




December 2019 Newsletter

Principal's Message

Greetings. Something told me December would be full of festivity, learning, and even some ballroom dancing. Thanks to all of our teachers, students, and our music teachers, Mr. Carroll and Ms. Garcia, for coordinating a multicultural winter program for our families. We are also grateful to our Booster Club, room parents, and parent volunteers for a wildly successful class basket auction, bake sale, and our first annual Holiday Bazaar right around the corner from our school. It was so heartening to share in the winter spirit with our families who came out to see our students sing and round out their holiday shopping at our Ms. Nelson's Book Fair and the bazaar. We are also thankful for the many well wishes, gifts of appreciation, and kind words our families share with us every year at this time. Reading the messages from our families about how much they appreciate our efforts makes all the difference. Thank you.

One of the highlights of December was seeing our entire fifth grade perform all seven ballroom dance styles on our play yard for their families and teachers. When we decided to use part of our arts budget for this new program, we could never have expected such enthusiasm and flexibility from our fifth graders. The life lessons they learned as they worked together are invaluable and hats off to our 7 dance couples who helped us place 2nd at the semi-annual Conga Kids competition at Marina del Rey Middle School. I know their school mates and everyone who saw them perform at our last assembly of the calendar year are anxious to take part in this program when they reach fifth grade. In addition to our winter program and all of the fun that came along with that day, our teachers continued their study of balanced literacy through our work with Erin Donelson and our book study of *Who's Doing the Work: How to Say Less So Readers Can Do More*. Each month our work together strengthens our ability to design units of study responsive to our learners, engage with them in ways that help us understand them better as thinkers, and take risks in ways that grow us as practitioners. We are excited to continue our work in science with our NGSS expert and CGI with 4 days of learning with one of our former teachers, Liz Romero. Go team!

Get ready for spelling bee lists and pledge forms! (Grades 1-5). For those who wanted a head start in their pledge collecting and studying, lists and forms were sent out by email. We look forward to seeing everyone back on the 13th of January. Happy New Year!  Andrew Jenkins

Attendance

Our goal is for 72% or more of our students to be in attendance 96% of the time. **An attendance rate of 96% is no more than 7 absences in a year.** Currently 72% of our students are meeting this target, which is an increase of 5 percentage points since our last newsletter. We saw some positive gains in almost all grades this past period, and kindergarten continues to lead the way. They win the extra PE class, and all the classes with the best attendance will get an extra 10 minutes of recess. We will also be awarding students for perfect attendance each month with our very own CDA trading cards. Finally, Mrs. Mead's class gets a Mad Science class. Bonus! **Keep it at 7!** We can do this. Thanks.

Cumulative Attendance Data as of December 20, 2019

Percentage in Attendance by Class		% of Students with 100% Attendance	
Mead	97.22%	Kindergarten	79.4
Gonzalez	96.54%	First Grade	75
Jenkins	96.54%	Second Grade	66.1
Block	96.23%	Third Grade	64.4
Tepas	96.09%	Fourth Grade	74.7
Payne	96.67%	Fifth Grade	72

Monitoring Screen Time & the Effects of Superhero Movies

Recently I came across an article on how images students see in many of the action hero movies that are out these days might have adverse effects on how they negotiate conflict in school and on play dates. It made me wonder if some of the situations I am having to address on our kindergarten play yard might be a result of our students not understanding how what is happening in action hero movies is not really how we handle situations when we are angry or feel insulted. I took time out of my holiday to watch Avengers: Endgame, and while I was entertained, I wonder how children under 7 might process what is happening. I write this as a reminder that films have ratings to help us make decisions about what might be appropriate for youth, and while I cannot control what our students watch outside of school, I would ask that we consider how we monitor screen time and help our students understand the images they see in movies like these, if they are watching them at an age where guidance is necessary. Thanks.

Spelling Bee Pledge Drive and Competition

Lists for the students in grades 1-5 were sent by email the week of December 23rd and will come home as a hard copy when we return from break. This year we are asking our students to collect pledges on 20 words that they will spell the week of January 27th. If each student collects at least \$25 in pledges, we will have reached our fundraising goal of \$10,000, which goes directly toward field trips for all students. Those who wish to compete in our annual school wide bee will engage in classroom bees for a spot on our stage on Wednesday, February 5th at 3:00 PM. Go Spellers!

Important Dates

01/13/20 School Resumes	01/31/20 STAR Nova Session 2 Ends
01/13/20 Coffee & Tea with the Principal	02/03/20 Coffee & Tea with the Principal
01/13/20 Spelling Bee Pledge Drive Begins	02/03/20 Hearts Campaign Begins
01/20/20 No School: Dr. MLK Jr. Holiday	02/03/20 STAR Nova Session 3 Begins
01/24/20 Emergency Drills	02/04/20 Afterschool PE Begins
01/27/20 Mid-Term Notices Go Home	02/05/20 Mad Science (Gr. 1-5) Begins
01/29/20 Booster Club Meeting	02/05/20 Annual Spelling Bee
01/30/20 Spelling Finalists Determined	02/07/20 Mad Science (TK/K) Begins
01/30/20 SSC/ELAC Meeting	02/12/20 Booster Club Meeting
01/31/20 Pledge Forms Due	02/12-14/20 5 th Grade Outdoor Ed
01/31/20 Prospective Family Tour	02/17/20 No School: Presidents' Day