

PLAINS SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



PRINCIPAL'S NEWS FROM Mr. Hank Skala:

I would like to take the time this month to explain our winter procedures. All children will continue to go outdoors for recess after lunch. In wintry weather, students need to be dressed with coat, hat, mittens and boots in order to enjoy snow play. We go out daily with few exceptions. I use a Child Care Weather Watch as a guide in determining if it is too cold for outdoor play. It takes into consideration both temperature and wind chill factor. If we have to resort to indoor recess, it generally takes place for kindergarten classes as playtime with organized activities in the gymnasium. First grade teachers opt for classroom activities which often incorporate movement and games.

Speaking of winter clothing, please have your child's clothing labeled, as more often than not, we can have some missing items. We do our best to keep everyone organized and keep track of items in their individual wardrobe cubby. If an item is lost, we have a section in the cafeteria for lost and found objects.

Happy Holidays!

Hank Skala, Principal

Upcoming Dates:

Early Release for students- Tuesday, December 4th. Dismissal is at 2:25 for grades k and 1 and at 2:00 for preschool.

Report Card Distribution is Friday, December 14th.

All School Sing- Winter Celebration, Wednesday, December 12th at 9:45.

December 4, Early Release for Students

Half Day for students on Friday, December 21st for Holiday Recess. Dismissal is at 12:15 with no lunch served. School re-opens on Tuesday, January 2, 2019.

Kindergarten News
Submitted by Regina Moulton
Grade Level Coordinator



5 little snowmen standing in a row (*hold up 5 fingers*)
Each with a hat (*pat head*) and a big red bow (*pull at neck like a bow tie*)
Along came the sun (*arms form big circle over head*) and it shone all day
And one little snowman melted away! (*put down one finger*)
4 little snowmen standing in a row (*hold up 4 fingers*)...

December is here already and we are beginning to discuss the many changes that occur in the winter. We will talk about the decrease in sunlight and changes in the weather. We will also talk about how animals and people prepare for winter. Children will learn about many different winter holidays and celebrations and how all of these holidays incorporate light in some way to light up the dark winter nights.

Each class continues to practice P.A.W.S. and work together to earn 25 tiger tickets. We just recently had our P.A.W.S. assembly to celebrate everyone's hard work. It was a fun time filled with music and dancing.

Our kindergarten students are working hard on their Writer's Workshop stories and illustrations. They are noticing what other authors and illustrators do and incorporating these ideas into their own writing. When your child asks you how to spell a word, encourage him/her to stretch out the word and write the sounds/letters that they hear. Maybe you can ask your child to help you write the next grocery list!

We wish you a low-stress, healthy, and FUN December!

First Grade News
Submitted by Ashley Macey
Grade Level Coordinator

It's hard to believe that we are entering December. These first few months sure have flown by! As the cold weather continues to arrive and the snow starts to fall, we will still go outside for recess when we are able to. The children must have snow boots, snow pants, hats and mittens to be able to play on the playground. Please

be sure your child's name is on each piece of clothing that comes to school. Children quite often do not recognize their own belongings or get them mixed up with someone else's. Our lost and found is always growing! An **extra set of clothes** is good to have in school because the children tend to get wet.

At Plains School, we will be sending home report cards on Friday December 14th. This is the first report card of a tri-semester schedule. Parents will get the next report card in March and then the final report card on the last day of school in June. They are designed to report children's progress in reaching grade level standards. Below is an explanation of the marking system we use in first grade:

M – Meets the Standard: The student demonstrates thorough understanding of basic concepts and skills. Performance is characterized by the ability to apply the skills with accuracy, quality and independence.

P – Progressing toward the Standard: The student demonstrates understanding of basic concepts and skills. Performance is characterized by the ability to apply skills with increasing success. Performance varies in consistency with regard to accuracy and quality. Support and guidance is often needed for clarification and to sustain involvement.

B – Beginning to Develop the Standard: The student demonstrates minimal understanding of basic concepts and skills. Performance is inconsistent even with support and guidance.

N/A – Not Assessed at this point: There are a number of specific skills within the curriculum for teachers to report on. Your child's teacher may be doing a lot of work in a particular area but will assess that area for a later marking period. There will be a little bit of variance in what is covered from classroom to classroom, but we will all have covered everything by the end of the year.

Please remember, we are always available to answer any questions or concerns you may have about your child. We spend a great deal of time with your children and we care very much about their progress. We all know how important communication between school and home is in improving that progress, so we want all parents to be very involved and have a good understanding of where your child stands.

**Submitted by Nancy Jessup
School Adjustment Counselor**

It has been a busy fall here at Plains School. It's hard to believe it's December already! As the days get shorter and the holiday season approaches, it seems that there is less and less time to do more and more things. Yet it is at exactly this time that it is important to take the time to take care of ourselves and our children. It seems contradictory, but if we do make the time for the simple pleasures of life, we will feel less pressured. Most of us understand that children need time to play; many of us forget that grownups also need that time to relax and unwind, for physical play and exercise. And what better way to do that than with our children?

According to an article from the National Association for the Education of Young Children called “The Value of School Recess and Outdoor Play”, unstructured play is a “developmentally appropriate outlet for reducing stress in children’s lives and research shows that physical activity improves children’s attentiveness and decreases restlessness.”

Below are some of the benefits of outdoor play that the article stressed:

1. Play is an active form of learning that unites the mind, body and spirit. Until at least the age of nine, children learn best when the whole self is involved.
2. Play reduces the tension that often comes with having to achieve or needing to learn.
3. Children express and work out emotional aspects of everyday experiences though unstructured play.
4. Children permitted to play freely with peers develop skills for seeing things through another person’s point of view – cooperating, helping, sharing and solving problems.

We are all under the pressure of time and children feel it too. A few moments in the day to relax and have fun in an unstructured, active way can work wonders for our sense of well-being. Playing with the children in our lives gives us opportunities to build relationships, improve communications, find out what’s going on in their lives, and to see the world in new ways.

I’m happy to communicate with parents and families via email as well as by phone to respond to your questions and concerns. My email address is njessup@shschools.com

NOTES FROM THE NURSE, Eileen Garvey, R.N., C.S.N.

Besides the normal colds and flu we see this time of year, we also see **conjunctivitis** here at Plains School. It is an infection of the eyes that is commonly known as “**pink eye**”. It is most often caused by a virus but can also be caused by bacteria. It can be spread if bacterial by hand-to-eye contact or by virus droplets, (e.g., coughing, sneezing) associated with colds or sore throats. It is not uncommon for viral conjunctivitis to spread rapidly through schools or group settings. This explains why pre-schoolers and young school age children are most often affected due to crowding and lack of good hand washing and hygiene.

Symptoms of pink eye include:

- Redness, irritation, itching, eye tearing.
- Clear or yellow discharge that may make the eyelids stick together, especially when waking from a nap or a nights sleep.
- Swelling of the eye lids.
- Sensitivity to bright lights.

Treatment for pink eye includes:

- Consulting your doctor for the possible need for eye medication to clear the infection.
- Warm compress to the eye helps loosen any crusting and wash away the discharge.

- Stay home from school until you are under treatment and the eyes are not draining.
- Wash your hands after touching or wiping your eyes.
- Do not share towels or linens.
- Cover mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing.

***Good hand washing is the most important thing we can do to prevent the spread of illness.**

I wish you all a happy, healthy holiday season.



ANNUAL IPM NOTICE

In May 2000, legislation entitled “An Act to Protect Children and Families from Harmful Pesticides” was signed into law. The law went into effect in November 2000.

The Act requires each school to file “Integrated Pest Management” (IPM) Plans with the State, and to restrict our usage of harmful pesticides. IPM stresses preventive maintenance and non-chemical methods of dealing with pests. Should chemical applications be needed, there are notification requirements and licensing requirements with which we will need to comply. The district has hired Minuteman Pest Control to work with us in this area.

Notice

All students, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or homelessness, have equal access to the general education program and the full range of any occupational and vocational education programs offered by the South Hadley Public Schools.

Declaración de No discriminación

Todos los estudiantes, independientemente de su raza, color, sexo, identidad de género, religión, origen nacional, orientación sexual, discapacidad o falta de vivienda, tienen acceso equitativo al programa de educación general y a toda la gama de programas de educación ocupacional y profesional ofrecidos por Escuelas Públicas de South Hadley

If you feel you may need special accommodations or assistance as a result of a handicapping condition or limited English proficiency, please call Kathleen Boyden at the South Hadley School Department, 116 Main Street at 413-538-5072 X101 (hearing impaired fax 413-538-5000) and notify us of your special need.

Si usted necesita alguna adaptacion o asistencia especial debido a algun tipo de minusvalia, por favor llame al telefono 413-538-5072 X101(fax para personas con deficiencias auditivas 413-538-5000) y notifiquenos cuales son sus necesidades especificas.

