



April 2016 Newsletter

Principal's Message

Greetings. This past week our students, teachers, and I set goals for our annual Common Core state assessments. Our fourth and fifth graders were able to reflect on their performance last year if they took the tests. We discussed how when people set goals, they often aim high to help them stay focused and work that much harder. I used the analogy of how I had set as a goal for us to raise \$30,000 at our annual Jogathon and \$20,000 with our Teacher Time Auction fundraiser. Because of our community, we exceeded our goals. I am proud of our students for how they have applied themselves this year in their academic work. The kinds of engagement I see in classrooms are a testament to the dedication and passion of our teachers and the enthusiasm for learning on the part of our students. We have forged a vision for teaching and learning that has at its core the interests and needs of our learners, and we continue to grow as educators and as a community. Thanks as always for being our partner in this important work.

April brought a wealth of learning opportunities for our students through field trips to the Natural History Museum and the Santa Monica Pier Aquarium, units of study around opinion and argument, learning around native plants and their impacts on our environment, and student-created avatars that illustrate learning around historical figures. Our upper grade teachers have expanded their repertoire of teaching tools with the use of our 135 Chromebooks, and we are excited as we strengthen our technology integration by adding Chromebooks in grades 1 and 2 and iPads in kindergarten. Our School Site Council approved our budget for 2016-17, as did our Booster Club, and because of a reallocation of funds, we were able to add a 4-hour teachers assistant to our corps of staff. If we can continue on the upward trajectory that we have had this year with fundraising, we are hopeful to continue to have an aide in our library to support Ms. McCarthy, our students, and our teachers and to add teachers assistants in first, second, and third grade. Please make sure to promote our spring fundraiser, the Great Race, and to donate items for our auction and raffle or time as a volunteer so we can exceed our fundraising goal of \$40,000. We look forward to a great event.

As we enter our last full month of instruction, let's remember that we still need our students in school, on time and ready to learn. Checking in with them every night about their work and behavior in school is so important. Thanks.

Principal Jenkins

Attendance

Our goal is for 76% or more of our students to be in attendance 96% of the time. **An attendance rate of 96% is no more than 7 absences.** We continue to do our best to reach out to families to ensure that our students are in school as much as possible. While we understand that illness is unavoidable, I do feel like there are many students who could be in school more. Please remember that we cannot teach who is not here! Currently our school-wide rate for students in attendance 96% of the time is 63.8%, which represents an increase of 1.4 percentage points since March. Let's ensure that we are only absent for excused reasons. Second grade wins the extra PE class, and we will announce the grade winners for attendance on May 9th! Congratulations! Thanks.

Numbers in parentheses represent percent change since March.

% of Students in Attendance 96%	
Kindergarten	65.3% (+4.2)
First Grade	67.2% (-1)
Second Grade	69.4% (+1.5)
Third Grade	64.7% (+2.8)
Fourth Grade	58.1% (-0.8)
Fifth Grade	62.8% (+1.3)

Parking Reminders

As we close out the year, please remember that our handicapped parking spots are for community members with a disability who need these spots. Also our parking lots are for staff only until 03:00 PM, and we must not park in the lot to pick up students after school and block others in. If we expect our students to follow rules, we must be their models.

Smarter Balanced Common Core State Tests

For the next four weeks, our students in third through fifth grade will be tested on what they have learned in English language arts and mathematics using a measure designed by the state. Our students have taken what we call interim assessments to prepare for these; and of course all of the work our teachers have done with them in class and after school and your support at home have prepared them as well. Third grade will be tested using our Chromebooks the weeks of May 2nd and May 9th, and our fourth and fifth graders will assess the weeks of May 16th and May 23rd using our Chromebooks and testing iPads that were provided by the district. We will test the first hour of each day, except for Thursday, so it is critically important that students are well rested, eat a solid breakfast, and arrive to school on time. Make up testing will occur the last two weeks of school. A letter and testing schedule was sent home. Thanks.

Word Work

Using word lists that are differentiated and aligned to a student's development as s/he advances in his / her understanding of and facility with word families, students work in cooperative groups sorting and discussing word families matched to their learning level. There are various kinds of sorts (i.e. closed, open, flash) that students use in their work, and teachers work with groups as they engage with their word sorts. There is an element of fun to the work that increases engagement, and typically a word sort takes 15-20 minutes. In many cases, this work has replaced our spelling program and is more meaningful, as it is differentiated and targeted to areas of student need.

Open House

Because of state testing, we have moved our annual Open House to Thursday, June 2nd, 05:00 – 07:00 PM. As a result of this change, we will have a minimum day for professional development on June 3rd. Thanks.

Important Dates

05/02/16 State Testing Begins (Grade 3)	05/16/16 State Testing Continues (Grades 4/5)
05/02/16 Teacher Appreciation Breakfast	05/16/16 DIBELS EOY Begins
05/04/16 Teacher Appreciation Luncheon	05/17/16 GATE Parent Meeting
05/05/16 Second Grade Field Trip	05/20/16 Emergency Drills
05/06/16 Teacher Appreciation Spa Day	05/20/16 Field Trip (Room 21)
05/07/16 The Great Race Fundraiser	05/20/16 School Play
05/09/16 State Testing Continues (Grade 3)	05/23/16 State Testing Continues (Grades 4/5)
05/09/16 Field Trip (Rooms 17 & 24)	05/25/16 Booster Club Meeting
05/10/16 First Grade Field Trip	05/26/16 Kindergarten Field Trip