring that teachers in other disciplines are also focusing on reading and writing to build knowledge within their subject areas.

Myth: The standards do not have enough emphasis on fiction/literature.

Fact: The Common Core requires certain critical content for all students, including classic myths and stories from around the world, America's founding documents, foundational American literature, and Shakespeare. Appropriately, the remaining crucial decisions about what content should be taught are made at the state and local levels. The standards require that a portion of what is read in high school should be informational text, yet the bulk of this portion will be accounted for in non-ELA disciplines that do not frequently use fictional texts. This means that stories, drama, poetry, and other literature account for the majority of reading that students will do in their ELA classes. In addition to content coverage, the standards require that students systematically acquire knowledge in literature and other disciplines through reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Myths About Process

Myth: No teachers were involved in writing the standards.

Fact: The Common Core drafting process relied on teachers and standards experts from across the country. In addition, many state experts came together to create the most thoughtful and transparent process of standard setting. This was only made possible by many states working together.

Myth: The standards are not based on research or evidence.

Fact: The standards have made careful use of a large and growing body of evidence. The evidence base includes scholarly research, surveys on what skills are required of students entering college and workforce training programs, assessment data identifying college- and career-ready performance, and comparisons to standards from high-performing states and nations.

In English language arts, the standards build on the firm foundation of the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) frameworks in reading and writing, which draw on extensive scholarly research and evidence.

In mathematics, the standards draw on conclusions from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and other studies of high-performing countries that

found the traditional U.S. mathematics curriculum needed to become substantially more coherent and focused in order to improve student achievement, addressing the problem of a curriculum that is “a mile wide and an inch deep.”

Myths About Implementation

Myth: The standards tell teachers what to teach.

Fact: Teachers know best about what works in the classroom. That is why these standards establish what students need to learn but do not dictate how teachers should teach. Instead, schools and teachers will decide how best to help students reach the standards.

Myth: Teachers will be left to implement the standards without any support or guidance.

Fact: Decisions on how to implement the standards are made at the state and local levels. As such, states and localities are taking different approaches to implementing the standards and providing their teachers with the supports they need to help students successfully reach the standards. To learn how states are supporting teachers and implementing their new standards, visit the [Standards in Your State](#) section for a map linking to the state-specific implementation page.

Myth: The standards will be implemented through No Child Left Behind (NCLB), signifying that the federal government will be leading them.

Fact: The Common Core is a state-led effort that is not part of No Child Left Behind or any other federal initiative. The federal government played no role in the development of the Common Core. State adoption of the standards is in no way mandatory. States began the work to create clear, consistent standards before the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which provided funding for the Race to the Top grant program. It also began before the Elementary and Secondary Education Act blueprint was released, because this work is being driven by the needs of the states, not the federal government. Learn more about the development process [here](#).

Myth: The Common Core State Standards were adopted by states as part of the Race to the Top grant program.

Fact: Recognizing the strength of having high standards for all students, the federal government gave competitive advantage to Race to the Top applicants that demonstrated that they had or planned to adopt college- and career-ready standards for all students. The program did not specify the Common Core or prevent states from creating their own, separate college- and career-ready standards. States and territories voluntarily chose to adopt the Common Core to prepare their students for college, career, and life. Many states that were not chosen for Race to the Top grants continue to implement the Common Core.

Myth: These standards amount to a national curriculum for our schools.

Fact: The Common Core is *not* a curriculum. It is a clear set of shared goals and expectations for what knowledge and skills will help our students succeed. Local teachers, principals, superintendents, and others will decide how the standards are to be met. Teachers will continue to devise lesson plans and tailor instruction to the individual needs of the students in their classrooms.

Myth: The federal government will take over ownership of the Common Core State Standards initiative.

Fact: The federal government will *not* govern the Common Core State Standards. The Common Core was and will remain a *state-led* effort. The NGA Center and CCSSO are committed to developing a long-term governance structure with leadership from governors, chief state school officers, and other state policymakers to ensure the quality of the Common Core and that teachers and principals have a strong voice in the future of the standards. States and local school districts will drive implementation of the Common Core.

Myth: The Common Core State Standards will result in a national database of private student information.

Fact: There are no data collection requirements for states adopting the standards. Standards define expectations for what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade. Implementing the Common Core State Standards does not require data collection. The means of assessing students and the use of the data that result from those assessments are up to the discretion of each state and are separate and unique from the Common Core.

RESPONSIBILITY



April 2015

Big Flats
Elementary School

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
<p><i>Character Ed Trait: RESPONSIBILITY</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Plan Ahead</i> ◆ <i>Be Self-disciplined</i> ◆ <i>Set a good example</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Think before you act—consider the consequences</i> ◆ <i>Be accountable for your words</i> 	<h2>SPRING RECESS</h2>					
5 <i>Easter</i>	6 <i>Day 3</i>	7 <i>Day 4</i> 6:00 <i>Principal Chat</i> 6:30 <i>PTO Meeting</i>	8 <i>Day 5</i> <i>CSE/504 Meetings</i>	9 <i>Day 6</i> 6:00 <i>BoE Comm.</i> <i>Budget Workshop</i> <i>Broad Street</i>	10 <i>Day 1</i>	11	
12	13 <i>Day 2</i>	14 <i>Day 3</i> <i>NYS ELA Assessments</i>	15 <i>Day 4</i> <i>NYS ELA Assessments</i>	16 <i>Day 5</i> <i>NYS ELA Assessments</i>	17 <i>Day 6</i>	18	
19	20 <i>Day 1</i> 6:30 <i>IS Open House for 4th Gr. Families</i> 7:00 <i>Supt. Rndtble.</i>	21 <i>Day 2</i>	22 <i>Day 3</i> <i>NYS Math Assessments</i> 6:00 <i>Board of Ed Meeting—RR</i>	23 <i>Day 4</i> <i>NYS Math Assessments</i>	24 <i>Day 5</i> <i>NYS Math Assessments</i> <i>Report Cards Gr. 1-4</i>	25	
26	27 <i>Day 6</i> 7:00 <i>Budget Q&A</i> <i>HH Legion</i>	28 <i>Day 1</i> <i>CSE Meetings</i>	29 <i>Day 2</i>	30 <i>Day 3</i> 6:30 <i>Spelling Bee</i>	1 May <i>Day 4</i>	<i>Coming Next Month: Gr. 4 Science Perf. Assessments Kdg. Orientation</i>	