

WILDCAT PRIDE

Winter NEWSLETTER



Happy New Year to you all! Our school year is half over and with most things back to normal around here the year has so far gone by quickly. Part of that reason may be because the elementary school is running rather smoothly. In my first few years as principal here we spent a lot of time transitioning to many new operations and procedures to catch up with our tremendous student growth. We dealt with the addition of numerous staff members, building projects, physical rearrangements of the building, adding bus routes, drivers and vehicles, completed three curriculum updates in math, science and social studies, started social emotional programs and completed a realignment of our K-2 reading program to name a few and there are numerous others. To me, this year illustrates the positive impact these adjustments have made, and I am seeing our students and staff doing great things.

At mid-year, I always like to thank everyone for all the work done up this point. We have a tremendous staff across all areas, and I feel very confident that every adult that works with your child has their best interest at heart and they do their best to support your kid's growth and development daily. I hope you all feel the same way. I would also like to thank all of you parents for all you do as well. Working and raising kids and living a life is no easy task. Thanks to you all for what you do for your kids and your continued support of our school. When we all work together and share a common goal of producing good students and quality young adults, we should be successful at meeting that challenge. I hope our second semester runs as smooth as our first and that you all had a great winter break.

Local Assessments

We have completed all winter testing for AIMS, and MAPS K-5. Aims is what we use to track and monitor student progress and growth for reading. MAPS is used to do the same for Math and ELA (English and Language Arts). We also administer district common assessments (DCA's) in math at each grade level and have a minimum of 4 per grade level that students take at certain points throughout the year.

One thing to celebrate currently is our improvement on our AIMS scores. Last year in August we had **45 students below benchmark and in December we had 42.** This year in August we started with **47 below benchmark and in December we have lowered that number to just 24!** We have been able to get **23 additional students to meet winter benchmark compared to just 3 more in the same time frame last year.**

This can likely be attributed to our work in K-2 to provide additional programs such as Really Great Reading, Sound Partners, and Heggerty Phonemic Awareness to supplement our core reading program called Wonders. Students in grades K-2 receive one or more of these programs daily during small reading groups. This progress is significant and our classroom teachers, paras and Title I teachers have worked hard and together to make this success occur. I am curious and excited to see what can be accomplished between now and spring testing.

State Testing

The state tests now called NSCAS and administered to students in 3-8th grade is still in a transitional phase. In the past, the state test was a summative assessment (given one time at the end of the year). The state has been working on transitioning to a growth model to show a student's growth throughout the year rather than a one and done summative test. This year the state is still working on the growth model and working out the kinks in the new system. For our school, only Miss Neiman's class will be taking part in this process in January. The students in her class will be taking a "practice" state assessment for the state to gather data and for us to familiarize ourselves

with the new system and platform. In the spring, all students 3-5th will be taking the tests. The scores and information from the spring assessments should be the last step of this transitional process and starting next year we should be able to start using the new system and the scores next year will begin to count.

Wildcat PRIDE

When I can, I like to remind everyone about our school pride and behavior program called WILDCAT PRIDE. Over the last couple years, the letters PRIDE have stood for Positivity, Respect, Integrity, Determination and Empathy. Teachers use these characteristics as a behavioral focus in their classrooms and if a student is ever sent to me in the office, we discuss their behavior in relation to WILDCAT PRIDE and what it means to be a Wildcat at this school and how to make better choices in the future. I always tell students that how you act and behave is every bit as important as your grades and your school work. It seems nearly all kids can tell you what each of these characteristics mean and nearly all kids are behaving as we would like to see (Most of the time). Students get rewards each month revolving around them showing these characteristics. Our hope is they make these characteristics a part of their daily habits and carry them on into the dreaded middle school and preteen years. Feel free to make PRIDE a part of your home life expectations too and you can refer to the characteristics when dealing with any behavior issues you might have at home.

Conferences are coming up again and are a very important and a great time to hear about how your child is performing academically and behaviorally. **Conferences will take place on March 16 and 17.** Please be on the lookout in late Jan/Feb for a short letter with your designated day and time.

***Please make every effort to come at your designated day and time. With the time frame available over those two nights and with the way sibling groups are split across grade levels, there is really not much room at all for any changes to occur. We will have your day and time sent home soon so you can plan accordingly with your other schedules and meet with your child's teacher in person.*

Until next month, take care and GO WILDCATS! Mr. Hansen

Other Information

*ALL LOST AND FOUND items from the beginning of the year were donated after winter break and will be again after conferences. If you are missing something, have your child check.

*For transportation issues contact Felicia Rumph.

*For Kids First After School Program and Youth Sports, contact Jeff Beckman

*For classroom related behaviors and academics contact your child's teacher.

*If you need additional support in one of these areas contact Mr. Hansen.

***Parent Teacher Conferences will be held March 16-17. Please plan on attending in person and at your designated date and time. Thanks for your understanding.**

December PRIDE Award Winners Were:

PK: Ian Reade, Milo Dunlap **Kindergarten:** Mackenna Wolfe, Olivia Stevens **First Grade:** Averie Lutjen, Brileigh Lathrop **Second Grade:** Aubriella Johnson, McKinley Holt **Third Grade:** Natalie Sukstorf, Aryana Martinson **Fourth Grade:** Emma Switzer, Scarlet Foley **Fifth Grade:** Addyson Lott, Michelle Amaya

These students were nominated by a teacher in the building for exhibiting **EMPATHY** throughout the month of October. Congratulations to these students for being leaders in our building and exemplifying what it means to be a Cedar Bluffs WILDCAT.

GO WILDCATS!