

The Press

Your Source for Cougar News

Principal's Message

Dear PrairieLand Families,

With all of the wintery weather, we have found that the PrairieLand website is an effective communication tool for cancellations related to our school activities. We also post regular announcements to the main page on a daily basis. New information for parents is typically posted to the website several days before it comes home in written form. For example, this newsletter will be posted to the website on Jan. 27, but will come home in paper form on Jan. 30. I encourage you to visit the website on a regular basis at www.unit5.org/prairieland.

Parent Survey Results

Our annual Parent Survey was completed in December and the results are available via a link on the PrairieLand website. We do review the results and take action when appropriate. One example of this is that even though parent results indicate a high level of satisfaction with the safety of our school, there were comments about looking into the topic of bullying. In the past, we have discussed this topic as a staff and are now conducting an online bullying survey with our 2nd-5th graders in January/February. Look for those results to be shared in March.

I encourage anyone who has specific comments or feedback that may or may not have been addressed in the survey to please contact me at 888-6838 or arnoldt@unit5.org. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and listen to your thoughts or concerns.

Smartboard Update

In December we had four additional Smartboards installed in our K/1 and K/2 commons and two 2nd grade classrooms. We anticipate two more Smartboards for the other 2nd grade classrooms to arrive any day. While we currently have Smartboard access for all students since we have them in the commons, we are also nearing the goal we set 1½ years ago to have a Smartboard in each classroom. Thanks to all of the generous support from P.I.E.C.E. – without our supportive parents this would not have been possible!

Standardized Testing

Students in 3rd, 4th, & 5th grades will soon be taking the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) from March 2-13. This is an important test that provides information about the extent to which our students are meeting state learning standards. The results from this test combined with the scores from the fall test will help us to see areas of growth and areas that need special attention. We ask that you please avoid taking students out of school during this time. We hope to make these weeks as low stress for the students as possible.

Sincerely,
Tim Arnold

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Calendar

February

- 3 - PIECE Meeting 6:30
- 11 - Market Day – 4:30
- 13 - “Cougars on Ice” Pepsi Ice Center
5:30 – 7:30
- 14 - Valentine Day parties – 2:15
- 16 - **No School** – Lincoln’s Birthday
- 19 - County Spelling Bee at IWU
- 21 - PIECE Carnival – 4:00 – 7:00

March

- 3 - PIECE Meeting – 6:30
- 2 - 13 ISAT and SAT 10 Testing
- 14 - Bowling at Circle Lanes 10-7
- 20 - Talent Show 9:00/1:00
- 23 - 27 **No School** – Spring Break



Student Spotlight

Reading Tip

I recently read some interesting information written by Dr. Steven Layne (www.stevelayne.com) on reading aloud to your child. Reading with your child daily can lead to improvements in your child’s reading comprehension and fluency. Here are some quick tips he offers:

- Make reading together part of your daily routine, even just 15-20 minutes
- Continue to read with older children who can read independently
- Try books on CD or tape
- Talk about what you read with your child
- Read together frequently, especially when starting a new book
- Show enthusiasm about reading with your child

- Use unique voices at appropriate times in the story
- Take turns picking which book to read
- Make read aloud time a priority

I hope you enjoy reading some great books with your child, no matter what age they are!

Birthday Books

Thank you to Michael Natoli for donating the book *My Truck is Stuck* by Kevin Lewis and Daniel Kirk in honor of his January 8th birthday.

You can donate a “birthday book” to honor your special day. The order form and book list are available on the wall outside the IMC and on the IMC website.

Technology

Here are some great websites. There are links from the Prairieland IMC page.

www.starfall.com – Fun phonics and reading practice for younger students (K-2)

www.internet4classrooms.com – Great activities for all grades organized by skill.

www.worldbookonline.com/student - This is an online encyclopedia which Unit 5 pays a subscription fee for. It is great for homework and research help. **Username: unit5**
Password: normal

Spelling Bee

The Prairieland Spelling Bee was held on January 22nd. Congratulations to all the 4th and 5th graders who participated. A well deserved congrats to Kylie Personette for winning the 2009 Spelling Bee and to Sarah Yoder for being Prairieland's runner up! Kylie will represent our school at the McLean County Spelling Bee at IWU on February 19th. Good Luck Kylie!

5th Grade

Emily Mook, Noah McLaughlin, Haylee Sieg, Mike Braida, Amanda Breeden, Ben Maynard, Thomas Anderson, Justin Depauw, Natalie Sterling, Tyler Nelson, Jacob Hayek and Brittany Howes

4th Grade

T.J. Estabrook, Jessica Flesher, Emily Kratz, Jamie Walling, Sarah Yoder, Grace Maynard, Malachi Barnes, and Jaiden Blair

P.E. News

Don't forget to have your children turn in their calendars with parent/guardian signatures on the three activities that they did each week. I will be drawing names for prizes during the week of February 9th. Look for a similar calendar to come home in March.

We are just finishing up our gymnastics unit and I can tell that we might have some future Olympic gymnasts here at Prairieland! ☺ We have also been talking about how important it is for students to get some physical activity outside of the school day.

Although as a district we are extremely privileged to have P.E. every day, 20 minutes is not enough exercise during the day. It is important to know that all children need at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise throughout each day. This can be in the form of running around outside with their friends or even helping mom and dad with chores such as shoveling or walking the dog.

This month we would like to encourage your child to exercise at home while also helping others in the community. We will be focusing on using exercise to create some "physical change" in our bodies, in addition to raising some "physical change" to donate to the Unity Center here in town. Each week in the month of February, I will designate an exercise for the children to do at home. Children earn one penny for each exercise they do. For example, if the exercise is jumping jacks and your child does 20 jumping jacks each night for 5 nights, they can earn \$1.00 from you to bring to school the next week to put in the collection for the charity. The goal is to encourage children to exercise, while helping them to realize that they are never too young or too small to make a difference in their community. At the end of the month, all of the money raised will go to the Unity Center. Parents and siblings are welcome to join in the fun as well!

Thanks for your continued support in keeping your children happy and healthy!

Mrs. Garneau



School News

NEWS FROM THE NURSE **1st DAY EXCLUSION is COMING!**

At the next board of education meeting, the final rules will be adopted for Unit 5's new **1st Day Exclusion Policy**.

Those students who will be entering **kindergarten, 6th and 9th grades this Fall** must turn in a physical exam and all immunizations by the first day of school or they will be excluded on that first day. This is a change from our previous October 15th deadline.

We are encouraging parents of incoming kindergarten children to go ahead and get the physical exam and any needed immunizations completed **NOW** and **turn them in at kindergarten pre-registration**. This will alleviate waiting in long lines at registration in the fall and/or on the first day of school so that the physical can be reviewed before your child may go to class.

Kindergarten pre-registration is scheduled for May 7th.

If you have any questions, please call me anytime!

Susy Marcum, RN, BSN
Certified School Nurse

Kindergarten Pre-Registration

Pre-registration for all 2009-10 kindergarten students will be held at Prairieland on Thursday, May 7, 2008 at 9:00 A.M. and 1:00 P.M.

Students must be 5 years of age on or before September 1, 2009, to attend kindergarten this fall. If you have a child who will be entering kindergarten this fall, please plan to attend the pre-registration. If you are unable to attend either session on May 7th, please call the school office at 888-6838. Please share this information with neighborhood families who do not currently have a student attending Prairieland Elementary.

100's DAY NEWS

Time is flying by at Prairieland. This year, the 100th day of school will be celebrated on Thursday, February 5th. Several events will take place to highlight this special day. A Kissables candy drawing will take place. Two lucky winners from each class will be rewarded with a bag of 100 Kissables. Classes also will make and display creative 100th day collections. Each class will try to collect 100 nonperishable food items for a local food bank. We will have a fun and exciting 100th day of school!

Student Council News

Friday, February 13th, Student Council will sponsor "Cougars on Ice". The Pepsi Ice Center, downtown Bloomington, will be available to all Prairieland Cougars and their families from 5:20-7:20 p.m. Children will pay \$2 for skates. There will be a couple of skate guards there to help. All students do have to sign a waiver form.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, March 14th. Circle Lanes will have lanes reserved for Prairieland families. This is our big fund raiser!

The cost will be \$5 per person for 2 games and shoes. Two hour time slots will be available to reserve, between 10:00 and 7:00. More information will follow.

Garden Club

Students in grades 3-5 interested in gardening, planting, and helping to beautify Prairieland's Butterfly Garden can join the Spring Garden Club sponsored by Mrs. Nancy Harp, Mrs. Kathy Kalina and Mrs. Jane Wawak. Even if your child was involved in the Fall Garden Club, we need them to fill out this form for Spring Garden Club. The gardening club will meet on Mondays after school from 3:00-4:00. Students must have a signed parental permission form to attend. They should bring clothes appropriate to garden in and gloves if they wish. The first few meetings will be planting seeds to start seedlings for our garden. Meeting dates are as follows: January 28th Feb. 25th March 11th March 18th April 8th April 15th April 22nd April 29th May 6th May 13th May 20th. We recommend your child bring a snack to eat from 3:00-3:05 as they are often hungry. Fill out and return the permission slip to the office or to Mrs. Harp or Mrs. Kalina before or at the first meeting.

Talent Show

The 2009 talent show is just around the corner. This year's talent show will be on Friday, March 20th at 9:00 and 1:00. One change with this year's show is that students will only be able to participate in one act (with the exception of Cougar Chorus or grade level acts). Applications will be passed out to interested students on

February 6th. They will be due back to Mrs. Halsey's room by February 12th. Tryouts will be the last week of February. It is not too early to start planning your act!

Young Authors

Young Authors is a program that encourages children to write and illustrate their own stories. We would like to invite students of all grades to participate in this fun activity. Books entered in the competition are due by Friday, February 27th. The top four entries from Prairieland will advance to the district level competition. We hope that many of our Prairieland Cougars choose to participate in this valuable learning opportunity. If your child is interested, additional information can be obtained from his/her classroom teacher. Any other questions may be directed to either Ms. Armstrong (armstrbm@unit5.org) or Mrs. Lucas (lucasa@unit5.org).

Family Fitness Night

Save the date! Monday, April 6th from 6-8 pm will be our 4th Annual Family Fitness Night. We will have great door prizes, including a Wii Fit and a Ripstick. There will be lots of information about how to keep your family healthy, interactive booths with exercise activities for everyone to try and yummy snacks to enjoy. We will also have information about the CATCH grant that Prairieland received this year and the many ways that we have incorporated healthy fitness habits into our daily schedule. Bring the whole family and join the fitness fun! More information will be going home after Spring Break.



Education News

Key #5 Determining Importance

Determining importance has to do with knowing why you're reading and then making decisions about which information or ideas are most critical to understanding the overall meaning of the piece. In your everyday life, you continually determine what's important, setting priorities, making decisions about what must be done now and what can wait. Titles, bold headings, pictures with captions, quotations, timelines, graphs, and maps give valuable information about what's important. Text features are road signs for the reader. They point to what's important.

School Improvement

During our last School Improvement Day on January 5, staff participated in a variety of reading and math related topics in the morning at NCWHS. In the afternoon, we focused on instructional technology with differentiated training with Smartboards and Lexia, which is a computer-based reading assistance program.

The next School Improvement Day will be held on April 9. While plans are still being made for that day, teachers will participate in grade-level meetings with other Unit 5 teachers.

From The Kitchen

Although the lunch menu lists one fruit daily, do you know that here, at Prairieland, we offer the students a choice between 2 fruits every day?

It is one way that we try to ensure that more children will choose to eat a fruit. As adults we need to encourage healthy eating habits by providing children a variety in nutritional choices. American children eat less than half the recommended 5 or more daily servings of fruits and vegetables. Experts estimate that **ONLY ONE** out of 5 kids actually gets the 5 a day they need for good health. Is your child the **LUCKY ONE**?



Please remember that if you wish to come and eat a school lunch with your child, we ask that you call or email the kitchen by 9:30 a.m. to be included in the lunch count.

The Cougars' cooks:

Mrs. Roszhart, Mrs. Sparrow and

Mrs. Vines

(309) 862-5062

Roszhac.unit5.org



Looking Ahead

April

- 7 - PIECE Meeting – 6:30
- 6 - Family Fitness Night– 6:00 – 8:00
- 8 - Market Day Pick-up 4:30
- 9 - **No School** – School Improvement Day
- 10 - **No School** – Board Holiday
- 14 - Spring Pictures

May

- 7 - KDG Pre-Registration 9:00 and 1:00
- 13 - Market Day Pick-up 4:30
- 25 - **No School** – Memorial Day
- TBD 5th Grade Recognition
- TBD Playday

Reminders

WEATHER REMINDERS...

Recess

Please be sure that your child comes to school dressed appropriately for any outside recess time. Children will go outside for recess on days when the temperature (with wind chill) is 20 degrees or above. On days when the temperature is between 20 - 25 degrees, students will go outside for 10 minutes and then have the option to continue playing outside or sit inside in the hallway for the remainder of recess. Keep in mind that the temperature fluctuates during the day and it is always better to send your child prepared with a winter coat, hat and gloves.

Weather related school closings

There are also several options for parents to find out when the weather requires the school to be closed or dismissed early:

WJBC 1230AM, WBNQ 101.5FM, WIHN 96.7FM, WBWN 104.1FM, WGLT 98.1FM, or WWCT 106FM.

You may also access the following websites: **Unit 5.org**, WJBC or WBNQ.

The decision to dismiss early due to inclement weather is made before 11:00 a.m. and the media will be notified at that time. Please do not call the school office or the Unit Office for this information. If nothing has been announced by 11:00 a.m., it will be a full day of school as usual.

Please arrange, ahead of time,

with your child what they are to do in case of early dismissal. It is difficult for last minute arrangements to be made for students.

Question and Answer

In each monthly newsletter, there will be a Q & A (question and answer) return slip. Parents and students are encouraged to fill out the slip, cut it out, and return the slip to the office. The principal will address as many questions as possible. Some may even be addressed in next month's newsletter.

Q & A Slip

Question(s) for the principal:

