

RCS NEWSLETTER

April 16, 2021

Dear Richmond Consolidated School Families,

I'm sure everyone is looking forward to the spring vacation. The RCS staff wishes everyone a safe and relaxing break. Please review the travel guidance on our [webpage](#) if you are planning on leaving the state during the vacation. When we come back we will be making the final push to close out the school year.

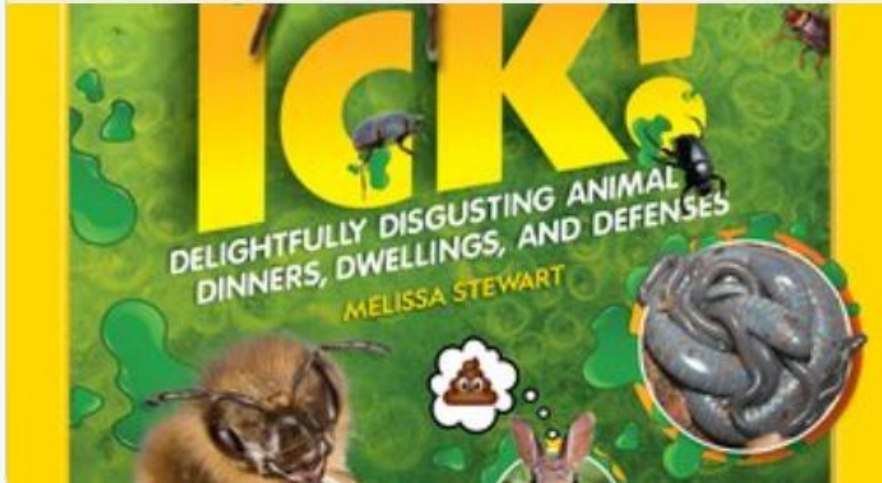
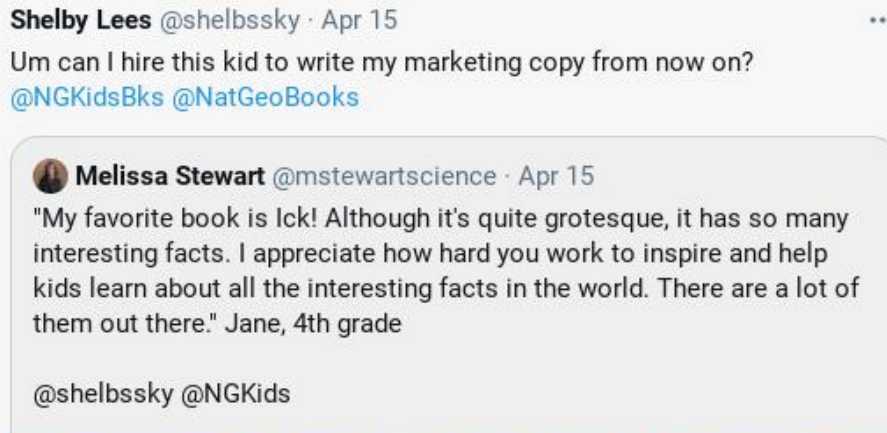
Sincerely,

Rob Putnam

UPDATES

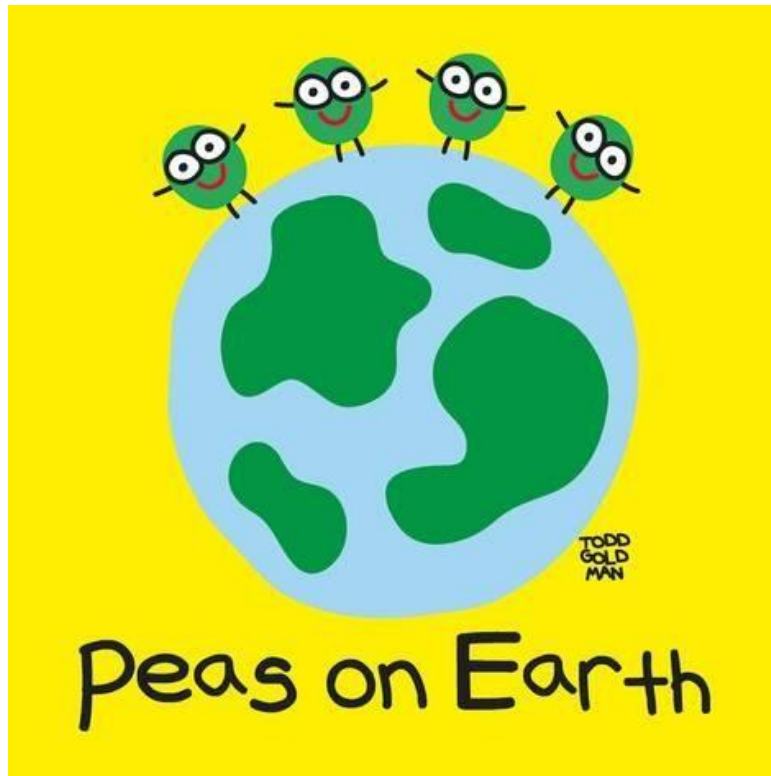
- The new RCS principal, Dan Weston, will begin his tenure on May 3.
- The School Committee unanimously approved the Superintendent's budget on Monday, April 12. On Wednesday, April 14 the Budget Advisory Committee also endorsed it. The budget will go before the town meeting on Wednesday, May 19 at 7:30 pm.
- The state is pushing ahead with MCAS but there have been some changes. First, the testing windows have been pushed back a month to May 10-June 11 for grades 3-5 and May 17-June 11 for grades 6-8. Second, individual students in grades 3-8 will only take half each of the usual ELA, Mathematics, and (for grades 5 and 8) STE tests. Students will be randomly assigned to take either the first half or the second half of the test. This means that we will not get a clear understanding of individual student performances, but we will be able to get a sense of the school's performance. Third, schools are required to test remote students. There is no further guidance at this time but we are supposed to receive it by April 26. We will be making arrangements over the next two weeks.
- Kiss and Ride: In our effort to make the arrival and dismissal as efficient and safe as possible I'd like to give a few reminders. First, please remember to have children enter and exit from the right/passenger/sidewalk side. Second, please say goodbyes inside the car so that we can keep the line moving. Finally, please remember that the PreK and K students are dismissed at 2:45, ten minutes before 1-8, so we'd like them to arrive at 2:40. The times are different on Wednesdays when we dismiss at 1:35 and 1:45.
- On Monday, April 12, author James Preller met with our 7th graders to answer questions about the writing process in general and his novel *Bystander* in particular. Students just wrapped up a study of the novel *Bystander* and it was exciting to ask the author questions! This program was made possible by a REEF grant.

- On Wednesday, April 14, the 3rd/4th/5th grade met with children's author, Melissa Stewart to answer questions about non-fiction writing. Mrs. Stewart has written 189 books about animals and humans. The 5th grade participated with the 3rd and 4th grade in a March Madness competition to determine which book by Melissa is the best. This program was made possible by the PTA. Thank you for this awesome opportunity! The author used a response from one of our 4th grade students on her Twitter account. (copied below) The author also took the time to respond to each one of the students. I included a 4th grade example below.



- The RCS garden

The Garden Is Getting a "Facelift"!



The Richmond Garden will be getting brand new raised beds in May thanks to the generosity of **Greenagers** in coordination with our Garden Educator, **Bridgette Stone!**

In order for this to happen, the 'ol pergola (have you seen hit lately?!?!) and rotting boards have to go....

And we need your help!!

We need a hearty team to help dismantle our sad little garden. No experience necessary! Just a desire to get your hands a little dirty with other members of our amazing community!
(* we would welcome one or two folks with building experience if possible)

When: Saturday, May 1 @ 3:00 pm (*raindate Sunday, May 2)

How to sign up: email Cathy Gamberoni @ OL4eyes@gmail.com

masks will be required while on RCS grounds

Melissa Stewart's Responses to 4th Grade Students

Dear Fourth Graders,

Thanks so much for your notes letting me know what you liked most about my books and the conversation we had yesterday. I like that you included some great photos too. That was a great idea.

Adam, I'm also a fan of the great spangled fritillary, but my all time favorite is the mourning cloak, which is just coming out of hibernation now. You may be able to spot one in the woods. I have a book about them sitting in the "manuscript graveyard" drawer that I showed your class. Luckily, I also have one that made it to publication. If you get a chance, check out *A Place for Butterflies*.

Vincent, I'm so glad you liked hearing the story of how I got the idea for *Ick!* That trip to Africa was one of the best experiences of my life. One of the parks that we went to was called Serengeti/Masai Mara. You can read more about it in *The Magnificent Migration: On Safari with Africa's Last Great Herds* by Sy Montgomery.

Jane, I'm so glad to hear that you liked reading my books, especially *Ick!* I'm hoping I'll reach 200 books soon. We'll just have to wait and see. If you love books full of amazing animal facts, check out *The Animal Book* by Steve Jenkins.

Adison, Wow, thanks for letting me know how much you liked *Ick!*, especially the page about vultures. Here's another book that I think you'll enjoy: *Something Rotten: A Fresh Look at Roadkill* by Heather Montgomery. I'm excited that you're writing a book called *The Ways of the Dog*. I hope to see it on my library bookshelf one day.

Mckenzie, Hooray for Pinocchio Rex! I'm excited that you really enjoyed that book. I loved working on it with well-known paleontologist Steve Brusatte. He gave me an amazing glimpse into his world. You might enjoy reading *The First Dinosaur* by Ian Lendler.

Emily, I'm delighted to hear that your real birthday is in the same month as the book birthday of my upcoming book *Fourteen Monkeys: A Rain Forest Rhyme*. My husband's birthday is in July too. Since you like baking, you may want to read the fiction book *Midsummer Mayhem* by Rajani Laroocca. It's such a great book, and it's set in Massachusetts.

Mary, thank you for your kind words. I'm glad that you liked hearing about my life and creative process. That trip to Kenya and Tanzania, two countries in Africa, was pretty amazing. Like Vincent, you might enjoy reading *The Magnificent Migration: On Safari with Africa's Last Great Herds* by Sy Montgomery.

Ricky, thanks for saying you enjoyed getting a tour of my office. I spend a lot of time here, so I try to make it as welcoming and functional as possible. It sounds like you're a fan of monkeys and birds and spiders, so you might like reading a new book by my friend Heather Lang. It's called *The Leaf Detective: How Margaret Lowman Uncovered Secrets of the Rain Forest*.

Sophia, I'm excited that you ordered your very own copy of *Ick!* There's so much cool information packed into that book. Maybe one day you will have a chance to go to Africa, but you can have an adventure right at home this summer. If you read *You're Invited to a Moth Ball* by Loree Griffin Burns, another Massachusetts author, you'll discover how to attract and observe moths late at night. You might spot some that are beautiful shades of bright green, soft pink, and grayish blue.

Jackson, I agree. It is surprising that it takes so many years to write a book. Here's [an infographic](#) I made to show why. It features my book *Can an Aardvark Bark?* And here's [the video of the toad and the bombardier beetle](#). For more amazing info about animals, check out *Pink Is for Blobfish* by Jess Keating.

Desmond, Don't those fish bait balls sound cool? [Here's an example](#). The illustrator who uses cut paper is named Steve Jenkins. My two favorite books by him are *Actual Size* and *Move!* You might want to check them out.

Rowan, I'm glad you liked getting a sneak peek of my upcoming book *Summertime Sleepers: Animals that Estivate*. It's about animals all over the world that sleep or rest during summer because it's too hot for their bodies to function or they can't find food. I hope your school is able to order it.

I hope you all have a wonderful vacation week!

Your friend,

Melissa Stewart