



## Mrs. Ness' Notes October 14, 2025

**Enrollment:** 630 students, 17 Shared Time students  
VPK-39, K-77, 1st-114, 2nd-96, 3<sup>rd</sup>-108, 4<sup>th</sup>-96, 5<sup>th</sup>-100

### **Safety and Security:**

**Drills:** As part of each school's safety and security plan, we must have five fire drills, two lockdown drills, two secure drills, one severe weather drill, and one hold drill, each year. We had two fire drills in September, and one in October so far. I am impressed with how well students have conducted our fire drills. Students were able to evacuate the building in a little over ninety seconds! We also had a lockdown drill on Friday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**DARE:** Each year 5<sup>th</sup> grade students have 14 lessons about peer pressure, bullying prevention, drug resistance, responsible decision making, etc. These lessons are taught by Maple Grove Police Officer Slawson. The program concludes with a DARE graduation ceremony. In addition, Officer Slawson teaches 5 lessons to each fourth-grade classroom and 4 lessons to each second-grade classroom. We appreciate this partnership and the life-long lessons our students are learning. On Thursday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 7 in-training DARE officers delivered lessons in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade as they practice how to teach DARE curriculum.

**APEX Fun Run-**The APEX fun run was a success. Students did an outstanding job completing laps. Many, many thanks to our generous families who supported the APEX run that raised over \$40,000 dollars! Exact totals will be shared at the October PTO meeting. These funds support PTO events and extra activities for students at school. For more specific information on how the funds are used, please visit: <https://ecepto.org/> and scroll to the bottom where it says treasurers report.

**MCA state test results:** Individual Student Reports (ISR) for students that completed the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) or the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) tests in spring of 2025 are now available in Parent VUE, under the documents tab.

The report includes your child's overall score and performance level in each test subject and the average scores for students at the school, district, and state level. Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments are taken by students in all public schools in grades 3-8 and 11 on mathematics, in grades 3-8 and 10 on reading and grades 5, 8 and once in high school on science. To learn more about your students' results review the document, [What Families Need to Know about Using MCA and MTAS Results](#).

Elm Creek Elementary's overall 2025 MCA results are **60.4% proficient in Math** (MN State math average is 42.6%) and **54.2% proficient in Reading** (MN State reading average is 47.6%).

**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 to offer coffee with the principal. The next coffee with the principal will be Friday, November 14<sup>th</sup> from 9:30-10:30 a.m. in the Elm Creek Media Center. The topic of focus will be Gifted and Talented Services at Elm Creek. I will host these get togethers monthly from October 2025-May 2026 at various times and locations. A flyer with dates for the year was sent out in Peach Jar, with reminders sent monthly.

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**Mexico Project:** We are in our twentieth year of *Students Connecting through International Service*, an exciting leadership/service-learning project that includes a trip to Tucson, Arizona. Four elementary schools: Basswood, Elm Creek, Oak View, and Park Brook, select fifth grade students to take part. These six students will attend meetings, conduct a school supply drive in their own school, and then travel together to Arizona to deliver the supplies to the Mexican students at the border. After the trip, the six students will create and present a video report to each of their schools and the supporting organizations. Local business and community groups will pay all trip expenses for the six students. Congratulations to **Lauryn D. and Jakob V.**, who are Elm Creek's representatives this year.

**VOLUNTEERS**--We have 252 active volunteers as of the beginning of October, and they have logged 558 hours so far this school year! Volunteers have helped in classrooms, served lunch with our cafeteria staff, helped during kindergarten lunch, prepped projects for teachers, watered gardens, helped chaperone field trips, distributed food bags to students, worked on laminating, helped at the Apex Fun Run, and much more. On behalf of students and staff, THANK YOU!!!

**Every Meal Bag:** Elm Creek Elementary partners with Advent Lutheran Church and Every Meal program to provide free, non-perishable food items to families. Food goes home in student backpacks 1-2 times per week. Every Meal offers 5 food bag options tailored to different dietary preferences. There are no eligibility requirements to participate. Families can sign up using the paper form that went home to all students, or an electronic form that went to all families in a Talking Points message.

**Elm Creek Twitter and Instagram Pages:** Please join us on our Elm Creek Elementary twitter page @ElmCreekElem or on our Instagram page at <https://www.instagram.com/elmcrekelem/?hl=en>.

**Tears and Cheers:** Thank you to the PTO for hosting our annual Tears and Cheers. This is an opportunity, on the first day of school, for kindergarten parents to gather in the Media Center to meet the PTO and get to know other kindergarten families. We had a wonderful turnout!

**Student Council:** Melissa Elias and Melissa Uecker work with students in 4th and 5th grade as part of our student council. They are meeting with a few returning 5th graders to get the first spirit day-Wear Orange for Unity Day/Anti Bullying on Wednesday Oct. 22<sup>nd</sup>. They just collected over 20 applications from current 4<sup>th</sup> graders who are interested in joining student council. They are currently in the process of going through those applications and will announce new 4<sup>th</sup> grade student council members soon. Their first community service project will be collecting food donations for CROSS.

**Birthday Lunches:** One day at the end of each month, a table is set up in the lunchroom. Students who have their birthday during that month can have lunch with the principal and will get ice cream. Students who have birthdays in July and August will celebrate in June. Our October birthday table is on Thursday, October 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Pumpkin Run:** Our Physical Education Teachers, Mrs. Elias and Mrs. Yonak, will be hosting our 19<sup>th</sup> annual Pumpkin Run during the week of October 27<sup>th</sup>! With PTO funds, the PE teachers get around 55 pumpkins from Nelson's Nursery in Zimmerman to hand out as prizes to students. Two students per class will win a pumpkin! Students have opportunities to win other prizes as well! It's so fun to watch the excitement when students get to pick up their pumpkin.

**Library News:** The media center has been a very busy place this fall! We started library check out and lessons during the second week of school. Students in kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade have been receiving lessons about library expectations, taking care of books, choosing just-right books, and taking care of their school device. PreK will begin coming to the library in late October. We are also making some changes in the media center to accommodate small group learning spaces for the team delivering small group interventions.

**Conferences:** Fall Conferences took place on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. This is a wonderful opportunity to connect with your child's teacher about your child(ren). We value learning about your child from you so that we can make this a

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wonderful year for them! Make some time to visit the Scholastic Book Fair in the Media Center during conferences. The book fair is organized by our PTO, and we appreciate all the volunteers who help to run it!

**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 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:

**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

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

**Recess:** We have had so many beautiful weather days for recess this year! Do you have questions about recess and when students 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.

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**Dates to Remember:**

**October 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>:** Parent/Teacher Conferences, 7:50-8:30 a.m. and 3:40-7:00 p.m.

**October 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>:** PTO Scholastic Book Fair, 3:40-7:00 p.m.

**Thursday/Friday, October 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>:** No School, Education Minnesota Conference (MEA)

**October 22<sup>nd</sup>:** Unity Day, wear orange to unite for kindness, acceptance, and inclusion

**October 27<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>:** Pumpkin Run

**October 28<sup>th</sup>:** Third Grade, Ward/Wyman, field trip to Eastman Nature Center

**October 29<sup>th</sup>:** Third Grade, Dylong/Ockuly, field trip to Eastman Nature Center

**October 30<sup>th</sup>:** October Birthday lunch table

**October 31<sup>st</sup>:** Dress like a book character day (nothing scary and no fake weapons, please)

**November 4<sup>th</sup>:** No School for students, Staff Professional Development Day

**November 7<sup>th</sup>:** PTO Harvest Bingo

**November 11<sup>th</sup>:** Picture Retake Day

**November 11<sup>th</sup>:** PTO Meeting, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Elm Creek Media Center

**November 14<sup>th</sup>:** Coffee with the principal, Elm Creek Media Center, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

**November 15<sup>th</sup>:** School Choice Fair, 9 a.m.-noon, Osseo Senior High School

**November 25<sup>th</sup>:** November Birthday lunch table

**November 26<sup>th</sup>:** No School for Students. Mark Reporting Day.

**November 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>:** No School, Thanksgiving break

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