



**Mrs. Ness' Notes**  
**February 10, 2026**

**Enrollment:** 624 students +23 Shared Time students  
VPK-38, K-81, 1st-113, 2nd-92, 3<sup>rd</sup>-111, 4<sup>th</sup>-92, 5<sup>th</sup>-97

**No School:** Monday, February 16<sup>th</sup> is Presidents' Day. There will be no school for students and staff.

**PTO Family Dance**-Let's Glow Crazy! Friday, February 20<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-8:00pm in the Elm Creek Gym. Come be part of the fun!

**VOLUNTEERS**--We have 354 active volunteers as of the beginning of February, and they have logged 2,665 hours so far this school year! Our amazing volunteers have begun presenting Art Adventure lessons to our students this month. Over the next few weeks, volunteers will be helping with classroom Valentine's Day parties, chaperoning a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade field trip to the Ordway, volunteering for our PTO Family Fun Dance, preparing for our Book Fair for the beginning of March, and much more. We thank you for giving your time to our school. You help make Elm Creek even more amazing every day!

**--WATCH D.O.G.S.--**

WATCH D.O.G.S. (Dads of Great Students) is a powerful, national program that seeks to involve male role models in schools through active participation. We launched WATCH D.O.G.S. at Elm Creek in 2019 and are excited to bring it back each year. We had our first WATCH D.O.G.S. day at Elm Creek on Thursday, January 8<sup>th</sup>. We had a group of 3 EC dads and one retired community volunteer come to the school and help in different classrooms. It was a fun day, and the students loved seeing the WATCH D.O.G.S. in the building! Our next WATCH D.O.G.S. day will be Wednesday, February 11<sup>th</sup>.

**ART ADVENTURE WITH Minneapolis Institute of Art (MIA)**—Art Adventure begins in February, offering an exciting art curriculum for our students based around the theme "How People Lived." We are fortunate to have five returning Elm Creek volunteers leading Art Adventure again this year. They completed training at MIA and are busy preparing lessons and projects for each grade level. They will go into classrooms and present throughout the month of February. Our 3<sup>rd</sup> graders will receive an extra art lesson in working with clay from local volunteer artist, Barbara Aldaffer. Barbara visits 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classrooms in February to teach them how to make clay pots. It's going to be a creative month at Elm Creek!

**Classroom Planning-optional form**

The purpose of this form is to gather important information for classroom planning for next school year. This is an optional form - Please only fill this form out if your child will not be attending Elm Creek next year or you have concerns to share. Deadline for completing the form is Sunday March 1st.

<https://forms.gle/LQbxTYCjk3YtDydr7>

The goal of student placement is for each child to be placed in the best possible learning environment. We strive to create balanced classrooms that will meet the needs of all students therefore we are

*Our mission is to inspire and prepare each and every student with the confidence, courage and competence to achieve their dreams; contribute to community; and engage in a lifetime of learning.*

unable to honor specific teacher requests. Class lists will be completed and communicated via email prior to Open House in the fall.

**Conferences and Book Fair:** Winter Parent Teacher Conferences are March 3, 5 & 11. Scheduling will begin Tuesday, February 17th. You will receive an email on February 16th with detailed information on how to sign up for your child's conference.

IMPORTANT!

You need a ParentVUE account to sign up.

Don't have an account? Contact Staci in the office at 763-425-0577 or [jones@district279.org](mailto:jones@district279.org) to request an access key.

Don't remember your password? Go to the login page to reset your password.

Don't remember your username? Call or email Staci, she can look it up for you.

[ParentVUE Login](#)

**Seussical Kids Musical:** Stages Theatre is offering a community education after school opportunity for Elm Creek Elementary students. Students enrolled in this class will be performing *Seussical Kids Musical* on **Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.** and **Saturday, March 14<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m.**, at Maple Grove Middle School. Admission is FREE and the show is about 1 hour long.

**Student Council Pop Tab Collection-**Student Council collects pop tabs all year long for the Ronald Mc Donald House, but in the month of February we are looking to collect a lot more! Please save all your pop tops and send them to school to help us raise money for a great cause! Thank you for your support!

Facts about Ronald Mc Donald House

\* The Ronald McDonald House provides a "home-away-from-home" for families of seriously ill children receiving treatment at area hospitals.

\* Ronald Mc Donald houses have support services like art therapy, music programs, and gardens

\* Ronald McDonald Houses serve more than 8,000 families each day around the world, saving them over \$311 million a year in hotel costs.

**Girls on the Run for grades 3-5-**Erica Schmidt, Kindergarten teacher at Elm Creek is coaching again this year. Check out the flyer that came out through email today for more information.

**Coffee with the Principal:** I like to connect with families in several ways to gather feedback and be available to answer questions. One way is through *Coffee with the principal*. The next coffee with the principal will be Friday, February 13th from 9:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m. in the Elm Creek Media Center.

**Recess Protocol-**

Osseo Area Schools continue to prioritize the health, safety, and well-being of every student in our care; therefore, there will be a unified, district-wide protocol for indoor recess. These guidelines have been developed with careful consideration and are based on recommendations from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Minnesota Youth Athletic Services and reviewing the Minnesota State High School League – [Board Policy for Weather Conditions and Competition or Practice](#). Our goal is to ensure a consistent and safe approach across all elementary schools, recognizing that the decision to hold recess indoors is a crucial aspect of student safety.

**1. Air Quality**

When the Air Quality Index (AQI) reaches 201 or higher (coded as "Purple" or "Very Unhealthy"), all elementary students must have recess indoors. This guideline is based on the MDH's "[Minnesota Our mission is to inspire and prepare each and every student with the confidence, courage and competence to achieve their dreams; contribute to community; and engage in a lifetime of learning.](#)"

[Outdoor Air Quality Guidance for Schools and Child Care,”](#) which highlights the increased health risks for everyone at this level of air pollution. EPA has a helpful app that can help track the air quality, EPA AIRNow

## 2. Cold Weather

When the wind chill or "feels like" temperature is -5°F (negative five degrees Fahrenheit) or below, students will have recess indoors. This measure is to protect students from the risks of frostbite and other cold-related health concerns. We continue to encourage families to ensure their children come to school with appropriate winter clothing. **Since we are almost through the winter cold, we will continue to follow our current procedure of below zero for indoor recess. We will implement the -5-degree policy next school year.**

## 3. Hot Weather

When the heat index reaches 104° or above, students will have recess indoors. This protocol is in line with the Minnesota Youth Athletic Services [Heat Index Guidelines](#) recommendations to prevent heat-related illnesses during periods of extreme heat. Heat stress poses significant dangers to children, who are more susceptible to heat-related illnesses. Additional resources can be found on the MDH [Extreme Heat website](#).

**Birthday Lunches:** One day towards the end of each month, a table is decorated in the lunchroom. Students who have their birthday during that month can have lunch with the principal and will get ice cream. Our February birthday table is on Friday, February 27<sup>th</sup>.

**First Grade News:** First grade will begin their Animals and Habitats unit in reading, which will nicely complement our research writing project! In Bridges Math, we are currently focused on our geometry unit, exploring both 2D and 3D shapes, as well as fractions. Additionally, in phonics, we will review long vowels and the silent 'e' rule.

**Library News:** The month of February is *I Love To Read Month* in the library. Lessons for all grades will focus on building curiosity and self-identity as readers! 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade will start the beloved "Ten Word Tiny Tales" project where each class creates a book of (very) short stories. The class books will be added to the library for circulation, and students can check them out to enjoy. K through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students will get started on beginning research and information seeking skills like using PebbleGo.

**PBIS & Outstanding Eagles:** Remember to check out our Outstanding Eagle student photos in Osseo-Maple Grove Press each week. As part of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), we also recognize classrooms that keep their room neat and tidy with a golden vacuum-one classroom per week.

**Eastman Nature Center:** Eastman Nature Center field trips are scheduled for all K-5<sup>th</sup> graders. We applied for a transportation scholarship through Three Rivers Parks last spring and all of our transportation costs for these field trips will be covered. Families will need to help cover the \$6/student Eastman fee. We value our partnership with Eastman Nature Center, which allows each grade level to spend time outside learning. If you haven't been to Eastman Nature Center as a family, I encourage you to visit. 😊

Eastman Field Trip dates are:

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade – Adaptations (10:00-12:00pm)**

10/28 – Ward/Wyman

*Our mission is to inspire and prepare each and every student with the confidence, courage and competence to achieve their dreams; contribute to community; and engage in a lifetime of learning.*

10/29 – Dylong/Ockuly

*Bus 9:45/12:15*

**4<sup>th</sup> Grade – Outdoor Survival (10:00-12:30pm)**

12/4 – 2 classes

12/5 – 2 classes

*Bus 9:45/12:45*

**1<sup>st</sup> Grade - Birds Big & Small (10:00-12:00pm)**

5/4 – 2 classes

5/5 – 3 classes

*Bus 9:45/12:15*

**5<sup>th</sup> Grade – Geocaching (10:00am-12:30pm)**

5/7 – 2 classes

5/8 – 2 classes

*Bus 9:45/12:45*

**Kindergarten - Better Homes & Habitats (10:00-12:00pm)**

5/12 – All 4 classes

*Bus 9:45/12:15*

**2<sup>nd</sup> Grade - Pond Study (10:00-12:00pm) & Playground**

5/20 – All 4 classes

*Bus 9:45/1:30*

*Our mission is to inspire and prepare each and every student with the confidence, courage and competence to achieve their dreams; contribute to community; and engage in a lifetime of learning.*

**Dates to Remember:**

**February 10<sup>th</sup>:** 100<sup>th</sup> Day of School (February 11<sup>th</sup> for some grades because they are not counting the snow day)

**February 10<sup>th</sup>:** PTO General Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Elm Creek Media Center

**February 11<sup>th</sup>:** WATCH D.O.G.S. at Elm Creek

**February 13<sup>th</sup>:** Coffee with the principal, 9:30 a.m., Elm Creek Media Center

**February 16<sup>th</sup>:** Presidents' Day. No School for students or staff.

**February 17<sup>th</sup>:** Osseo Middle School Principal Chance visiting Elm Creek 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms

**February 18<sup>th</sup>:** School Bus Driver Appreciation Day

**February 20<sup>th</sup>:** PTO Family Fun Dance, Elm Creek Gym, 6-8 p.m.

**February 27<sup>th</sup>:** February Birthday lunches

**March 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>:** National School Breakfast Week

**March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>:** Parent/teacher conferences and Winter Book Fair

**March 5<sup>th</sup>:** Second Grade field trip to Ordway

**March 6<sup>th</sup>:** No school for students. Mark Reporting Day.

**March 11<sup>th</sup>:** PTO Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

**March 13<sup>th</sup>:** Coffee with the principal, 10:30 a.m. in the Elm Creek Media Center

**March 13<sup>th</sup>:** Seussical Kids Musical, Maple Grove Middle School, 7 p.m.

**March 13<sup>th</sup>:** Seussical Kids Musical, Maple Grove Middle School, 2 p.m.

**March 16<sup>th</sup>:** WATCH D.O.G.S. at Elm Creek

**March 17<sup>th</sup>:** Fourth Grade Recorder Concert, 6 p.m.

**March 20<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>:** Spring Break, no school for students

*Our mission is to inspire and prepare each and every student with the confidence, courage and competence to achieve their dreams; contribute to community; and engage in a lifetime of learning.*