



Mrs. Ness' Notes January 13, 2026

Enrollment: 618 students +23 Shared Time students
VPK-38, K-78, 1st-112, 2nd-91, 3rd-110, 4th-93, 5th-96

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!

DARE Graduation: Fifth grade DARE graduation was on Friday, January 9th. 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. Niyah B., Tian J., Luella K., and Eliana T. did an outstanding job reading their DARE essays! Michael B., Tait L, Holly M. and Caleb P. 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!

Great Kindness Challenge: Elm Creek students will participate in the Great Kindness Challenge the week of January 26-30, 2026. 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, Etta R. and Joanne M., who are leading our kindness club of 4th and 5th graders during Thursday 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/>

Student Council: This week, on Thursday Jan. 15th, is Color Block spirit day. Each grade wears a different color to school.

Pre K-yellow

K-orange

1-purple

2-red

3-green

4-blue

5-black

February 6th is Sports/Jersey Day, right before the Super Bowl.

Starting in February we will be collecting pop tabs for the Ronald Mc Donald House. We will be sending a flyer out later in the month.

No School: Monday, February 2nd is a professional development day for staff and no school for students.

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VOLUNTEERS-- We have 330 active volunteers as of the beginning of January, and together they have logged 2,250 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!

--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 WATCHDOGS 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 8th. 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 WATCHDOGS day will be Wednesday, February 11th.

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 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!

Conferences and Book Fair: Winter Conferences will be on March 3rd, March 5th and March 11th, both before and after school. Scheduling information will be coming out next month.

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 13th at 7 p.m.** and **Saturday, March 14th at 2 p.m.,** at Maple Grove Middle School. Admission is FREE and the show is about 1 hour long.

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: I’ve received some questions about recess and when students can go outside. Our 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.

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 Tuesday, January 27th.

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!

Third Grade News: 3rd grade music rehearsals and concert on Jan 29th. The evening concert is at 6 p.m.

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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! 3rd through 5th 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 2nd 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-5th graders. 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 \$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:

3rd Grade – Adaptations (10:00-12:00pm)

10/28 – Ward/Wyman

10/29 – Dylong/Ockuly

Bus 9:45/12:15

4th Grade – Outdoor Survival (10:00-12:30pm)

12/4 – 2 classes

12/5 – 2 classes

Bus 9:45/12:45

1st Grade - Birds Big & Small (10:00-12:00pm)

5/4 – 2 classes

5/5 – 3 classes

Bus 9:45/12:15

5th 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

2nd Grade - Pond Study (10:00-12:00pm) & Playground

5/20 – All 4 classes

Bus 9:45/1:30

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Dates to Remember:

January 15th: Color Block spirit day.

Pre K-yellow

K-orange

1-purple

2-red

3-green

4-blue

5-black

January 16th: Asynchronous Learning Day

January 19th: No School, Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday

January 26th: 5th Grade Orchestra Demo Concert, 8 p.m., Osseo Middle School

January 26th-30th: Great Kindness Challenge (look for a flyer coming out next week)

January 27th: January birthday lunches

January 29th: Third Grade Vocal Music Concert, 6 p.m., Elm Creek Gym

February 2nd: No School, District Professional Development Day

February 3rd: 5th Grade Middle School registration in classrooms

February 6th: 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 10th: 100th Day of School

February 10th: PTO General Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Elm Creek Media Center

February 11th: WATCH D.O.G.S. at Elm Creek

February 13th: Coffee with the principal, 10:30 a.m., Elm Creek media center

February 17th: Osseo Middle School Principal Chance visiting Elm Creek 5th grade classrooms

February 20th: PTO Family Fun Dance, Elm Creek Gym, 6 p.m.

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

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