

Maverick Newsletter

News From Mills Elementary

Principal's Corner

Mrs. Logan

Welcome to December!

December is here and with its arrival we are reminded that nearly half the school year has already passed us by!

Winter Break is a mere three weeks away and excitement is building, as the coming vacation and family get-togethers draw closer with each day. However, we cannot forget as we prepare for the coming holidays that there is still important work to be done here at Mills each and every day until they arrive. Even though vacation is on its way, it is crucial that your student is here every school day this month.

The NWEA mid-year testing window opens on Monday, December 6th and closes on Friday, December 17th. See Dr. Russell's Tip of the Month on pg. 3 for some suggestions on how to help your student with the testing process. You can also view NWEA Frequently Asked

Questions in the Parent Tool Kit at the following link:

<http://www.nwea.org/support/article/930/parent-toolkit>

Just before the students are released for Winter Break, a letter should arrive at each student's household. This letter will contain the student's NWEA score, his/her NWEA goal, and the percentage of days the student has been absent so far this school year.

Attendance is a critical component of academic success. One of the best things you can do to help your child succeed in school is to get them here, every day, on time!

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Dates to Remember

Please mark your calendars with the important events and dates provided.

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Tip of the Month

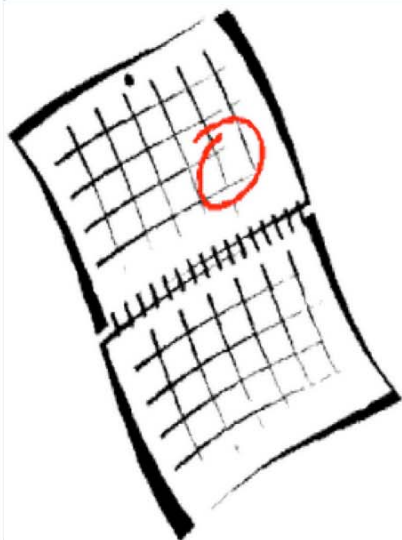
Helpful tips for parents from our literacy coach, Dr. Russell.

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First Lego League

Get the details for the 2010 FLL Championship

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Dates to Remember

DECEMBER 2

*PARENT GOAL TEAM 6-7:00 p.m.

DECEMBER 6-17

*NWEA TESTING

DECEMBER 9

*WINTER MUSIC PROGRAM

DECEMBER 20-21

*NO PRESCHOOL

DECEMBER 22

*1/2 DAY OF SCHOOL

DECEMBER 23-

JANUARY 3

*WINTER BREAK – NO SCHOOL

JANUARY 3-6

*WINTER BRIDGES

JANUARY 10

*ALL STUDENTS RETURN

Winter Music Program

The two 2nd grade classes and the two 4/5 combo classes have been practicing very hard in order to showcase their talents at the winter music performances on Thursday, December 9.

The students have prepared a variety of music to share with us. All parents are encouraged to

attend the 2 performances on December 9. There will be a 2:00 p.m. and a 6:00 p.m. program. Each performance will take place in the Mills Elementary gym.

Any questions can be directed to Miss Wilson, Mills' music teacher. Please come out and support our musicians!

Give Cookies for Christmas!

Searching for a Christmas gift for that aunt who has a sweet tooth? Try chocolate chip cookie dough or peanut butter cup cheesecake! Your friends, on the other hand, may prefer pepperoni pizza!

We have several containers of cookie dough, cheesecakes and even pizza

leftover from this fall's Delicious Delights fundraiser.

Items are first come, first served and cannot be 'reserved' for anyone. For a complete list of items available and prices, please contact Jillian or Cora in the office at 253-3700.

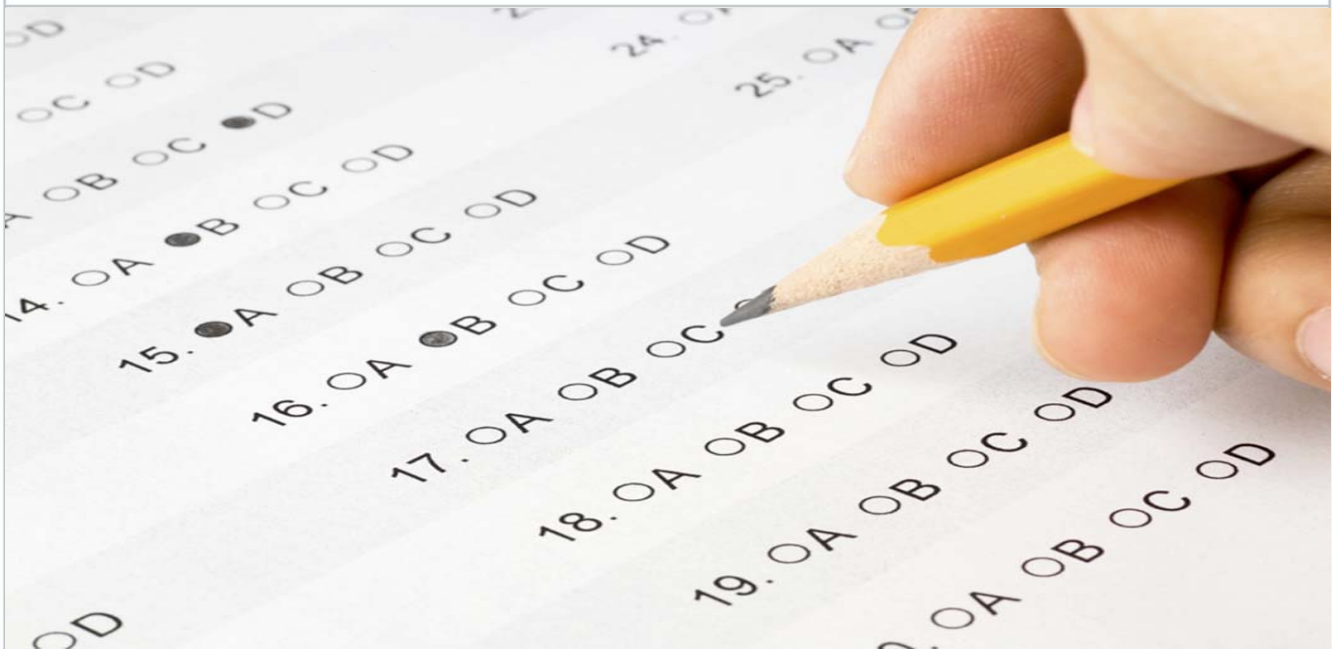
Protocol for Indoor Recess

Whenever the still air or the wind chill combine to create a temperature of 10° F or below, students will be kept inside during recess, or outside for no longer than 10 minutes.

If there is no adult on the playground for before-school recess, students are to go the Art Room. (This

applies during the normal recess hour. **Students should not arrive earlier than 8:10 a.m.)**

For morning recess, students will be in the gym. During lunch recess, students will go to the library. During afternoon recess, students will remain in their classrooms.



Tip of the Month

Helpful tips for parents from Dr. Russell

NWEA Testing

The testing window for NWEA is December 6-17, 2010. In order to keep students in school to complete testing, please do not schedule any appointments (doctor, dentist, etc.) during these school days. Please make sure your child is here at school all day, every day.

Here is what our staff expects of you during testing time:

- Make sure your children get lots of sleep.
- Make sure your children eat a great breakfast before school.
- Talk to your children in positive ways about "showing what they know".



Our Community's actions result in a learning environment that fosters and celebrates the education of the whole child!

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The Importance of Good Attendance

The saying, “The world is run by those who show up” is attributed most often to engineering expert, Robert B. Johnson. The idea that Mr. Johnson was trying to get across is that people tend to fall into two groups: those who sit back as spectators and those who ‘show up’ and actively shape the world around them.

At Mills, we want every student to ‘show up’ and shape their world. The first step towards making that happen is getting the student to consistently walk through our doors. After all, how can they be active participants if they’re not here?

Past research has shown that attendance is linked to student achievement. A 1998 study by Coutts suggests that student attendance should be charted and monitored weekly, since high attendance rates are indicators of effective schools.

A 2000 study by Johnston states that the positive impact of good school attendance on academic achievement may be greater than historically thought. In fact, Johnston’s research showed conclusively that attendance is strongly associated with student achievement.

The NCS D Board of Trustees recognizes that attendance in class is an integral part of learning and **expects every student to be present and participate every day.**

The NCS D Board Policy regarding school attendance also supports that teachers may include class participation as a reasonable percentage of the total grade of any class.

As of December 1, the average attendance of Mills students sits at 96.28% with preschoolers leading the way. While this is perhaps a number to celebrate, it also means that the average Mills student has missed 3.72% of the school year, with some missing a great deal more than others.

This statistic only

accounts for absence. It does not include tardiness. If a student is consistently late for class each morning, that time does add up. All of our classes follow the same academic routine in the morning, which means if a student misses the first 20 minutes of every day, they are missing the same subject each time. It should be no surprise when a student falls behind in math if they’re not present when it’s being taught each morning.

Parents may wonder what they can do to help their child succeed in school. While there are many ways that parents encourage success in their kids (being engaged in their school, holding them accountable for homework, openly communicating with school staff), the simplest way is often overlooked. Do your part to get them here on time every day, and the first step has been made towards success.

Mills Reading NWEA Current Scores and Predictions

NWEA	Spring 2010	Fall 2010	Winter 2010 Prediction	Winter 2010 Actual	Spring 2011 Prediction	Spring 2011 Actual
Kindergarten	73%	28%	50%		75-80%	
1 st Grade	83%	59%	79%		85-90%	
2 nd Grade	60%	38%	60%		75-80%	
3 rd Grade	67%	41%	60%		75%	
4 th Grade	60%	50%	70%		85-90%	
5 th Grade	58%	53%	75%		90%	

Mills School Reading Goal: Goal 1: By May 2011, 100% Mills Students will read at the 50% as measured by NWEA and PAWS.

The Reading Goal Team created this graph to show all students, teachers, parents, and staff Mills current NWEA testing status. Recently, Mills has been acknowledged for great academic growth. The status of Mills reading has gone from “focus” to “EXCELLING”! Kudos to all parents, staff, teachers, and students for making this happen.

Reading at home 20 minutes every night has helped our students make great growth. In order to reach our end of the year goal we need to keep up the hard work. So instead of telling your child to read every night, ask them, “What are we going to read tonight???”

WY 2010 First Lego League Championship

Friday, December 3rd and Saturday, December 4th the 2010 First Lego League Championship will be held at the Casper Events Center. Friday at 6:00 p.m., special guest speaker Story Musgrave, former NASA astronaut, will speak followed by a practice round at 7:15 p.m. On Saturday, team registration will open at 7:00 a.m. Sessions will take place from 8:00-11:10 a.m. There will be a lunch break from 11:10 a.m. until the Opening Ceremony begins at 11:45 a.m. Robot Rounds will take place from 12:30-4:15 p.m. Awards and Closing Ceremonies will start at 4:30 p.m.

All participating team members **must have a signed consent form** in order to partake in the championship activities. Please see Mrs. Ferguson with any questions or concerns.

Parent Involvement Committee

Further Review of the Parent Survey Results

The Parent Involvement Committee has had a chance to compile and analyze the parent survey results. In order to implement changes at Mills Elementary School, we need parent input. The parent survey results indicate 83 responses; the Parent Involvement Committee would like to thank all the participants for their responses. The survey and results are attached to the end of the newsletter for your review.

Here are some highlights from the parent survey results:

- 91.6% of participants felt welcome at Mills Elementary School
- 94% agreed the school personnel was friendly
- 100% of participants agreed the school building was kept clean
- 97.6% felt the school was safe for their son or daughter
- 39.8% of parents felt their son/daughter has the right amount of homework
- 42% said their son/daughter does their homework willingly
- 83.1% agreed the school expects parents to see that their children complete their homework
- 65% of parents said they would like help with reading/math/science
- 63.8% of participants would like additional information on helping their son/daughter perform well on tests

The Parent Involvement Committee is continuing to work on the results for further improvement and would like to hold family information nights, due to the high number of parents seeking additional information. Look for dates and times of the family information nights in future Maverick Newsletters.

Closing Comments

- If your child has mistakenly brought home a green windbreaker coat with gray plaid fleece inside, please call Melissa Bjornstad at 265-5333. This is her 4th grade son's brand new coat.
- Round #2 of Chef's Club will begin on Tuesday, January 11th. There is a writing piece for this club, so students need to be signed up and ready to present on January 11th. No late-comers will be accepted. Contact Ms. Peterson for more information.
- New clubs starting soon: Science Club and Young Author's Club. Look for more information coming your way!
- Make sure to check the Lost and Found for missing items! Items left at the end of the month are donated to a local charity. This is a cold time of year to have your winter coat or mittens donated!