



LAKER NEWS

JENNIFER OLSON – Elementary Principal

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DECEMBER 2023

December Greetings!

I wanted to start out by giving a quick acknowledgement to all the families that were able to connect at conference time—thank you for sharing in the importance of the learning partnership and making time to discuss your child’s progress! We will continue to reach out to you to celebrate successes and make note of challenges your child experiences, but please continue to reach out to your child’s teacher as well.

Communication is a key to making continued progress. I’m sending a big shout out to our PTA groups for organizing conference meals for staff. The gesture, while a simple one, was very much enjoyed. We’re grateful!

Winsted third and fourth grade students close out November by sharing their musical talents on Thursday, November 30 at 1:00 and 7:00 p.m. in the HLWW-High School auditorium, under the direction of Mrs. Jana LeClaire. We look forward to their holiday selections!

On to December events! We’re running for fun with Apex! Apex Leadership Company has been in our buildings and sharing online leadership messages with our schools the last few weeks in partnership with our fundraiser, and we’ll wrap it up this week with our fun runs on November 30 and December 1, at Humphrey and Winsted, respectively. All the monies raised for our run go back to classrooms to support grade level and school field trips planned for the spring, help us host special events like VIP Breakfast, Grandparents’ Day, classroom guest days, our roller-skating units in physical education class, guest speakers, and enhanced classroom opportunities. Monies will also be earmarked for some playground updates. Your efforts and support are very much appreciated.

We have many other activities taking place within the life of our classrooms and schools...watch for updates, news, and pictures from your child’s classroom. It’s going to be a busy month...and before you know it, we’ll be closing out our last day of the calendar year with students on December 22, with plans to return January 2, 2024, after our winter break.

A friendly reminder that students are outside daily—bus stops, recess times, and fitness breaks taken by classrooms/grade levels. We’ve been fortunate with mild temps this season, but please don’t forget all the outdoor gear—hats, gloves, boots, etc. so students are able to enjoy the daily breaks outdoors. You’ve done a fantastic job of equipping your child. Please encourage them to wear the gear you’re providing. We have an occasional “determined” student who may feel his/her locker is a better place than on them. We’re working on it from our end and ask that you help reinforce wearing the gear at school too. Please be sure to have your child check for any missing items before the winter break. (PS—labeling clothing is GREAT!)

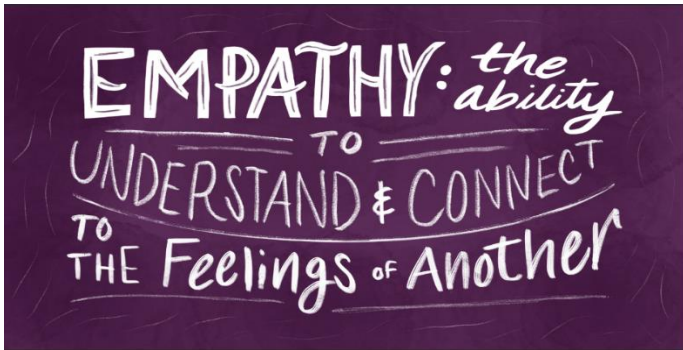
We wish you the happiest of holidays, and a safe, enjoyable winter break.

Have a great December!

Jen Olson



December Student of the Month Theme



Click on the link below to find the Student of the Month honorees.

[Humphrey Elementary](#)
[Winsted Elementary](#)

Winsted PTA

Want to connect with our Winsted PTA? Check out our website [here](#). You will find out about activities and events we plan, how to support the Winsted staff, and how to get involved. Any questions? Feel free to email us at the email address on our website or through our Facebook link (also found on the website). Thanks for supporting Winsted Elementary!

Cold and Flu Season

Morgan Johnson, HLWW District Nurse

Cold and flu season has remained steady this year. I encourage you to have a discussion with your child about the importance of regular hand hygiene and keep your child home if they are not feeling well enough to participate in school.

When calling to report your child's absence, I ask that you also report their symptoms. This helps the health offices track which illnesses are spreading throughout the school and when an outbreak must be reported to the Minnesota Department of Health.

Have a healthy and happy December!



HLWW ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

Winter Recess

Please be sure your child has the right outdoor clothing to enjoy our Minnesota winter recesses! All students, grades kindergarten through fourth, are asked to wear hats, mittens, boots, and snow pants during the winter season (**students not wearing boots must stay on the paved area during recess**). Also, a reminder for parents to assist their child, and our staff, by labeling your child's winter apparel.

Students will be outside during the noon hour recess period unless one of the following weather-related conditions (listed below) are in existence. If any of the conditions apply, recess (or a portion of recess) will be held indoors. The principal or designee will make decisions related to the application of this policy.

- * The temperature and/or wind chill index is at or below zero degrees. (We will hold very closely to the "zero-zero" rule during the winter season. Due to the variation of the weather, however, it is crucial that children come prepared to go outside daily.)
- * Precipitation (rain or snow) and/or weather conditions (thunderstorms or lightning) to a degree that it is deemed the conditions are not conducive to student's well-being.
- * The playgrounds are in such condition (wet, icy and/or muddy) that it is deemed unsafe and/or conducive to student's well-being.

Dismissal Time

For the welfare and safety of all students, it is requested that students do not arrive at school any earlier than necessary. This is especially important for those children who walk, ride bicycles or are dropped off by parents. Students who walk, ride bicycles or are dropped off by parents should not arrive more than 15 minutes (7:55 a.m.) before school starts due to supervisory reasons.

What's New in "Speech"?

Mrs. Voigt, Speech-Language Pathologist

We have had a busy start to our school year over here in the speech room. Mr. Peterson (speech assistant) and I were excited to move into a new, larger room which features a Smartboard and lots of room for crazy dance parties (and doing high quality speech and language therapy). Our room also has some popular and very large decorations, including Ellie the elephant and two large mouths.



Students continue to work on all manner of things, including saying speech sounds correctly, understanding and using new vocabulary words, using correct grammar, and learning to communicate for the first time.

In speech therapy, we use many tools, including books, games, paper, markers, and toys. Mr. Peterson's latest favorite is Farm BINGO, while Mrs. Voigt loves the dot markers and the sticky ball. No matter what we do, we have a good time learning!

Stop by any time to say hello and learn more about the good times at the end of the hall.

May your holidays sparkle with moments of love, laughter and goodwill and may the year ahead be full of contentment and joy.

Happy Holidays!



Second Grade Thankful

Mrs. Eastling, Winsted Elementary

Our November character strong focus has been gratitude. As a class, we work through a lesson once a week that has students thinking about how to show gratitude in school and at home. We listen to songs about it, play some team building games, and challenge each other to show gratitude throughout the month! Teachers will also pick a student of the month who has shown or always shows gratitude!

This is what Mrs. Eastling's class is thankful for!

Mrs. Eastling: coffee, music, and family

Julian: dogs, cats, and games

Brooks: pet leopard gecko

Jayden: cousins and friends

Lily: family and cuddle buddies

Charlie: food

Andrew: Grandmas and his 2 cats

Annikka: mom and dad

Nixie: dogs

Parker: family, food, and friends

Lofton: family

Zoey: water

Rachel: water and food

Josiah: sun

McKenna: music

Bianca: dogs

Jace: sun and the moon

Emily: cats

Jorge: sun



December 25-January 1



**WINTER
BREAK
NO SCHOOL!**

Gratitude

Mrs. Adams, Humphrey Elementary School

Each month we study a character trait through character strong. November's theme was gratitude. The kindergarten students have been learning what gratitude is through activities in the classroom, and by playing a gratitude game in their Laker Proud groups. The students in Mrs. Adams kindergarten class took some time to journal about what they are grateful for. Here are their journal entries:

Alexander- friends that share
Emma- rainbows
Owen- the flowers
Rhett- my friends Tanner and Jace
Jace- my friends Charlie and Isaac
Reagan- the dinosaur
Tanner- food, chicken
Blake- mom and dad
Eleora- my friend, Bethany

Kaylee- rain and rainbows
Arleth- my cousins
Aliah- Mrs. Adams
Basil- grandma and grandpa
Lennox- my neighbor
Sebastian- games
Bethany- my sister
Beau- ramen and mac and cheese
Juna- my mom and dad

Thankfulness


Mrs. Lindstrom, Humphrey Elementary

In November we talked a lot about THANKFULNESS as we prepared for Thanksgiving and discussed our character trait of the month: Gratitude. Here are the things Mrs. Lindstrom's class are most thankful for:

Turner: family, friends, house
Ben: my family
Reagan: everything but bad guys
Brady: family and friends
Harleigh: family, friends, food
Lily: my cat
Friedrich: family, friends, pets
Lainey: family and teacher
Zeke: God and Jesus
Emmalayne: mom, dad, food
Raya: helpers, teachers, family
Eve: family and animals
Lilly: family and Mrs. Lindstrom

Wilton: family and my house
Quinn: family, friends, and teacher
Gavin: rain
Graysen: mom
Grace: family, friends, pets
Eric: family, friends, teachers
Chase: family
Alonso: family
Jaxon: food, family, drinks
Alys: friends
Elvis: family, friends, food
Rissa: food
Mrs. Lindstrom: my family and my students

*Grateful * * * Thankful*



SH-AR-K? SH - ARK? or SHARK?

Gretchen Karg, Title 1 Teacher, Humphrey Elementary

Orton Gillingham is an explicit, systematic, multi-sensory approach to teaching foundational skills started 90 years ago by Samuel Orton and Anna Gillingham. Foundational skills are what most of us think of as phonics. Multisensory means the method incorporates the visual (look of the letter,) auditory (sound of the letter,) and feel of the letter (teeth/tongue/air) into every lesson.

There's been various theories and approaches to teaching reading before and after the development of Orton Gillingham. Some of these focused the phonics instruction on onset-rime as in SH-ARK, B-ARK, M-ARK. Some, like the Dick and Jane series, focused on whole word sight reading as in SHARK, GO SPOT! Some focused on context clues and comparing and contrasting words in a set as in comparing SHARK to FISH or CRAB.

New technologies, like MRI, have provided research that shows what the brain does when learning how to read. This has shown reading researchers the pathways and areas of the brain used for learning the foundational skills needed to read a word. This has helped reading teachers become more efficient and pragmatic in our instruction. Interestingly, new brain research is less certain on how the brain learns the meaning of words while reading, since brain areas are used differently by different people in this aspect of reading due to individuals' unique memories. There is still much to discover about the development of reading comprehension.

Phonics has two parts - decoding (sounding out) and encoding (spelling.) Orton Gillingham methods reinforce the necessary pathways used to learn how to read (decoding) and spell (encoding.) This old approach from the last century meshes nicely with this century's new brain research on orthographic mapping. This new research shows that phonics knowledge is strengthened by adding the physical act of writing the words (encoding) in tandem with the instruction on how to read the words (decoding.)

Orton Gillingham principles are integrated in the phonics skills curriculum that our HLWW elementary schools are using. This curriculum is from the University of Florida Literacy Institute, known as UFLI. In addition to decoding, there is a strong emphasis on encoding - or spelling - integrated with the learning to read process, as well as a multi-sensory component. If you have heard the term Science of Reading in the media, HLWW is applying the latest science when using UFLI, even though some of these instructional practices originated in the past and are now coming back into the mainstream due to recent research.

If your student talks at home about their lips, tongue, teeth, or flow of air when they are reading or spelling, that's multi-sensory and it's from UFLI. If your student talks about the word "shark" having three phonemes and graphemes as in SH-AR-K, that's orthographic mapping and it's from UFLI. In all HLWW elementary grades and classrooms, your students are getting this consistent focus on the research-proven best practices in building readers!

