



Germantown Hills Elementary School Newsletter

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A Note from Dr. Nafziger

Welcome Back to School!

I hope this message finds you well and ready to be back to school after the holiday break! Just like the lyrics in the song, "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas"...I'm sure "mom and dad could hardly wait for school to start again!" With that, December has flown by and as we enter the 2nd half of the school year, I'd like to shed some light on some really important news!

Last academic school year (2020-21), the members of our school district worked extremely hard to create an environment in which our children could thrive both academically and socially-emotionally. It took the entire faculty and staff to create an atmosphere during one of the most challenging times in our educational system. The pandemic is still very much a part of our daily lives here at school as I know it's a part of your lives at home.

With all that being said, our district, as compared to 39 other schools in the Tri-County area, scored some of the highest scores on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR). The IAR test is a state given test to all public school students in Illinois. The intent behind these tests is to assess progress of students in grades 3-8 in the areas of English/Language Arts and Mathematics. Overall, we scored 2nd among all the 39 schools in Mathematics and 1st in English Language Arts. This accomplishment is something to be extremely proud of because as the saying goes, it takes a village to raise a child. It took a village to accomplish what our students accomplished last year. Even though we start testing in 3rd grade, students would not have been prepared for this test if it weren't for all the foundational work by our K-2 faculty/staff.

Lastly, if it weren't for all of you, working so hard at home to prepare your child during this pandemic, our students wouldn't come to school ready to learn and for that I truly thank you!

Here's to the 2nd half of the school year---together, let's make it great!

Positive Action for January 2022

Week of January 4th – Thoughts: Ideas that result from thinking.

Week of January 10th – Actions: What you do or cause to happen.

Week of January 18th – Feelings: Emotions such as anger, fear, love, and worry.

Week of January 24th – Friendship: Caring between people who choose to be together.

Important Dates

January 3rd – No School, Teacher Institute

January 4th – Students return

January 17th – No School, MLK Day

January							2022
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
						1 <small>New Year's Day</small>	
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
16	17 <small>Martin Luther King Day</small>	18	19	20	21	22	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
30	31						

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Counselor's Corner

Going back to our normal daily routine after a long break can be difficult for not only children, but everyone. Anxious feelings before school resumes, or as I call them, the "Sunday Scaries," can be hard for families to handle. This is very common for children (and adults), so not anything to be overly worried about. There are a few things you can do to help your children deal with separation anxiety.

1. Establish a good bedtime and morning routine. Having a solid routine helps kids feel more secure and less anxious. They can know what to expect, what's coming next. When we don't know what's next, our brains will make something up for us, this can cause anxiety.

2. Share a special token. Sometimes having a reminder of a family member that's being missed can change a child's day. Giving your child a special item of yours, something small like a hair tie, tie clip, or a little picture, that they can keep in their backpack will help them handle those sad feelings while at school.

3. Don't give in. While we always want to help our children feel happy, giving into a desire to stay home or feeding into those missing feelings with things like "I know you hate school, and it makes you sad to leave me," are not helpful. Encouraging children to face their big feelings and sharing how you handle missing them but still do your job with positivity is an affect and grit-building way to get through separation anxiety.

Whatever works best for your child, always remind them that negative feelings never last, and they can do hard things, and so can you!

- Mrs. Albrecht, GHES Counselor
albrechtk@ghills69.com



Kindergarten PA Students

KA: Tori Rowden, Ollie Uppole, Fiona Pray, Eleanor Ragona
KB: Kyleigh Kemp, Fallyn Kalina, Cole Larson, Ivy Burrell, Lucas Feld
KC: Elijah Richardson, Joanna Cronk, Jasper Maroun, Fayelyn Welch
KD: Sylvie Perez, Wesley Sudbrink, Emily Dykstra, Maurine Martin



1st – 4th Grade PA Students

1st: Lucy Graf, Hunter Snider, Cora Stivers, Camden Heinekamp
2nd: Elizabeth Riordan, Harlan Edwards, Gunnar Oktoer, Eylul Ozgol
3rd: Sawyer Jackson, Mario Nieto, Olivia Cawley, Briley Terry
4th: Lucas Thomas, Charlie Ragona, William Miller

What's So Special about Library?

The library has wrapped up some exciting lessons. The kindergarteners partnered with the 5th grade students to read stories and color bookmarks. The first graders have been busy learning about the parts of a story. Second grade has wrapped up a research project on the Polar Express. Students used a research tool called the Super 3. 3rd Grade has finished a genre battle-choosing the top book from each genre. 4th grade read the graphic novel City of Ember and can't wait to read the sequel. Here are some new books the library just purchased:

K-2nd Grade- It Fell from the Sky by the Fan Brothers

3rd-4th Grade- Beatryce Prophecy by Kate DiCamillo



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Shout outs!



- Shout out to our maintenance crew, especially **Mr. Miguel** and **Mr. Gropp**, for all their hard work! – Mrs. Scott
- A big thank you to **Dr. Nafziger** for filling our December with fun and Holiday cheer for the students and staff! – GHES Staff
- Thank you and keep up the good work, to our school nurse, **Larissa Watts** and her assistant **Rachel Boyle**. They keep our students and staff safe and healthy! – GHES Staff

Staff Spotlight – Valerie Gabriel

Mrs. Gabriel is a beloved educator at GHES. She previously taught 1st grade for 9 years and is currently a math/literacy interventionist.

1. What do you love about GHES? I love that GHES feels like family. There are so many friendly faces in this building, and I always appreciate the smiles (even through the masks), kind words, and positive attitudes I encounter on a daily basis from staff, parents, and students. I can always count on someone to make me laugh and smile throughout the day.

2. What is your favorite part of your job? My favorite part of my job is seeing the growth my students make throughout the school year. There is nothing better than seeing their faces light up when they have solved a problem or achieved a goal they have been working so hard to reach.

3. What is your favorite food? My favorite food is chocolate chip cookies.

4. What is your favorite book? My favorite book is Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs.

5. What do you like to do for fun? I LOVE to read, travel with my husband, spend time with my family, and play with my new puppy.

6. Who is someone you admire? I admire my mom, Melodie Dobner. Not only is she an amazing mom, but she is my inspiration for the type of educator I want to be. She has touched so many people's lives, and I hope to do the same.

7. How long have you been at GHES? I have been at GHES for 11 years.

8. Funny or best school memory from working at GHES? I have SO many fun memories, but I will always remember the time that I volunteered to help with the Kiss the Pig fundraiser for Jump Rope for Heart. I thought I might have to kiss the cute, little piglet once or twice, but my number kept getting picked. I think I kissed that pig 12 times!!!

GHPTO News

Parent's Night Out

Our last Parent's Night Out was a big success! The feedback we received is that you would like to see more of these events and we would love to offer more too! We are planning to potentially hold another one for Valentine's Day, Saturday February 12th. Activities would again include games in the gym, movie, crafts, and snacks for a cost of \$20 per student. In order for us to make this event happen, we would need three adult volunteers to help during the event. Responsibilities would include helping assist the kids with crafts or games, serve snacks, and supervision. Once we have three volunteers, we will open up registration for students. Volunteers would get free admission for 1 student. If you are interested in helping, please email us at ghpto@ghills69.com.

Upcoming Meetings

Tues. Jan 4th, 6:30PM Media Center
Tues. Feb 1st, 6:30PM Media Center

Upcoming Events

Potential Parent's Night Out
Sat. Feb 12th- 5:30-8:30PM

ATTENTION!



When calling your child in sick from school, please leave a detailed message including the symptoms, diagnosis, or injuries. We need this information to determine and trace any COVID related issues. Thank you!



We took advantage of a warm December day and Dr. Nafziger treated everyone to Popsicles on the Playground!

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December at Germantown Hills Elementary School



The GHES Christmas Tree was decorated with ornaments hand made by our students and Mrs. Ward.



Students on Mrs. Bitner's Bus 9 spread a little Christmas cheer and sang "Rudolf the Red Nosed Reindeer" as a special surprise for Mrs. Albrecht, Mrs. Scott and Mrs. Ruah during morning bus drop off.



Winners of the 2nd Grade Holly Jolly Sweater Contest:
4th Place: Aiden Fischer
3rd Place: Abby Knapp
2nd Place: Ben Vespa
1st Place: Josie Eilts



Delilah Grabenstetter and Kenzie Piscaglia shared their favorite Christmas stories with their class in 4D