

Seward Elementary School



Parent Newsletter

March 2009

March 6--No School

March 9--Professional Development Day, No School

March 16-23--Grade 2 Achievement Testing

March 17 & 19--Parent/Teacher Conferences

March 20--Elementary Planning Day, No School

March 23-27--Grade 3 Achievement Testing

March 30-April 3--Grade 4 Achievement Testing

Lines from the Principal.....



Well, here it is --- almost March and the end of the third quarter of this school year! Unbelievable! The days just seem to fly by, don't they?

I do want to take this opportunity to remind you of the importance of attending parent/teacher conferences.

The spring conferences are scheduled for Tuesday, March 17th from 4 to 8 p.m. and Thursday, March 19th from 4 to 8 p.m. Conference time provides the opportunity to visit with your child(ren)'s teacher(s) to discuss the academic progress and achievement thus far. Along with that, it is time to talk seriously about what needs to be completed during the final quarter of the school year. These conferences are an essential piece to your active involvement in your child (ren)'s education! So, please plan to attend once you receive notification of

the exact date and time! Of course, alternative dates and times are an option if there is a scheduling conflict. The most important thing is maintaining contact with the teacher!

On a sad, but personal note, my father passed away on February 10th. I want to take this opportunity to say "thank you" for the cards, phone calls, and/or personal visits to express your sympathy. It has meant a lot to my family and me during this difficult time. As many of you know, I was very close to my father. It was that dad and daughter thing! He was 87 and lived a wonderfully rich life. I was lucky to have him as long as I did, but it doesn't make it any easier. I miss his presence, but I have wonderful memories that will remain with me forever. Thanks again for your expressions of kindness!

That's all for this time. I look forward to seeing many of you at the parent/teacher conferences on March 17 or 19th. Until then ...

keep thinking 'springtime' thoughts.

Lana Daws

2009 – 2010 Kindergarten

An Intent to Register form and informational letter was sent to the parents of eligible kindergarten students for the next school year. Information was also posted on the school website. If you or someone you know has a child eligible to begin kindergarten in August and DID NOT receive a letter, please call the Seward Elementary School office at 643-2968. A parent meeting and student visitation day will be scheduled soon.

Achievement Tests

Please notice at the very top of this newsletter, the weeks scheduled for achievement tests for students in grades 2, 3, and 4. Here are some very simple, yet important tips to help your child(ren) do their best on these tests!

- **Plenty of Rest**
- **A Good Breakfast**
- **Reassurance from YOU!**

Thanks for your help with this! These tests are important as they provide us with data and important information about the academic success and progress of our students, as well as what changes we might need to consider within our curriculum or instructional practices! Once again, these tests are important to our school district! Thanks for your help!

Kindergarten Immunizations

Before school begins in August, all students entering kindergarten need the following:
3 doses of DTap, one dose given after the 4th birthday
3 doses of polio
3 doses of Hepatitis B
2 doses of MMR(measles, mumps & rubella)
1 dose of Chickenpox. If a child has had chickenpox then we need written documentation, including the year of the disease. These immunizations can be given after the child turns 4 years of age. The summer months are very

busy and the wait can be long, so it is recommended you get these shots early. The Seward Immunization Clinic is open the third Tuesday of the month from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Faith Lutheran Church. The Seward Family Clinic will start giving VFC immunizations starting in March. Anyone that is underinsured or uninsured can get these immunizations free.

Grade Level News...

Kindergarten

The Kindergarten year is flying by. We can hardly believe it is March already.

Thank you for attending the Kindergarten musical. They looked so cute and they did an awesome job.

In Math we continue to review writing and counting numerals, telling time to the hour and counting by tens and fives. We are learning the



names and amounts of coins and counting money. In Reading we continue learning sounds and blending sounds to

read words. It is exciting to hear the students read using their knowledge of letter sounds and words. We hope you are seeing this progress also. The students are also using this knowledge in their writing. We continue to reinforce the appropriate use of capital letters, spacing, punctuation and writing complete sentences.

Parent/Teacher conferences are March 17 and 19. We look forward to visiting with you about your child's progress.

On March 27 we will be inviting next year's Kindergartners for Kindergarten Kick-off. Therefore, we will not be having Kindergarten for the present kindergartners on that day.

The Kindergarten classes have decorated the display cases in the commons area for

the month of March. Please stop by to see this cute display.

We would like to welcome Carissa Gottschalk to Mrs. Thompson's class, Andrew Grant to Mrs. Risings' class and Kyle Tische to Mrs. Piskorski's class.

Mrs. Thompson

First Grade



As we move into the last few months of school it sometimes gets harder to motivate your child to practice their reading at

home. Since this is such a new skill for many first graders, daily practice is so important. Here's a few ideas to keep your child reading!

- *Let your child stay up 15 minutes later if they spend the time reading.
- *Have your child look for words they know on the cereal boxes in the morning.
- *Look for words they can read on signs as you are driving. Keep a notebook in the car and encourage your child to write those words down. Challenge them to get 100 words and offer a small reward.
- *Make some flash cards with words your child needs to practice. Time your child to see how long it takes to read the stack. Then each night, see if they can beat their time from the night before.
- *Have family reading time where everyone sits down and reads together for fifteen minutes.
- *Make up a scavenger hunt for your child at the library. Challenge them to find a certain book or magazine. While you're there, check out some new books to read at home.

*Snuggle up together on the couch and share a funny story. Maybe you can even write your own book. We'd love to read it at school!

Remember: Reading is a gift that lasts a lifetime.

Mrs. Frisbie

Second Grade

March is a busy month for second grade. Our integrated unit is a study of whales. Second grade students will each create a whale report project. You can enjoy these during parent/teacher conferences. After whales we study space. The students become junior astronauts in training and prepare for a launch to the moon.

Math concepts this month include measuring, decimals and place value. We regularly review all the second grade concepts. Practicing two-digit subtraction with borrowing and two-digit addition with carrying will benefit your child. These concepts can often be confused with each other.



Games that incorporate math concepts can be a fun way to keep math skills sharp.

Our achievement tests are scheduled from March 16th through the 23rd. During this time it is helpful for your child to get adequate sleep and a healthy breakfast. Talk to your child about approaching the tests in a relaxed, positive way. It is important students focus and try their best, but also realize they are not expected to know all the answers.

Thank you for your continued support in your child's education.

Mrs. Schluckebier

Third Grade

The Third grade students have been enjoying learning a little about penguins. The classes did



a variety of activities. They discovered that there are many different kinds of penguins, and they don't all live on the continent of Antarctica.

Some are as far north as the equator. The culminating activity was to take a Virtual Field Trip to the Henry Doorly Zoo and see the penguins there. This was done by using our Distance Learning program at our school in the same way we do our Spanish classes.

In Social Studies we have been doing a patriotic unit to go along with Presidents' Day. We are learning a little about the history of our country and how the United States of America was founded and some information about our National Government in Washington D.C. We videotaped the inauguration of President Obama and watched parts of that in our classrooms. The students especially enjoyed hearing the new president recite his "Oath of Office."

In math we are continuing with multiplication and beginning division. Students can now practice Math Facts in a Flash at home by going to the web site that was previously sent home. Keep working on those math facts at home! If you have misplaced that web address, here it is again:

<https://hosted110.renlearn.com/204163/HomeConnect/Login.aspx>

We have a new student in third grade. Her name is Kenna Gottschalk, and she is in Mrs. Menze's room. Welcome, Kenna!

The third grade teachers have been doing some professional reading together and would like to share with you the 8 Steps to Pa-

rental Success for parent teacher conferences.

We found these in Teaching: The Book by the APL associates Sharer, Anastasio, and Perry.

1. Be there. A parental no-show sends a message to a child that maybe school isn't such a high priority, or perhaps that the child isn't a high priority.
2. Remember the "F" word: FOCUS! Focusing on respecting each other mutually will help build a strong foundation for your child's education.
3. Share insider information. Tell us what you know about your child as a learner and keep us informed.
4. Use the report card as a jumping off point, rather than dwelling on the grade itself.
5. Inquire about your child's progress in areas that aren't easily measured by grades, such as knowing how to socialize and work respectfully with other children.
6. Ask what you can do to further support your child's needs.
7. Trust your child's development. Try to relax a little and have faith in your child and your child's journey through school.
8. Leave your own school "baggage" at home. Avoid emphasizing any negative memories you have. (e.g. "I didn't like math when I was in school either.") Instead say, "Let's learn together."

We look forward to seeing you at parent conferences.

Mrs. Witt

Fourth Grade

In February, fourth graders successfully completed the State Writing Assessment, as did all fourth graders across the state. The prompt asked students what they would do if they suddenly had a break from a normal day. The students wrote interesting and creative stories telling how they would spend their day! The students' papers will be scored using the Six-Trait writing model, which includes Ideas, Organization, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Voice, and Conventions.

Fourth graders also attended the Nebraska Statehood Celebration at Concordia.



The students enjoyed the activities celebrating the 142nd year of our great state! March will be a busy

month in the fourth grade with Parent/Teacher Conferences, State Math and Reading Assessments, and Achievement Testing at the end of the month.

Be sure to contact your child's teacher if you have any questions!

Mrs. Snell

Library/Media News



2009 SES
READING
CLASSIC
TEAM

Five students will represent Seward Elementary at the county Reading Classic

competition on March 21st at St. John School. Congratulations to: Mika Brees, Hannah Core, Kailey Moeller, Evan Palmer, and Molly Suhr. Sherry Menze and Deb Snell are the team coaches.

Our team will be one of seven Seward county schools competing that day with the winner moving on to the state level. At state, eighteen county winners meet to compete in late April.

Working in teams of four, students answer questions from a book list of 94 titles, competing with the other teams in five rounds. The two highest scoring teams meet in a final buzzer round to determine the state winner.

This is the nineteenth annual RC competition sponsored by Eastern Nebraska Reading Council. The primary goal of the Reading Classic Contest is to:

- promote reading
- encourage students to become lifelong readers,
- recognize teams of outstanding young readers in Nebraska
- introduce students to award winning books such as Caldecotts, Newberys, Golden Sowers

We are proud to have these students and coaches representing SES. We know they are working hard, reading lots of good books, and learning to work as a team. They will represent us well.

Kindergarten through fourth grade students continue to hear the 2009 Golden Sower nominees. We love the thought of a lion in the library (Library Lion) or a lion chasing a greedy badger (Honey. . . Honey. . .Lion!). We all want to be fancy like Nancy (Fancy Nancy), migrate like Luck, or become friends like Duck and Goose. Five more to go--which book will be the favorite?? Time will tell.

Until next time-

Mrs. Komenda

Greetings from the Gymnasium!

Maybe some of you have heard your student(s) talking about a new PE teacher. Well there is not a new teacher, I just have a student teacher from Concordia this semester. Her name is Leah Koopman. She started with us right after Christmas and she will be here until March 5th. The students have really enjoyed having her and she has been doing a great job!

We just finished our jump rope unit at the end of February. The students had a lot of fun



jumping and learning new tricks with their ropes. Along with having fun we were getting a good cardiovascular workout for our hearts. The

American Heart Association has a motto for having a healthy heart that I would like to share with you. They state, "You can have a healthy heart, it's as easy as 1,2,3! Eat healthy stuff, move around enough and live tobacco-free!"

During this unit many of the students also collected money for the American Heart Association's Jump Rope For Heart. Thank you for those who took part. The money will really help the American Heart Association fight heart disease.

In March we will start a new unit in soccer. We will spend a few days practicing skills (dribbling, trapping, kicking and goal keeping). We will then get a chance to practice these skills in a game situation. If the weather is warm enough at the end of March, hopefully we will get a chance to go outside and play.

Miss Nichelson

Music News

Now that we have learned a large set of notes and skills on the recorder, third and fourth grade students are putting those skills to use by improvising. Improvisation is the process of making up your own music to fit a given background. We have been working in class with a blues background and many students have come up with some great sounds! Please be aware that students should be practicing regularly, and make sure they put their recorder back in their book-bag after practicing. Stu-

dents who forget their recorders at home may lose recess time.

First and second grade students are beginning to read more songs out of the music books. We are applying the skills we have learned about rhythm and our classroom reading skills to learning new songs. First and second graders are also playing instruments regularly as a separate way of practicing rhythm and beat.



I would like to say congratulations to the kindergarten students on a great concert! We had almost 100% of the kindergartners in attendance, and they did a wonderful job. Now that we have finished our concert, we can continue with learning about a good singing voice and a steady beat through a variety of songs and games.

Mr. Janda

From the Counselor

A **BIG** month!

Well, Seward Elementary families, let me explain spring for our staff the way I did with my wife-you just grab the steering wheel and hold on, praying you don't wreck because things are moving too fast!

If you don't know what I mean, let me share a few events. The biggest thing is March is our testing month. As you have read, achievement tests start March 16th and go until

April 3rd. During that time we may also be doing our English Language Learners (ELL) assessments, all after having taken our National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Those are three BIG tests amidst all the important tests that classroom teachers are giving for individual standards as they have done throughout the year.

The end of March is also the deadline for referring kids for testing if we have academic and/or physical concerns and in the middle of all this we have Parent-Teacher Conferences March 17th and 19th. Did I mention we will hold Kindergarten Round-Up/Orientation March 27th?

Now keep in mind this does not take into account extracurricular spring activities that start up, state sporting playoffs/matches, March Madness, and other life events that we don't have control over.

So now you know why March is a BIG, BIG month. But have you asked yourself, "What can I do to help?" If you have, keep reading.

The biggest help during March would be to **KEEP ROUTINES** for your child as **CONSISTENT** as possible. He/she will depend upon that security as times become more stressful and/or hectic.

The second thing would be **REST** and **RELAXATION**. Make sure your child(ren) are getting 9-10 hours of sleep, eating a FULL breakfast (more than just a bowl of cereal), and finding personal time to unwind. It might be a great month for parent/child "date nights" where the child gets to pick what day and what place just the two of you go.

The third thing would be **GOOD COMMUNICATION**. If you notice your child becoming unusually stressed, out of routine, or just acting different *LET SOMEONE KNOW!* Teachers are professionals at many things, one of them being modification and intervention. We can change things for your kid(s) until life gets "back on track".

The final thing that helps the most is to **TAKE CARE OF YOU!** As a professional mental health person I know well that if I don't take care of myself, I can't care for other people as well.

Here's to surviving March but reaching for something more than just surviving, and that is caring for each other in these hectic times.

In care,
Lance Todd, counselor