Mrs. Ness' Notes
October 13, 2026

Enrollment: 613 students, 25 who are Shared Time students
VPK-38, K-91, 1st-86, 2nd-109, 3rd-94, 4th-99, 5th-96

DARE: Each year 5th 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 third-grade classrooms. We appreciate this partnership and the life-long lessons our students are learning. On Thursday, October 8th, 8 in-training DARE officers delivered lessons in 2nd and 5th grade as they practice how to teach DARE curriculum. If you are the parent of a fifth grader, set aside Friday, January 8th for our DARE graduation celebration.

PTO Fun Run-The PTO fun run was a success. For the first time, the PTO did not use a company to lead this. Angela Carner and her committee did an outstanding job organizing and running the fun run. Many, many thanks to our generous families who supported the PTO fun run that raised over $65,000 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 treasurer 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 2026 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 2026 MCA results are **57.2% proficient in Math** (MN State math average is 45.4%) and **51.2% proficient in Reading** (MN State reading average is 49.0%). This is for students who were enrolled as of October 1st, 2025.

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 first coffee with the principal for the year will be Friday, October 23rd from 10:00-11:00 a.m. in the Elm Creek Media Center. The topic of focus will be Academic Interventions at Elm Creek. I will host coffee get togethers monthly from October 2026-May 2027 at various times and locations. A flyer with dates for the year was sent out in Peach Jar. I will send reminders monthly.

Mexico Project: We are in our twenty-first year of *Students Connecting through International Service,* an exciting leadership/service-learning project that includes a trip to Tucson, Arizona. Five elementary schools: Aspen Ridge, 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 **Alexander W.**, who is Elm Creek's representative this year.

VOLUNTEERS-- We have 188 active volunteers as of the beginning of October, and they have logged 608 hours so far this school year! Volunteers have helped in classrooms, served lunch with our cafeteria staff, prepped projects for teachers, watered gardens, helped chaperone field trips, distributed food bags to students, worked on laminating, helped at the Elm Creek Fun Run, the Book Fair, 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/elmcreekelem/?hl=en.

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 organize the first student council spirit day-Wear Orange for Unity Day/Anti Bullying on Wednesday Oct. 21st. Student council is accepting applications from our 4th grade students. We are looking forward to working with our new crew for the 26/27 school year. 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 Friday, October 30th.

Pumpkin Run: Our Physical Education Teachers, Mrs. Elias and Mrs. Yonak, will be hosting our 20th annual Pumpkin Run during the week of October 26th! 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: We are excited to share a positive update about our library! Starting this year, we are transitioning towards an unrestricted checkout model, giving students increasing freedom to select books based on their reading interests rather than a strict numerical limit. This means you might see more library books coming home soon! As we pilot this approach, our goal is to build strong habits of responsibility alongside a genuine love of reading. We encourage you to set a routine at home for keeping library books in a dedicated spot—like a backpack or bedside table—so returning them stays simple and stress-free.

Weather-Appropriate Clothing and Recess-We have had so many beautiful weather days for recess this year! As the weather changes, please make sure your child comes to school dressed for the weather. This includes a warm coat, mittens, a hat, and boots as snow arrives.
Your child is expected to go outdoors for recess each day, weather permitting. Indoor recess will be held when the *feels-like* temperature reaches -5°F.
Please help your child be ready for outdoor fun by sending them to school dressed for the weather!

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:

Thursday/Friday, October 15th-16th: No School, Education Minnesota Conference (MEA)

October 21st: Unity Day, wear orange to unite for kindness, acceptance, and inclusion

October 23rd-Coffee with the Principal, 10 a.m., Elm Creek Media Center

October 26th-29th: Pumpkin Run

October 30th: October Birthday lunch table

October 30th: Dress like a book character day (nothing scary and no fake weapons, please)

November 3rd: No School for students, Staff Professional Development Day

November 6th: PTO Harvest Bingo, 6 p.m.

November 10th: PTO Meeting, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Elm Creek Media Center

November 12th: Picture Retake Day

November 14th: School Choice Fair, 9 a.m.-noon, Osseo Senior High School

November 20th: Coffee with the principal, Elm Creek Media Center, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

November 26th-27th: No School, Thanksgiving break

November 30th: November Birthday lunch table

December 4th: No School for Students. Mark Reporting Day.