



Principal's Message Improving School Attendance

School districts in Maine recently received, from the Department of Education, the preliminary overviews of our ESSA "School Report Cards." These reports evaluate where individual school stand in terms of a number of identified criteria. The factor I'd like to discuss today is **School Attendance**. In looking at the 2017-2018 school year, WHES showed as a school exceeding the acceptable threshold for chronically absent students. The state defines "chronically absent" as students who experience either excused or unexcused absences on more than 10% of the days a school is in session. WHES fell into the **Emerging** category as we had 16.5 % of our students identified as chronically absent. This finding reflects a need to seriously work on our students' attendance, which is a goal shared across RSU #12.

It is not just that the state's evaluatory mechanism has focused on this issue but, rather, the educational loss that is experienced by students when they are absent from school. Public school in the 21st century is a highly interactive, ever-changing entity that relies on the interactions and participation of all involved. Gone are the days where a student who was absent for a day or two would simply read a chapter in a textbook and answer some questions. Kids are asked to analyze materials and formulate responses based on their interpretations of information and much of this work predicated on the activity of the class itself. These are not experiences that can be replicated and are lost if a student is not present. Educational literature is very conclusive in identifying chronic school absences as one of the chief factors leading to lowered or lack of educational progress and growth. A positive school attendance pattern isn't a complete guarantee of school success but those students who demonstrate that positive attendance pattern are unsuccessful in school far less often.

I would ask all parents to consider this concept: essential or non-essential absence from school. Essential absences occur when a student is so sick that he/she either cannot function, is likely to be contagious or has a family situation that cannot be avoided. These are the absences that should occur as the educational benefits for being in school are minimal. With that being said, the non-essential absences are those days when a child may not feel tip-top or may be in the early, non-contagious, stage of an illness but, should he/she attend school, a measure of activity and functioning can be achieved and a connection to learning maintained. The fewer non-essential absences a student can manage, the better outlook they'll have on their learning profile. Family vacations away when school is in session is another of the non-essential absences that educators warn about.

Our job as educators here at WHES is to facilitate the greatest growth possible for all students. In order to accomplish the level of growth we all desire, a positive attendance pattern must be attained. I would ask all parents to consider this each time your child is out of school.

Office: Please remember to send your child to school with a note if they are going to a different destination on the bus after school. It helps to avoid last minute phone calls to the school, which can make dismissal very chaotic. We appreciate the advance notice and thank you for not calling with these changes after 2:00 p.m.

Flocking for Food: The flock took a long trip south this weekend and is visiting Tom Soule!!!! Thank you SPC for your generous donation to the Whitefield Food Pantry.

Health: Please remember that we are a peanut aware / allergy aware school. If at all possible, please avoid sending in peanut butter with your child. Younger children especially tend to get the peanut butter on their faces, hands, and clothing and are then throughout the building. Thank you for your consideration!

Kitchen: There is now an easier way to pay your students lunch bill online! Please go to our school website, under parents is "My School Bucks" and sign up there! Just as a reminder when sending money in for lunch accounts, please be sure to label it with the name of your student(s) and the amount(s) to be deposited into their account. We also encourage everyone to fill out the Free and Reduced Lunch form. It is open to everyone! If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Kara Waller or Amanda Lincoln in the kitchen.

Click below to check out the Whitefield School Collaborative Problem-Solving Project!

<http://www.svsu.org/o/whes/page/whitefield-collaborative-problem-solving-project>

Grades Pre K- 1

Pre K: Please remember that book orders are due on January 25th. We have turned the Dramatic Play area into a Veterinary Office

If anyone has any extra small food bowls or collars, we would love to add them. We have been practicing letter sounds- ask your child what the first letter of their name is and the sound it makes. You will be amazed!

Beck: Please send mittens and hats each day to school with your child. We try to go out daily. Stuffy Day is this Friday. Each child may bring a stuffy to school that can follow our classroom rules. Also, the stuffy must fit in their backpack too. Our writing is coming along. We are working on labeling and “stretching” out our words.

Lamothe: The first graders have been working hard on writing complete sentences. We know all sentences start with a capital letter and have an ending punctuation mark. We have been reviewing the skills of sequencing and classifying. In literacy, we worked on the consonant blends: bl; cl; fl; gl; pl and sl. Our focus in Math was double facts and doubles plus one. Our classroom is in need of glue sticks and Ziplock snack baggies.

Grades 2-4

Brewer: We have had a busy, full week. In math we have been working with place value, rounding to the nearest tens, placing commas in large digit numbers and continued to review our basic facts. Our word of the week is chortle. Ask a second grader what this word means. In writing we are adding details to our opinion writing, in order to sound even more convincing. We are learning about common and proper nouns as well. A big thank you the Winchenbach family for extra snacks this week.

Northrup: We will be having our chapter 3 test in math on Tuesday. A study packet was sent home with your child today. Please look this over with your child over the long weekend.

Next week we will be taking the winter NWEA test. Please make sure your child eats a good breakfast and has plenty of rest so that they are able to do their best!

Student of the Week- Audrey

Trask: The class has been busy taking NWEA’s this week. They have taken assessments in math, reading, and language.

In math the class has been working on decimals and fractions. This is proving to be a challenge at times. As the week has progressed, parts of the Metric System have been introduced.

Next week the class will be going to the HVNC.... If the weather cooperates.

PBIS News- This month in PBIS we are focusing our monthly assembly on RESPONSIBILITY!! This month’s assembly will be held on January 24th at 1:30. Please come and celebrate our successes!. We are also going to begin our annual Anti-Bullying program in February, supported by Project Love and Duck Tape. Here at Whitefield Elementary we are pledging to “Stick Together” against bullying. Stay safe this weekend during the big storm!!!

Middle School News

Norris: We welcomed a representative from the Knox-Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District on Monday. Our class played a rousing game of Jeopardy as we learned about the theme for the 2019 Poster contest - “Life in the Soil : Dig Deeper”. Now we are tasked with creating colorful and informative posters about soil and its importance to plants and animals, creepy crawly things, and insects .

McCormick: Boy this has been a busy week. We have spent a little time talking about Martin Luther King Jr. this week. His famous “I Have a Dream” speech was an important part of our history. We have spent a little bit of time talking about his dream and discussing our own dreams for our world. What is your dream?

Mathews: Students are almost complete with the winter reading NWEA test. We will be begin the language test next week. The students have worked hard and kept a positive attitude. All students should have a nonfiction book during class. We are creating research groups and diving into text sets on chosen topics.

Howard: 8th grade is learning to translate sentences into equations - defining a variable and solving. 7th grade has begun working with comparing rational numbers - being able to convert rational numbers (.i.e. $\frac{1}{4}$, 20%, .33) into one form like decimals allows them to compare. 6th grade is working with division of decimals and is learning to create a list of multiples to help in the process.

Resource News

Brann: With the storm arriving over the weekend, it will be a great time for students to read or catch up on assignments. Enjoy the long weekend!

Grady/Richards: Please remember to read and fill in your reading logs. The year is going by quickly, so preparing for next year is something to keep in your mind. If you need to know your child’s reading level, please feel free to email us. Have a great weekend!



Art - Library - Music - PE

Abbott: This week, K-5 students took a survey regarding the use of technology. This survey is given to us by the Maine Learning Technology Initiative, which is where we get our middle school devices from. Parents - there is a link for you to take the survey at home. Please go to our school website and look under "Menu - Parent Resources - Bright Bytes Survey" or click on the following link - [Bright Bytes Survey](#) .

Simpson: A message from Jess and Miranda from midcoast conservancy, who are putting together a MLK day event at Hidden Valley Nature Center: The event is at Hidden Valley Nature Center from 10:00 am -2:00 PM on Monday, January 21st. Attendees will have the opportunity to try out our fat tire bikes, cross country skis, and/or snowshoes. Like the rest of our events, attendees can arrive anytime between 10:00 and 2:00. For more info, please visit our facebook page or website.

*Have a great weekend - No school Monday in observance of
Martin Luther King Jr.*