

Kinsella Courant

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R.J. Kinsella Magnet School of
Performing Arts

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Dear Parents:

CMT's are completed and spring vacation is over!!

Thank you for all your support in making sure our students were prepared and here on time! Welcome back as we finish up the end of the year. There is still a lot of testing and work students need to complete, so please be sure your child gets lots of sleep and is well rested. Parent conferences will occur in May. More news will follow.

Summer School applications are in and ANY child that is deficient or below in Reading or Math will be expected to attend. Your child's teacher should have reviewed with you whether your child should be attending summer school during the March conference. If you have any questions or are unsure, please speak to your child's teacher. Summer School starts Monday, June 23, 2008-July 24, 2008 from 8AM-11AM, Monday through Friday. Breakfast and lunch will be served. Transportation will only be provided for Hartford students.

Parents: remember as we go forward into the warmer weather-students must follow our dress code daily. NO SHORTS for boys or girls. Boys must wear long pants or capris for girls that come to the middle of their calf. Collared shirts in white, light blue, yellow and navy are the expectation to complete their dress. Please make sure your child follow these expectations for dress daily.

There are many performances yet to come. Please check our school website or the school performance schedule. Our students and staff are doing a terrific job and the reviews have been fabulous!!! Check us out!!!!

Sincerely,

Pamela Totten-Alvarado

Principal

R.J. Kinsella Magnet School of Performing Arts



Interview with Ms. Hurteau

1. How did you become a teacher?

When I was in High School, I became very active in gymnastics. I worked hard and became very successful at it. I eventually taught private lessons for students at a gymnastics school. I loved teaching and decided to become a teacher.

2. You have taught at Kinsella for six years and have just been chosen as Kinsella's Teacher Of The Year. What advice do you have for new teachers?

Be organized! Follow through with rules, expectations, and consequences.

3. What is a challenge you have faced in your life?

It was a challenge to finish college and graduate school. It took many years. There were times that I wanted to give up but I didn't. I was determined to finish what I started.

During those years, I learned to prioritize. Sometimes, in order to accomplish something really important, you have to focus on that one goal and not let yourself be distracted by other less important things.

4. What advice do you have for students?

The most important thing is to have the right attitude. Even if you are working on a subject you don't really like, it is important to try put aside your opinion and feeling and do your best. By doing so, you will do better in that subject and may discover that you like it after all. And having the right attitude will make you more successful in school and ready for all the challenges you will face after you graduate from school.

I also urge students to always participate in class. If you do, you will be more likely to successfully complete your work and to be able to work independently.

5. How has Kinsella's Performing Arts Theme helped your students?

They have become more focused and more self confident. In dance, for example, they learn to how to move their bodies and so they are less physically awkward. By participating in vocal, drama, band, and instrumental classes, students are learning to be comfortable working with each other and performing before audiences of hundreds of people. The self confidence they are gaining will be helpful to them throughout school and in their careers.

There are also connections between the subjects we teach and the performing arts. For example, in 3rd grade math, one of the skills we are working on is patterning. In music, they are learning different patterns of notes and melodies. In dance, students do a variety of pattern movements.

News From The PTO and the Classrooms

PTO

Mrs. Rivera, the PTO and Family Resource Aide, reports, in March, Mrs. Arlene Robertson, from the city of Hartford Health & Human Services, gave a lead poisoning prevention & education workshop. A presentation was also given about a First Aid Guide - [What to treat first](#). All participants received a free First Aid travel kit. CL&P and the PEAC program did a presentation on Money Matters, how to fix your finances and create a budget. In April, during the PTO Meetings, we will discuss summer school (it's mandatory for students who are below reading level), Camp Courant and other FREE day camps, school fundraisers, and the 2007-2008 school year book which will include all the performances, class pictures, extended day, 8th grade promotions and much more. The cost is \$15.00 dollars each. The book is also going to be in color! So don't forget to fill out your order form.

Prek

Mrs. Baker reports, in April, Prek will be having two puppet shows. They will both be on health and nutrition. We will also be going to the Ringling Brothers Clown Camp on April 25th. We are currently learning about the world around us.

Kindergarten

Mrs. Duchon reports, in March, our class had a lot of fun enjoying Mr. Lee, the storyteller. He has told us many fascinating stories! In April, our class will study worms. The students were so excited when they arrived! We are also looking forward to a much needed vacation so we can rest and relax. Visit the Kinsella website and look up kindergarten! We have lots of good information there.

Mrs. Saperstein reports, the class has been busy investigating bugs and worms. Learning about the bugs and worms has been fascinating. They know how to feed, handle, and clean the bugs and worms. One of their favorite activities is worm races. They have learned that the big, fat, juicy worms move much quicker than the small red worms. They are also reading "How to Eat Fried Worms". (They won't be eating any worms in this classroom!) As they expand upon their animal unit, everyone in this class is very excited because after vacation they will be hatching chickens. You are all welcome to come by to see the baby chicks somewhere around May 13th-15th!

2nd grade

The second grade team reports, in March, **The Math Focus was** Every Day Math Units 6 & 7, Beginning Multiplication and Division, Subtraction with Regrouping, Number Patterns, Complements of 10, Weights and Scales, Measurement, Median, and Frequency Distributions.

The Literacy Focus was students continuing the MONDO program using literacy centers and leveled readers. **In Science,** students worked on changes (the states of matter) and how matter can change from solid to gas and then to gas. In **Writing,** Students focused on proofreading skills. Students practiced editing. They read their writing out loud to make sure that their stories made sense.

In April, In science, We will begin to study butterflies. Be

sure to ask your child about the experiments we are doing in class. In literacy, we will begin DRA2 testing after April vacation.

3rd Grade

Mrs. Gray reports, in March, our class worked hard to do our very best on the CMT. We studied hard all year for this challenge. We have also begun our mapping unit in Geography/Social Studies. By the end of the year, we will have mapped the entire USA! We will begin our study on Plant Growth and Development. We will attend a field trip to the 4H farm in Bloomfield to support our learning experience. Only students who complete homework regularly and behave appropriately in school will be invited to attend.

4th grade

Mrs. Sklenka and Mrs. Hunter reports, in March, the class worked very hard on the CMT's. We also explored different types of poetry. In April, our class will participate in the science fair. We will also visit the Discovery center and perform our scenes for the Hartford Stage.

Mrs. Kozlowski reports, in March, in writing, the class focused on poetry. We wrote our own poems and read poems by Shel Silverstein. In April, 4th graders are working hard on their science fair projects, going to visit the Discovery Center, and will be performing skits for Hartford Stage.

Mrs. Dimattio reports, in March, the class took CMT's and tried our very best. We have begun division in math and continue using our reading strategies in literacy. In April, the class is working on science fair projects, making hypothesis statements and testing them using the scientific method. We will visit our pen pals at Bluff Point and make observations of the coastline habitat

5th Grade

Miss Noonan reports, in March, our class worked hard to complete all of our CMT testing. We tried our best and I am sure our test scores will show how much we've learned so far this year! In April, our class will be going to the Discovery Center for a week to learn about diversity. We will also be working hard on our science fair projects for the science fair on April 22!

Mrs. Hayes reports, in March, the class completed their study unit on fractions. We also met our new friends. In April, we will be going to the Discovery Center and competing at the Science fair at Kinsella.

6th Grade

Mrs. Dinnald reports, in March, our class finished their science fair experiments and presented their PowerPoint presentations to their peers. In April, our class will be working on math excel spreadsheets for a math project and work on environmental science projects

Mrs. Hassell reports, in March, the class finished our CMT's and celebrated with a pajama party. Students also worked on Science Fair projects and prepared for their performance of Shakespeare's "The Tempest". In April,

our class will go to Camp Discovery from April 23-25. Students will also present their Science fair Projects and continue working on their Author Study activities.

Mrs. Shimkus reports, in March, the class took the CMT's and hopefully did a great job. We also practiced for our performance of "Hamlet" and began discussions about Ancient Civilizations. In April, our class will perform "Hamlet" for the rest of the 6th grade and be an audience for the other two classes. Our science fair projects are coming along and will be judged on April 11. Discovery Center is April 23-25.

7th/8th Grade math

Mr. Lalime reports , in March, our class concentrated very hard on the CMT's. We had a great deal of success in learning what we had to learn in order to accomplish our goals. In April, our class will take a long needed vacation as well as work on algebraic concepts and integers. We will also be taking a closer look at geometry

7th/8th grade science

In March, Mr. Romano Joined Kinsella as our 7th/8th grade Science teacher. WELCOME MR. ROMANO!

Mr. Romano reports, in March, the class was hard at work preparing their science fair projects. The class has also worked hard at making the classroom look more organized and scientific.

In April, we will be learning about building structures, how technology helps improve lives, how energy works, what is inertia, organ systems, and different ways to reproduce.

Performing Arts

Vocal

Mr. Jimenez reports, in March, most of our classes were learning sound patterns related to DO-Re-Mi, and MI-Re-Do. Students were Clapping Rhythm patterns with quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes, the concepts of Rest or silence, and Sound-Silence in Music Repeat signs. They continue to be emergent Music literate in reading, singing, playing, and writing original ideas. In April, a group of about 65 selected students from grades 4 - 8 were part of a demonstration group presented at the Connecticut Music Educators Conference held at the Hartford Convention Center. The ensemble performed four songs from the Afro-Spanish Caribbean Styles. "Plena" from Puerto Rico, "Merengue" from the Dominican Republic and "Son" from Cuba. This was an honor for our school to be invited to such a prestigious Conference of Music Educators and to be able to showcase the talent of our Hartford students. We were the **only** inner-city ensemble to perform. Our students' behavior and performance shined and had excellent feedback from fellow Music Teacher attendees.

Band

Ms. Hanjian reports, in March, recorder classes had their music reading test in preparation for signing up for instrumental music lessons for next year. In April, the 5th grade band from Morley school in West Hartford and the Kinsella band presented a joint performance at Bulkeley High School.

Violin

Ms. Jones reports, in March, our class began working on our music for the final spring concert. Pre-K and

Kindergarten are getting ready for the informal performance on the 15th. First and Second, Third grade are getting ready for the final spring concert, where we will also be performing a piece with the recorders. Selected students are preparing for the Bushnell Performance in May. We also started working on learning how to identify the form of the pieces we are playing. Students have begun place their fingers down on the tapes in preparation for our final performance. In April, we will continue working on identifying the form of the pieces we are working on. We are also strengthening our memory by learning short selections to be featured in the final Spring concert

Drama

Mrs. Chiucarello reports, in March, 7th and 8th graders started working in small groups to dramatize a Classical Greek Myth. This project involved creating an original script, directing and acting. Students will present their work in May at a venue yet to be determined.

The 5th and 6th graders began creating scripts from well known fables such as, "Androcles and the Lion", "The Hen and the Fox", and "The Pelican and the Crane". In the lower grades students have been learning about the art of clowning and slapstick. Classes are full of silly activities and exciting exercises that help students strengthen their funny bone. Students are learning how to develop a clown character, timing, audience awareness, trips and falls, takes and double takes.

In April, students in the upper grades will continue to work on their Myth and Fable projects and prepare them for presentation. Students in the lower grades will continue to build on their clowning and slapstick skills and prepare to share their work in May.

Dance

Ms. Thomas reports , in March, PK-4th grade reviewed all previous dances, combined the first 4-8 counts of each dance to create a new one, then began the unit on Ballet. 5th-8th Grade learned the technical names for select bones of the human skeleton to help understand proper body alignment.

In April, PK-3rd grade will learn basic Ballet positions of the arms and feet. 4th graders will be rehearsing a Flamenco piece and/or a Latin piece in conjunction with Mr. Jimenez. 5th-6th graders will be learning a dance based on Chinese Kung Fu movements. 7th-8th graders will be rehearsing a "Techno-Ballet" piece.

Ms. Howe reports, in March, Dance 2 classes finished up our cultural dancing unit. While the older students were working hard on their CMT's, Prekindergarten through second grade were working on learning the names for our different body parts. This will help us when it comes to learning ballet and tap dancing. Older students learned about the bones in our body by their scientific names. Parents, do you know where your radius is? I bet your fifth-eighth grader can tell you. All students learned about our dancer of the month--Gene Kelly. Wow, what a dancer he was! In April, Miss Howe's Prekindergarten and Kindergarten will be learning about tap dancing. Students will be dancing to the song "I'm a Super Kid". Parents, please make sure your students are wearing socks for this semester, as these are borrowed shoes. Grades 1-6 will be learning about ballet and its history. First grade has started their dance to "Somewhere Over The Rainbow". Grades 7-8 will also be learning about ballet with the added benefit of aerobic dance for half of their class. All classes will be preparing for the May 28th Spring Music and Dance Concert. Hope to see you there!



This Is Your Brain On Music

By Daniel Levitin

Book Review by Mr. Saxon

Music is all around us: we listen to it at home, in church, during weddings, on TV, at parties, during sports events and at many other places.

Music is found in all cultures and all places and has existed since the beginning of the human race. In fact, some of the earliest human artifacts are musical instruments such as flutes made from bones or drums made from animal skins stretched across tree trunks.

Why is music so important to people? Dr. Daniel Levitin, an accomplished musician, a music scholar, and a neuroscientist—someone who does research about the brain—helps us to understand in his fascinating new book, This Is Your Brain On Music.

Dr. Levitin says that music's prominence among humans is related to the evolution of our species. He theorizes that music predated language and that music was a way to communicate and socialize with others and helped to forge bonds between people.

As human brains evolved, especially in the last fifty thousand years, people developed a more acute sense of sound, and, at the same time began to associate different kinds of sounds with a variety of emotions, memories and motivations. Think of how babies respond to calming lullabies. A lullaby is a kind of music: some kinds of music are calming; some kinds of music create feelings of excitement, of fear, of sadness, of joy, of confusion, and so on. As human brains changed, these changes effected how people's brains responded to music. The changes also enabled humans to develop and appreciate a broader range of musical expression.

How have things changed more recently? In the last one hundred years, as communities have grown, as music education and training has become more widely available, and as technology has expanded, far more people are now able to learn about music, about how to play musical instruments, and to learn about a wide range of musical styles. As a result, musical creation and performance have become far more widespread and diverse than in the past.

Best of all, thanks to the internet and downloads and cds and iPods, we can now easily access and enjoy a huge variety of music from all over the world. If you love music, you have picked the right century to live in!