

Parkers Prairie Elementary Newsletter

April 2010



Panther PRIDE

This month we will be focusing on the “D” – Demonstrate Self Control – of PRIDE. While using self control around a bag of potato chips or pan of brownies can be difficult, we also need to think about demonstrating self control with how we treat other people.

I watch my five and seven year old sons and their interactions with each other. Just this weekend one brother was mad at another for putting a puzzle piece in, so he hit and whined all the time feeling justified because he had wanted to put in that piece. He was not demonstrating self control, he felt angry and responded with anger.

The students at Parkers Prairie Elementary are no different. Someone they thought was a friend rolls their eyes, and so they roll their eyes back. One friend begins to use vulgar language, another joins in, and then another. A friend is upset about a missed ball in a basketball game and then acts physically aggressive towards another player. Demonstrating self control is especially difficult when our emotions come in to play. We feel justified to behave in ways we normally wouldn't because we are hurt, feel uncomfortable, or are embarrassed.

Catch you children demonstrating self control. Name it specifically. Children all know what not to do. It is our role as adults that care about them to notice what they do right, and recognize it as a success.

Handbook Highlight

Our elementary handbook can be accessed on our district website. www.isd547.com

Spring is in the air. And there are many fashion statements to make. Please help your child make wise choices about what to wear to school. Our handbook provides this guidance – appropriate for varying temperatures, does not expose midriff, and does not cause undue attention or detract from the education program.

Thanks for helping your children make good choices about what to wear to school.

MCA Time Just Around the Corner

Students in grades 3 – 6 will take part in the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) beginning April 12th. All of these grades are assessed in the areas of reading and math. Fifth grade is also assessed in the area of science.

As a school system we have been preparing students for this assessment since the first day of school. Assessment questions are based upon the specific grade level standards. Standards build on each other from pre-school through twelfth grade. Yes, that means that students are being prepared to show off what they know as early as preschool and kindergarten.

Parents can help ensure that Parkers Prairie Elementary is able to showcase our great academic skills. Show your children that you value learning. Ask them specifics about their school day, show interest in subject areas that they talk about. Talk with them about the importance of doing their best in all situations.

For students being assessed this year make sure your children get the right amount of rest. While this is a nice normal for year round, it is especially beneficial during assessment time. Share with your children that you see the MCA's as a way to show what they have learned, and that you are confident that they will do well. Let them know that you want them to do their best.

Some students will feel added pressure or stress with assessments. Remind them that they have the skills to do what is being asked, and share with them things you see them doing to relax themselves in other stressful situations.

One of the most difficult things about this type of assessment is that we do not get the results quickly. We will learn general school results early in July, and have student specific reports to share with families next fall.

Cyberbullying

Increasingly, instances of cyberbullying are being reported by students at Parkers Prairie Schools, including the elementary school. Cyberbullying is bullying others by using mobile phone text messages, emails, phone calls, internet chat rooms, instant messaging – and the latest trend – social networking websites such as Facebook and Myspace. Bullying and use of social networking sites by children can be hurtful and even dangerous if used inappropriately. We would like to bring this problem to your attention to address with your child.

What Parents Can Do

- Discuss and explain to your child what cyberbullying is and that it is not acceptable. Unacceptable behavior includes:
 - Spreading rumors or false information about others.
 - Sending rude, harassing or threatening messages.
 - Creating websites that ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate others.
 - Posting on social networking sites hurtful or embarrassing things including pictures of others.
- Keep the computer in a well-travelled part of the home and monitor your child's use.
- If you are allowing your child to have a social networking page such as Facebook or MySpace, closely monitor their use and have access to their privacy and security settings.
- If the child engages in unacceptable behavior online, make certain that there are immediate consequences.
- Restriction/confiscation of technology is not the answer. Kids are smart – they will find other options.
- Advise the child that cyberbullying may be a criminal offence - electronically communicated threats are crimes.
- Tell the child to never reveal his or her password to anyone, including friends.

Warning Signs

- Your child has withdrawn from normal interaction with family and friends to spend an inordinate amount of time engaged in Internet activity.
- Your child turns the computer off or quickly changes the screen when you enter the room.
- Your child suddenly avoids using the computer or drastically changes internet use habits.
- Your child demonstrates a marked change in behavior, beliefs, self-esteem or attitudes.
- Your child's academic performance or school attendance decreases significantly.

Source: www.cyberbullying.info