



## **Mrs. Ness' Notes**

**April 14, 2026**

**Enrollment:** 628 students +23 Shared Time students  
VPK-39, K-82, 1st-113, 2nd-92, 3<sup>rd</sup>-112, 4<sup>th</sup>-92, 5<sup>th</sup>-98

**State Testing:** Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) are taken by our 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. Please make sure your child is well rested so they can do their best on these state tests.

MCA dates:

MCA Reading: Tuesday and Wednesday, April 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>.

MCA Science (5<sup>th</sup> grade only): Tuesday and Thursday, April 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>.

MCA Math: Tuesday and Wednesday, April 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Kindergarten Orientation:** Elm Creek Elementary School's *Kindergarten Orientation* is scheduled for Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026, from 5:00-6:30 p.m. During this time, children will visit the kindergarten classrooms with the teachers and participate in some fun activities. This gives the teachers a chance to observe and perform a mini assessment of the children to assist with classroom placement. While the children visit the classroom, parents will hear information from several staff members regarding the beginning of their children's education at Elm Creek. Parents will join their children in the classroom and then follow a rotating schedule that includes visiting the Media Center, taking a tour, and a short bus ride.

**Staff Appreciation Week, May 4th-8th:** Please take a moment and write a note of appreciation to your child's teacher during this week. Thank you!

**School Nurse Appreciation Day:** Wednesday, May 6th is School Nurse Appreciation Day. Thank you to Elm Creek RN, Becky Christensen, and Elm Creek site RN, Jadelyn Bergley, for your excellent care of our students.

**Elm Creek Annual Family BBQ:** Please set aside **Wednesday, May 27<sup>th</sup>**, for our 10th annual all school barbeque. You are invited to come to our all-school BBQ lunch. More information to come. It is always a fun and well-attended event.

**No School:** Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup> is a licensed staff professional development day. There will be no school for students.

**Asynchronous Day:** Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup> is an asynchronous day. Students will bring home their devices on Thursday, and they will have work to do from home on Friday, usually in SeeSaw. Teachers will have 2 hours of office hours so students, or parents, can log on to talk to their teacher if they have questions about the work.

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**VOLUNTEERS**—We have 385 active volunteers as of the beginning of March, and they have logged over 3,600 hours so far this school year! Over the next couple of weeks, we'll have volunteers going on field trips, popping popcorn for classrooms, helping in the lunchroom, laminating for teachers, preparing for our school Carnival, and so much more. Spring is always a busy and exciting time within our community.

April is Volunteer Appreciation Month. Please grab a little token of appreciation in the office the next time you volunteer! The cards were made by our students to say thank you for everything you've done for our school this year. We hope it makes you smile and helps you remember how much we appreciate you. We are so thankful for our volunteers at Elm Creek! ♥

**Student Council** - Student Council is in the middle of the Chloe Bear Community service project. We are collecting new "with tags" stuffed animals that will be packaged and brought to the Children's Hospital. We are also partnering with Kidstop who is collecting art supplies for Children's Hospital.

**Student Newspaper Sales:** The student newspaper, made by Elm Creek fourth and fifth graders, was a big success. We sold out the first day and had to make more copies. Total funds earned were \$44.30 (those nickels look like quarters to some students 😊). This money goes to student council to support their service-learning projects.

**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, May 8th from 10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. in the Elm Creek Media Center. St. David's school-based therapist will be talking about summer tips for your child.

**First Grade News:** In the CKLA (Core Knowledge Language Arts) reading program, our students are diving into the enchanting world of fairy tales! Meanwhile, in science class, they're having fun exploring the fascinating concepts of sound and light. To wrap up their learning adventure, our first graders will take on an exciting project where they'll retell a chosen fairy tale using the magic of sound and light with shadow puppetry.

On May 4<sup>th</sup> or 5th, first graders will be visiting the Eastman Nature 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 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

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## 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 April Birthday table is on Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>.

**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

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

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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

**Dates to Remember:**

**April 15<sup>th</sup>:** Fifth grade field trip to Ordway

**April 16<sup>th</sup>:** Tornado Drill/Severe Storm Drill, 2:05 p.m.

**April 16<sup>th</sup>:** Fifth grade Science MCA testing

**April 16<sup>th</sup>:** Kindergarten Orientation, 5-6:30 p.m.

**April 17<sup>th</sup>:** WATCHD.O.G.S. at Elm Creek

**April 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>:** 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade Math MCA testing

**April 24<sup>th</sup>:** Asynchronous Day, students work from home in SeeSaw

**April 27<sup>th</sup>:** No School for students. District Professional Development Day.

**April 28<sup>th</sup>:** April Birthday lunches

**April 28<sup>th</sup>:** Fifth grade Band concert, OMS at 8 p.m.

**April 30<sup>th</sup>:** Family Reading Night, 5-6:30 p.m.

**May 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>:** PTO Staff Appreciation Week

**May 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>:** First grade field trip to Eastman Nature Center

**May 6<sup>th</sup>:** School Nurse Appreciation Day

**May 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>:** Fifth grade field trip to Eastman Nature Center

**May 8<sup>th</sup>:** Coffee with the principal, 10 a.m., Elm Creek Media Center

**May 8<sup>th</sup>:** PTO Carnival

**May 11<sup>th</sup>:** Lunch bunch with Boundary Change Elm Creek kids going to Fernbrook, Jeff Zastrow will join.

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