

Ohio Elementary School News

December 2008

Dear Parents,

As we move into the month of December, many of our days become filled with many obligations of fun and festivities. This time of year often becomes an opportunity for us to focus on opportunities for charity towards others in thoughts, words, actions, and deeds. I would invite us to consciously talk with our families about the choices that we make everyday that have an impact on the lives of others.

At Ohio, our effort remains focused on providing a solid education for each of our students. Our faculty work hard to balance the need for continued focus on educational goals with the opportunities to bring in cultural celebrations that enhance student understanding and appreciation of others. Their efforts are truly appreciate and evident in the growth we see in our children.

December is often considered to be a time for giving. Although many would like to be generous in our giving, we are at times, bound by financial obligations that limit our ability to contribute to others. With this in mind, I would invite you to look closely at one of our Ohio Newsletter entries for this month: freerice.com. We introduced this website last year and it is nice to have the chance to remind families of this option. Through this website, we have the opportunity to act charitably toward others (without cost) while continuing to build the vocabulary skills that help us to succeed in the world.

I would also like to personally thank each of you for your ongoing contributions to the Ohio community. I wish you all the warmest of holiday seasons, with health, happiness, and success for the 2009!

Sincerely,
Karen Cuddy-Miller
Principal

Calendar at a glance:



December

3rd Parent Teacher Conference Day (1/2 day)
11:45 a.m. dismissal
3rd **O.H.I.O. meeting** – 6:30 p.m.
17th Evening Chorus Concert: 4th, 5th, and 6th
22nd – 31st Winter Recess – No School

January 2009!!

1st New Year's Day – No school
2nd Winter Recess – No School
7th O.H.I.O. meeting – 6:30 p.m.
12th – 16th New York State ELA Assessments
Grades 3, 4, 5
19th Martin Luther King Jr. Day – No School
20th – 23rd New York State ELA Assessments
Grade 6/ Make-up dates Gr. 3, 4, 5
26th – 30th Make-up dates Grade 6



Please note:

- Correction for e-mail addresses:
Mr. Zbytek's address is azbytek@ntschoools.org

Thank you!

Building our future together, one student at a time...

Beverage Tab Update

Ronald McDonald House Pop Tab Drive

What a year for pop tabs! I was so pleased with the number of pop tabs that came in and enjoyed the stories of how far they traveled. We have now collected from as far away as New England and Ontario. (What an interesting story it might have been if the boarder workers questioned all those tabs!) It took three trips down to the house last month to drop them all off. On my last trip, the volunteer insisted that we bring the tabs into the house until she looked in the trunk of my car. We were all glad that the shed was opened that day. The contest went down to the last day when Mrs. Poole's class pulled ahead to win. Mrs. Poole's class will soon receive their pizza party generously donated by our OHIO group. Thank you all for collecting for a great cause. Last year the Ronald McDonald House made \$5,000 in just pop tabs. They are hopeful to make \$7,000 this year with all your help!

Mrs. Schake

Poole	106,584	Haseley	6,051
Swartz	90,101	Bunny	6,013
Ninos	45,076	DesJardins	5,720
Green	24,740	McConnell	4,689
Fretthold	23,481	Pogorzelski	4,423
Jordan	16,779	Quagliana	3,549
Mauro	12,355	Birkman	3,372
Zarbo	10,801	Tirone	3,124
Cary	9,149	Daigler	2,901
Schake	8,856	Routhier, Charsley	13
LoCicero, Andreozzi, Squier			8,786



Building our future together, one student at a time...

Reminder - Parent Teacher Conferences



December 3rd – 11:45 a.m.
Dismissal

During December, afternoon conferences are scheduled for **December 3rd**. Each of our teachers provided the opportunity to sign up for a conference during our Open House in September. These will be confirmed with you through your classroom teacher. If you have questions or a conflict, please contact your teacher in order to make accommodations.

Freerice.com

Check out this website: Freerice.com. This website is focused on building our vocabulary skills WHILE FEEDING THE WORLD. This free website works with the United Nations to help end world hunger. By simply going to this website and you are greeted with a vocabulary word "game" and four words from which to select their word meaning. For every word meaning that is correctly selected, 20 grains of rice are donated through the United Nations World Food Program. On October 7th, 2007, the day FreeRice began, donations for that day were 830 grains of rice. In just two months, donations had grown to over 383 million grains of rice - for just one day! Today, donations have exceeded 51 BILLION grains of rice.

Although the greatest purpose of this website is our opportunity to make a difference in the world, a second great gift is this free, fun, and generous



opportunity for our children to build their vocabulary skills every time they enter this website! The website is designed to meet the vocabulary level of each person* on the site...so if a word meaning is missed, the words become easier. If the correct word meaning is selected, the words become more challenging. This makes it fun for every member of the family!!

*Generally this site is most appropriate for intermediate level readers - but everyone can try!

Building our future together, one student at a time...

The Giving Tree

The foyer of Ohio is soon to be filled with a winter-like scene to host the presence of the Giving Tree. Ohio will be sponsoring a "Giving Tree" to benefit children within our community. Your gift of a **warm hat or a pair of mittens** will be used to brighten a child's holiday. These items will be donated to a local charity. So, please consider having your child donate one of the above items if you're able. We'll be depositing items under the tree in the lobby from during December and January!



... and Dressing for Success

As you are aware, it is an important value at Ohio to "**Dress for success.**" At Ohio Elementary, this means that we are **dressing with respect and safety** in mind. For our faculty and staff, this often means that we are dressing professionally, supporting our efforts to be positive role models for our children. Occasionally, "dressing for success" has a different meaning. **The Ohio faculty and staff are committed to supporting our community and modeling charity for others throughout the school year.** At Ohio, one way the faculty and staff are choosing to model this is to "Donate to Dress Down." During these days, teachers have identified a charity to which they would like to provide support and donate money for the opportunity to support their charity. During these days, our "success" will be measured in the money or gifts we are able to collect in order to help others.

During the recent months, many of our **local businesses and families have experienced hardships** associated with the recent changes in our economy. In the past, Ohio Elementary families have been recipients of charitable support from a local business that has reached out to provide **gifts to children during the holidays.** This year, this business will not be able to provide such support. In an effort, however, to continue to provide support to our families, the faculty and staff have decided that they will be using the Donate to Dress Down theme again. Our Giving Tree will be decorated with a number of "snowflakes." Each snowflake will represent a child in need and list the child's age, gender, and size or toy suggestion. Our faculty/staff members will be bringing in wrapped gifts for these children. In order to celebrate their generosity, we will be hosting additional "dress down" days for the gifts that have been collected.

Ohio families may support this effort as well. If you are interested, just select a snowflake and **return a wrapped gift by December 12th** to the **Main Office.** Be certain to **attach the tag** that you have selected to this gift - as this will ensure that the gift is given to the right child!

Thank you for your help and support of others!

Building our future together, one student at a time...

PENNIES FOR PATIENTS

During the month of January, our students will be participating in the Pennies for Patients drive. It's not too late for the students to start saving their pennies and/or any loose coins they may have. A reminder will be sent home regarding this drive. All money raised is donated to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. These funds help support lifesaving research and services for patients.



We will have containers for children to deposit their money. This is strictly done on a voluntary basis. We thank you for any help you may give for this drive.

Bus Transportation Notification



Bus behavior reminder....

As the school year progresses and students become excited about snow on the ground, holidays and special school events, we commonly notice an increase in “offensive” behaviors on our busses. Please take the time to remind your children about the importance of demonstrating respectful behavior on the bus. This type of reminder is very important and supports our efforts to create a safer, more student friendly environment on the bus.

Please also remember that disrespectful behavior will be taken very seriously. Students using vulgar language, inappropriate gestures, and/or demonstrating other misbehavior on the bus are likely to lose bus privileges.

BASE Reminder:

Parents of BASE students, please remember to notify the school through written notice of any changes in your daycare plans. We are working to make certain that we are providing each of our students with appropriate supervision to ensure their safety during school hours and upon dismissal. In order to do so, we need to know of any changes that may effect your child(ren)'s after school destination, each time there is a change!



Building our future together, one student at a time...

From the Nurse...

in 2008

A new law was recently enacted that expands health screenings to include inspections of students' dental health within New York State. As a part of your child's requirements for school, a dental certificate also will be requested at the same years a physical examination is required for students in Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and Grades 2, 4,7,10. Please contact me if you have any questions or need further information.



And...

It is that time of the year when children get sick with colds and flu symptoms. It is hard sometimes to know whether or not to send a child to school. Here are some guidelines for parents when you are unsure whether or not you should send your child to school on any given day.

1. Children should be fever free for 24 hours (without fever reducing medication) before coming back to school. If a child is still running a fever in the afternoon on one day, he should not be sent to school the next day.
2. Children who are experiencing vomiting and diarrhea should be kept at home until they have been over it for at least 24 hours. Children may appear better in the morning but I find that they run out of steam by early afternoon.
3. Coughing is hard to determine. A child with excessive coughing should be kept at home. If your child has been up coughing in the night, chances are that coughing will continue during the day. The child will also not be rested enough to concentrate and do well in school. If a child has had a good night's sleep and is well rested, as long as the coughing is minimal, they may be okay for school. Keep in mind that coughing can spread germs. You would not appreciate it if other children were sent to school with bad coughs and exposed your child to cold and flu symptoms. Please also remember that cough drops are considered medication and require a doctor's order to be given in school.
4. Remember, as the parent, you decide whether or not to send your child to school. You know your child best. You know their behavior and how they react when sick. You are the best judge - your child should not be the one making the decision.



Sincerely,

Beth Galas RN
Ohio School Nurse

Building our future together, one student at a time...

Gifts for the Mind

With the gift giving season upon us, I wanted to make some recommendations for games and activities that strengthen language, math, critical thinking, family bonds, social skills, and are just plain fun!

Here is just a sample of gift ideas to expand your child's mind. (In no particular order) I know there are many, many more.

Games:

Chinese Checkers
Othello
Mancala
Checkers
Chess
Apple to Apple
Chaos
Backgammon
Scrabble
Blokus
Bananagrams
(like a boardless Scrabble)

Computer:

Simulation programs
Chessmaster, Sudoku
Brain Booster

Activities:

Science experiment kits
Build it kits such as radios or motion detectors
Art kits
Dress up and items for pretend
Puzzles
Rush Hour
Tipover

Building Toys:

Knex
Legos
Magnetics
Wacky Wigglers
Wooden Blocks
marble building sets, such as Marble Madness



Books:

- *Books in your child's area of interest, but that are too difficult for them; make great read aloud books...no matter what your child's age and reading ability.
- *Puzzle books such as Sudoku, crossword puzzles, *Classic Brainteasers* by Martin Gardner (age 12 and up), and *Match Wits with Mensa* by Marvin Grosswirth (ages 10 and up)
- *Internet linked books such as Usborne
- *A deck of cards with a book with different card games
- *Magazine subscriptions such as: *Zoobooks* (ages 4-12), *Sports Illustrated for Kids* (ages 7-13), and *National Geographic World* (ages 10 and up)

If you are an online shopper, one resource where you can find creative and educational items is at www.mindwareonline.com.

If you know of any wonderful ideas that I should include on next years list, please email them to me at cyoung@ntschoools.org.



Have a wonder filled, brain expanding, holiday season!

Mrs. Carol Young

Gifted and Enrichment Teacher at Ohio and Meadow Elementary

Building our future together, one student at a time...

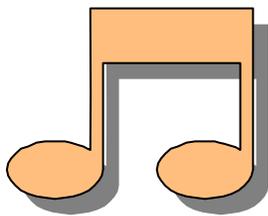
From our Music Department...

Holiday Concerts:

On December 17th our 4th, 5th, and 6th graders will present a holiday concert here at Ohio School. Our 4th graders will perform at 7:00 p.m with our 5th graders performing at 7:30 p.m. and our 6th graders ending the festivities at 8:00 p.m.

We would love to invite our entire Ohio family to join us; however, space for the evening performance is limited to our performers' family members. We will have daytime performances for our school children on Thursday, December 18th and Friday December 19th. Please come and join us then.

When writing letters to Santa don't forget to include music, and please share your family's holiday traditions through music and songs for a more memorable gathering.



*Happy Holidays to all!
Mrs. Strong and Mrs. Wright*

Happy Holidays!

Let's Keep Safety On Our Minds...

We all know that following afternoon dismissal, we are excited and distracted. Students want to get home and parents have things to do! We are all busy and want to get to the next place we need to be. We would ask, however, that you keep safety on the top of your "To Do" list. Our Crossing Guards are charged with the most precious responsibility – keeping our students safe. As you are picking up your children or traveling by our schools, please be certain to take the time to:

- **Drive slowly**
- **Watch for children** in the area
- Honor the responsibilities of the crossing guards – and follow his/her directions
 - Please do NOT creep into the intersection when the guard is guiding children to cross
 - Please **remind your children to travel directly home** – discourage them from stopping to play in the snow or snow hills – as this only adds to potential safety concerns

If you are picking up your children, please be certain that you keep the students off of the snow mounds – especially around the parking lot! Safety is our first priority and we sometimes need to be certain that **we are thinking** ahead – especially when our children want to “run ahead.”



Building our future together, one student at a time...

SPECIAL MESSAGE

**From
Superintendent of Schools
Vincent J. Vecchiarella**

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Now that the winter season is approaching and, in Western New York, it means we can expect some bad weather over the next few months, I want to share the following information.

Our District staff understands the decision to open or close schools due to weather conditions has a big effect on families. We also understand that our students are best served – both academically and socially – by being in school but, as always, the safety of our young people is our top priority.

HOW IS THE DECISION MADE?

The decision to open or close school in bad weather is based on a careful analysis of all relevant factors, some of which are:

- **Road conditions** – This information comes from weather forecasts, our District snow-plowing crew, our transportation department and the police. The status of City snow plowing efforts is also an important consideration.
- **Amount of snow and/or ice already accumulated and whether precipitation is expected to continue along with the temperature and wind chill factors.** Careful monitoring of weather forecasts.
- **School site conditions** – Information is communicated to the Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds from staff members who are responsible for clearing and treating school parking lots, driveways and sidewalks. Any electrical and/or heat problems are also reported by custodial and maintenance staff.

WHO MAKES THE DECISION?

As Superintendent of Schools, I am responsible for the final decision based on the above factors.

HOW IS THE PUBLIC NOTIFIED?

Tune to local radio or TV stations for closing information. The first calls go to TV channels 2 (WGR), 4 (WIVB) and 7 (WKBW) and radio station 930 AM (WBEN) followed by the FM radio stations. Please do not call the schools unless it is an emergency. This school year we are again implementing emergency notification of families through Global Connect. Please make sure that the District has your updated telephone numbers. Also understand after we receive your updated information it will take time to update the District's data base.

Building our future together, one student at a time...

WHEN IS THE DECISION MADE?

We always try to make the decision by 6:30 a.m. so we can notify radio and TV stations and alert the transportation and food service departments. Waiting much longer to announce a closing means some parents will have already left for work expecting their children to be in school for the day.

WILL SCHOOLS CLOSE IF CONDITIONS WORSEN?

Keep in mind that, even if weather conditions worsen, we cannot reverse the decision in the morning without endangering students. Once the decision is made to open school, many parents rely on it and leave for work. This includes those who drop off children at the BASE Program as early as 7:00 a.m. If we were to send students right back home in the morning, many would return to unsupervised bus stops and empty houses. However, if conditions warrant closing school early, you will be advised through the above stated notifications.

Although my staff and I do our absolute best in this process, we know that no perfect decision exists. Conditions in one part of the City may differ dramatically from those in other parts. Even if your neighborhood is clear, travel elsewhere in the District could be a problem and vice versa.

Therefore, if school is open but the conditions as you observe and consider them are such that you do not feel it is safe for your child to attend school, use your best judgment on whether he or she should attend. Your decision will always be respected.

I hope this explanation helps everyone understand the process we use to make the best possible decision for all in our District.

Sincerely,
Vincent J. Vecchiarella
Superintendent of Schools

Building our future together, one student at a time...

Attention Parents: Notes to Note

Smarter Adults - Safer Kids District Training Dates:

<u>Date - Time</u>	<u>Building</u>	<u>Location</u>
<i>December 3 - 2:00 pm</i>	<i>Ohio</i>	<i>Cafeteria</i>
<i>January 15 - 2:00 pm</i>	<i>Gilmore</i>	<i>Social Work Office</i>
<i>February 10 - 2:00 pm</i>	<i>Spruce</i>	<i>Auditorium</i>
<i>March 12 - 7:00 pm</i>	<i>Meadow</i>	<i>Conference Room</i>
<i>April 21 - 9:30 am</i>	<i>Middle School</i>	<i>Room 163</i>

Substitute Support Staff – North Tonawanda is always looking for interested people!

The North Tonawanda City School District always accepts applications for the following substitute support staff positions:



Teacher Aides (\$8.90 per hour)
Typist (\$8.90 per hour)
School Monitor (\$8.25 per hour)
Child Care Worker/BASE (\$8.25 per hour)
School Bus Attendant (\$8.25 per hour)
Nurse (\$15.15 per hour)

Applications are available at the Administration Building, between the hours of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 175 Humphrey Street, N. Tonawanda.

Central Registration

As of July 1, 2008, all new students to the North Tonawanda City School District must register at the Administration Building at 175 Humphrey Street. Additionally, all address changes must be completed and approved. The district requires certain documentation in order to register your child and/or make an address change. These forms can be obtained at the 175 Humphrey Street Building or by calling to make an appointment at 807-3535

Building our future together, one student at a time...

SEX OFFENDER NOTIFICATION

The North Tonawanda Police Department has informed the school district that we will no longer be receiving written notification of level 2 and 3 sex offenders through the mail as we have in the past. The Niagara County Sheriff's Department created a web site listing all the level 2 and 3 sex offenders in their jurisdiction and the NT Police Department has teamed up with them. Level 2 and 3 sex offenders residing in North Tonawanda are now on that web site.

Additionally, the web site will allow users to sign up for a notification service that will automatically notify you via e-mail every time a level 2 or 3 sex offender moves into or from place to place within Niagara County.

The Niagara County Sheriff's Department web site is www.ncsd.com/SOR/. Please also remember that the New York State web site is www.criminaljustice.state.ny.us/sor/. The state web site allows you to search by name, county, or zip code throughout New York. The state's toll free number is 1-800-262-3257.

The District will continue with notifications using the District newsletter and District web site www.ntcityschools.wnyric.org.

Attention Families: Has your contact information changed?



Emergency Contact Information

Attention Ohio Elementary School - Please note these changes in our contact information:

Student Name(s) and Grade levels _____

- Our new home phone number _____
- Our new cell number: _____
- Our new address: _____
- Additional persons with permission to pick my child(ren) up from school:

- Other contact information changes: (i.e.: Grandparent phone number changes if they are listed as emergency contacts)

Parent Signature

Building our future together, one student at a time...