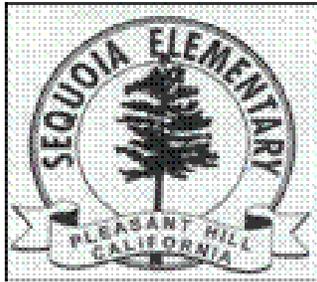


THE SEQUOIA SPIRIT

December, 2014

Volume 4, Issue 4

A Message From The Principal ...



December is here! The end of the calendar year is always a great time to reflect on where we are, where we've been, and where we are going. Your child's teacher has been working hard for the past three months by planning, implementing and assessing each and every lesson. I am always inspired by their professionalism, drive and commitment to our students.

We have had a smooth transition to Common Core Standards. Our students continue to learn at high levels and are assessing well on multiple measures.

Our 5th grade music program is off to a great start. All 5th graders are involved in

either band or orchestra and meet with their teacher twice per week. Their first performances are coming up!

I am looking forward to fine dining day with our Kindergarten classes and more holiday cheer throughout the month.

I hope you all have a wonderful holiday season. If you are traveling, please be safe. I am looking forward to another great year here at Sequoia!

Please remember that 1st—5th grade students are dismissed at 1:30pm for the next two week, except for Wednesday when dismissal is at 1:25pm. AM Kinders are dismissed at 11:05 and PM Kinders at 1:00pm .

Sincerely,
Dr. Franklin
Principal

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Winter Break

**Dec. 22—
Jan. 2, 2015**

"Sometimes the questions are complicated, but the answers are simple."

- Dr. Seuss



Parent / Teacher Conferences

Parent / Teacher conferences will be held from December 8—19th. Students will be dismissed each day at 1:30pm except for Wednesday which will remain at 1:25pm. These conferences are vital as it will allow teachers to share with each parent their child's academic growth and areas that need improvement. Teachers are just as interested in your input as you are in theirs. Teachers want to be apprised of any changes your child is facing in his personal or family life, and how he behaves at home in comparison to how he acts at school. Your child's comfort level in the classroom, whether he's found his niche among fellow students, and whether he seems stressed or happy are all important clues to his social and emotional well-being — and it's only by working together that you and your child's teacher can fully understand them.

Before the Teacher Conference

- **Start preparing early.** Don't wait until the night before to get organized. Create a folder at the beginning of the year in which you store test scores, big homework assignments, and your notes (about things your child has told you or any other topics you want to address).
- **Talk to your child.** Ask how she's doing in class, what's going on during lunchtime, recess, and when they go to special classes like music or library time. You want to find out both the positive and negative.

During the Teacher Conference

- **Arrive early.** With only a few precious minutes to spend, you don't want to be late. It will shorten your time with your child's teacher and affect her day's entire schedule.
- **Enter with the right attitude.** The goal of both the teacher and the parent should be the success of the student, but sometimes parents have a hard time discussing tough issues. Rather than put the teacher on the defensive, arrive with a compliment to start the conference off on the right foot. ("My son is really enjoying the unit on space" or "We had a great time on the field trip.") Then address any concerns in a respectful way.

Find out the communication protocol. Don't let this be the only time you talk to your child's teacher. Ask how she likes to communicate, whether it's by e-mail, notes passed through a folder, or phone calls.

After the Teacher Conference

Follow up. If the teacher brings something to your attention that needs to be addressed with your child, take steps to put the plan in motion, whether it's helping with organizational skills, getting extra help, or addressing a social issue.



Monthly Attendance Report



During the 2013-2014 school year, Sequoia Elementary students had an average daily attendance rate of 97%. For this year, our goal is to be at 98%. A 1% increase in attendance district-wide represents one million dollars. We need to do our part. Every month, I will publish attendance rates by grade level. Let's make the commitment to have all children at school everyday, all day.

Grade	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.
Kinder	98.51%	97.55%	95.76%
First	97.60%	96.75%	97.58%
Second	98.73%	98.81%	98.32%
Third	98.42%	98.18%	98.13%
Fourth	98.78%	98.89%	98.84%
Fifth	98.73%	98.14%	97.78%

Our current attendance rate for the year is 97.79%

Cold Weather

With the weather getting colder, windier and rainier, please send your child to school with warm clothes. I am always amazed when it is cold and rainy and we have students wearing shorts to school and students without jackets.



4th and 5th Graders “Walk Through History”



This past month, all 4th and 5th graders participated in the annual “Walk Through History”, a focus on the American Revolution for 5th grade and California History for 4th grade put on by California Weekly Explorer. This event allowed students to get into different characters such as George Washington, General Charles Cornwallis, Patrick Henry and Paul Revere, and reenact many key moments during the history. Thank you to all the parents who made it out to watch these fun programs.



Winter Break Ideas ...

Webquests

A webquest is an online task that has kids find information on the Internet and use that information in meaningful ways. There are thousands of webquests online. Some of my favorite collections of webquests can be found at the [University of Connecticut Literacy Web](#) and [Lee's Summit](#).

Visit an Online Museum

Too snowy during winter break to get out and visit your favorite museum? Don't fret. You and your child can visit many museums across the U.S. virtually over the Internet. Some of my favorites are the [Online Titanic Museum](#),

[Olga's Gallery Online Art Museum](#), [Smithsonian Online](#), and [Museum Stuff](#) which is a clearinghouse of thousands of online museums.

Play math games and puzzles

Looking for an easy effective way to practice your child's math skills over winter break without having to hear moans and groans? Try math puzzles and games. Kids won't even realize they're sharpening those math skills.

Conduct Science Experiments

Have your kids engage in winter science experiments this winter break. They can build a winter weather station and observe local weather conditions. Have them keep a journal of their investigation and findings. [TLC](#) has a nice collection of winter science experiments.

Educational Car Rides

Winter break is a time when many people travel to see family. Use that extra car time to help your child practice school skills. Younger kids can practice their letters, counting and numbers. Be on the lookout for letters on license plates and numbers on road signs. Have kids count objects they see along the road and find certain colored cars.

Computer Learning

The Internet is a fantastic resource for educational winter break activities. Suite 101 has some excellent learning games, as does PBS. [NASA](#) offers a program called build a space station. National Geographic's prehistoric virtual journey is simply amazing.

Read for Pleasure

Book reports and required reading have their place, but that place is not during winter break. Let kids read what they want and watch their reading skills improve. Read aloud to kids or take turns reading from holiday stories as a family. Afterwards, ask kids comprehension questions to deepen their learning. Encourage reading by giving books as gifts.

Cook Up Math & Science Lessons

Cooking is an easy way to teach kids about math and science concepts during winter break. Reading recipes can even improve their reading skills. Baking cookies or helping with dinner can help kids learn about fractions, measurement and even chemistry.

Write Thank-You Notes

Writing within authentic contexts is a great way for kids to sharpen writing, spelling and penmanship skills. Have kids write notes of thanks to people who give them holiday gifts- teachers, friends, and family members. Help kids brainstorm what they want to write. Writing thank-you notes is also a great way to teach kids about addressing envelopes.

Use the Internet to Teach Kids to Read

Online reading programs offer kids an opportunity to learn to read or strengthen reading skills. Scholastic has an excellent collection of reading games and activities. Starfall features phonics games.

