



Mrs. Ness' Notes

January 14, 2025

Enrollment: 583 students + 8 Shared Time students
VPK-28, K-104, 1st-85, 2nd-95, 3rd-82, 4th-100, 5th-89

Attendance Boundary Change Process: Four proposed attendance boundary changes were shared online today. Go to <https://www.district279.org/about-us/boundaries> for more information. There will be feedback opportunities at informational meetings on January 15th and 23rd.

PTO Restock the Classrooms: Thank you for all the amazing classroom materials provided through PTO Restock the Classrooms. Our teachers are very grateful and excited for the fun things students can do because of how you, our Elm Creek families, helped!

Conferences and Book Fair: Winter Conferences will be on February 4th, February 6th and February 12th, both before and after school. Scheduling information will be coming out soon.

Finding Nemo 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 *Finding Nemo Kids Musical* on **Friday, March 14th at 7 p.m.** and **Saturday, March 15th at 2 p.m.,** at Maple Grove Middle School. Admission is FREE and the show is about 1 hour long.

School Supply Drive: Elm Creek is conducting its Sixteenth Annual International School Supply Drive the week of January 27th-31st. Our school supply drive is part of a six-school project called Students Connecting through International Service, which will provide school supplies to a small school in Sasabe, Sonora, Mexico. Please support this service-learning opportunity by sending in funds with your child during this week. Checks can be made out to SCTIS (Students Connecting through International Service). Teague L. is our Elm Creek student representative who will be delivering supplies to Sasabe students in April.

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 Monday, January 27th from 10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. at Annabelle House in Osseo.

VOLUNTEERS-- We have 303 active volunteers as of the beginning of January, and together they have logged **1,926 volunteer hours** at Elm Creek this year, so far! On behalf of students and staff, we thank you for giving your time to our school! We ♥ our EC volunteers!

--WATCHD.O.G.S.--

WATCHD.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 WATCHDOGS at Elm Creek in 2019 and are excited to bring it back each year. Our first WATCHD.O.G.S. day at Elm Creek will be Monday, January 27th. We will have a group of men (EC dads, stepdads, grandpas, uncles etc.) come to the school and

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help in different classrooms. It's always a fun day, and the students love seeing the WATCHD.O.G.S. in the building!

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 “Amazing Animals in Art.” We are fortunate to have four 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 3rd graders will receive an extra art lesson in working with clay from local volunteer artist, Barbara Aldaffer. Barbara visits 3rd grade classrooms in February to teach them how to make clay pots. It's going to be a creative month at Elm Creek!

Recess: I've received some questions about recess and when students can go outside. The general practice is that students will go out to recess every day unless the temperature, or wind chill, is below zero, or if it is raining. Please have your child dress appropriately with the knowledge that they will be going out to recess daily. Thank you.

Student Council: We had our January Student Council meeting, so here is the latest.

Spirit Days: Jan. 24 Teacher and Student Swap Day (teachers will dress like the students and students will dress like the teachers)

Feb. 7 Jersey/Sports Day (wear your favorite jersey or something with a sport on it just in time for the Super Bowl)

Community Service Project: Ronald McDonald Pop/Soup Tab collection for the month of February. We are asking people to send in their pop/soup tabs (start collecting now) and we will donate to Ronald McDonald House. They turn those in, and Ronald McDonald House usually make about \$6000 a year with these donations from around the state/country. Student council students will read announcements throughout the month of February with facts about the Ronald McDonald House and reminders to donate.

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 January birthday table is on Wednesday, January 29th.

Physical Education News: We had a blast celebrating the end of our bowling instruction with our annual moonlight bowling event. The students enjoyed winning prizes sponsored by the PTO. Thanks again for all your continued support for Physical Education!

Kindergarten News: Kindergarten is settling back in after winter break and crossing our fingers for some snow to play in! We are learning about what plants need to live and will start reading our first decodable readers!

Third Grade News: 3rd grade music rehearsals and concert on Jan 28th. The evening concert is at 6 p.m.

Fifth Grade News: 5th grade is looking forward to receiving our DARE T-shirts, which are funded by the PTO. We appreciate their contribution & support for students who have graduated from the DARE program.

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We are also grateful for the funds provided to run our fifth grade SOAR store and for our parent volunteers that come each month.

Library News: The month of February is *I Love To Read Month* in the library! We will be celebrating with new books, displays, and lots of read-alouds with all grades during library time. We are also very excited to be hosting an in-person author's visit in February. Kennan Jones, author of "Saturday Morning at the 'Shop," will be visiting Elm Creek and talking with 2nd-5th grade students about his new book and being an author. Keenan is a local educator with connections to the Elm Creek community.

No School: Monday, February 3rd is a professional development day for staff and no school for students.

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-5th grades. We applied for a transportation scholarship through Three Rivers Parks last spring and most of our transportation costs for these field trips will be covered. Families will need to help cover the \$5/student Eastman fee. We value our partnership with Eastman Nature Center that 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:

3rd grade – October 22, 24 (Adaptations)

4th grade – Dec 10 (Outdoor Survival)

Kindergarten – May 7 (Better Homes & Habitats)

1st grade – May 9 (Animal Life Cycles)

2nd grade – June 2 (Pond Study)

5th grade – June 3 (Geocaching)

Great Kindness Challenge: Elm Creek students will participate in the Great Kindness Challenge the week of January 27-31, 2025. The Great Kindness Challenge is a proactive and positive bullying prevention initiative that improves school climate and increases student engagement. Our students will be challenged to perform as many kind deeds as they can in one week. Thank you to Elm Creek volunteers, Kenosha A. and Cindy M., who are leading our kindness club of 4th and 5th graders during Wednesday recesses in January to plan and prepare for this week. See an article about us in the local newspaper from 2019 here: <https://ccxmedia.org/news/elm-creek-students-participate-in-great-kindness-challenge/>

DARE Graduation: Fifth grade DARE graduation was on Friday, January 10th. I am always impressed when our fifth graders read their essays and lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance. It takes a lot of courage and confidence to speak in front of a large audience. Thalia A., Lukaine B., and Brooke O. did an outstanding job reading their DARE essays! Lawrence C. and Sawyer B. did an excellent job leading everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance. Thank you to Officer Slawson and Chief of Police Eric Werner who organized this event!

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Dates to Remember:

January 17th: Asynchronous Learning Day

January 20th: No School, Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday

January 24th: Student Council Spirit Day, Teacher and Student Swap Day (teachers will dress like the students and students can dress like the teachers)

January 27th-31st: Students Connecting through International Service Supply Drive/Mexico Project

January 27th-31st: Great Kindness Challenge (look for a flyer coming out next week)

January 27th: Coffee with the principal, Annabelle House, Osseo, 10 a.m.

January 27th: WATCHD.O.G.S. at Elm Creek

January 28th: Third Grade Vocal Music Concert, 6 p.m., Elm Creek Gym

January 29th: January birthday lunches

January 30th: Fifth Grade Demo Orchestra Concert, 6:30 p.m., Osseo Middle School

February 3rd: No School, District Professional Development Day

February 4th, 6th & 12th: Parent/teacher conferences and Winter Book Fair

February 6th: Kindergarten field trip to Ordway to see Stone Soup, 9:30-11:45 a.m.

February 7th: Second grade field trip to Stages Theater, 9:25-11:45 a.m.

February 7th: Student Council Spirit Day, Jersey/Sports Day (wear your favorite jersey or something with a sport on it just in time for the Super Bowl)

February 11th: PTO General Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Elm Creek Media Center

February 13th: 100th Day of School

February 14th: Fourth Grade Kindness Retreat field trip

February 21st: PTO Family Fun Dance, Elm Creek Gym, 6 p.m.

February 21st: Fifth Grade field trip to Ordway, 9:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

February 28th: Coffee with the principal, 10:30 a.m., Elm Creek media center

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