

Ohio Elementary School News

February 2009

Dear Parents,

I remain in awe of how quickly the days on the calendar are passing this year. In seemingly, the blink of an eye, we have already passed the mid-point of our year. As we enter February, many of our primary classrooms are getting ready to celebrate the 100th day of school and some of us are already looking ahead to spring!

February will bring much continued excitement to Ohio. We continue with our *Strive for 25* focus – to promote reading among our students. We invite parents to join us as reading partners at home. Research tells us that reading with our children just 15 – 20 minutes each day can have a significant impact on their success in school. **Reading to our children** introduces our children to new *listening* vocabulary. Hearing new words in context helps children become familiar with new words and to understand their meaning. Later, when they encounter a new word in their reading, they can better recognize a new word that they have heard before. Having your **children read to you** creates opportunities for your children to practice their reading fluency, understand story structure, and celebrate the pride they feel in their accomplishments! So as we snuggle in for the last few weeks (or months) of winter – grab a good book, a comfortable place to read, and a youngster with which to read – and enjoy your time together!

Sincerely,
Karen Cuddy-Miller
Principal

Look for in the coming March Newsletter:

*Reading Levels:
What do they mean to our
students and to you...?*

Calendar at a glance:



February 2009

- 4th O.H.I.O. meeting – 6:30 p.m.
- 6th Ohio Family Dance – 6:30 p.m.
- 14th Valentine's Day
- 16th – 20th Mid-Winter Recess – No School
- 27th Grades 3-6 Reports Cards

March 2009

- 4th O.H.I.O. meeting – 6:30 p.m.
- 5th Parent Teacher Conferences – ½ Day
Early Dismissal at 11:45 a.m.
- 24th Parent Teacher Conferences – 6:30 p.m.
- 25th Staff Development Day – No School



NYS ASSESSMENT in March:

Please note:

- Grade 3: March 3 & 4** (Tuesday, Wednesday)
- Grade 4: March 4, 5, & 6** (Wed., Thurs., Fri.)
- Grade 5: March 3 & 4** (Tuesday, Wednesday)
- Grade 6: March 10, 11** (Tuesday, Wednesday)

Please remember, the best way to prepare our students for the New York State Assessments is to make certain our students are well rested with a good night's sleep, and to start their day with a good breakfast on the morning of the testing.

Thank you for your efforts to support our Ohio students in these ways!

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

Parking - Parking - Parking

As many of you are aware, the parking situation at Ohio has been a complex issue for many years. Although we have improved parking conditions during the day - this year, as compared to last year, our parking issues during morning arrival and afternoon dismissal remain a great concern.

We have three current parking related issues that impact Ohio most:

The first is our Bus loading zones: We have two bus loading/unloading zones at Ohio. Along *Ohio Street*, at the front of our school, we have a bus loading zone for our large school buses. Parent parking in this area has created congestion as parents park to drop off or pick-up their children. In some situations, this has prevented our buses being able to access the bussing zone itself. At other times, buses have been held up/delayed as parents attempt a three point turn to depart the area, blocking the roadway.

We have a second bus loading zone in the *back parking lot* that runs parallel to the primary wing of the school. Although there is a sign indicating that this area is for busses only, many parents often park in this area for drop-off/pick up reasons as well. This, however, has interfered with the busses' ability to safely park along the sidewalk in order to load or disembark. Several times, our busses have needed to double park - forcing our students to walk in front of other cars in order to access their bus. This is an unsafe condition that cannot be permitted. Although we have talked to many parents, who then work to honor our requests not to park there, other parents inevitably then pull into these spaces. Although some parents have indicated that they wait until these busses have departed before entering this zone, there is no clear way to ensure that this area is truly clear. Often, particularly during inclement weather, some of our busses arrive at a later time. Although the many busses may have arrived and departed, we still need to maintain a safe area for the boarding of a late arrival bus. As this issue recently escalated, we have taken additional steps to ensure the safety of our students and have begun working with the North Tonawanda Police Department in order to more effectively address this concern.

The third parking conflict reflects parents' efforts to park along the *perimeter of Ohio School*, in front of the houses which neighbor our school. Although these areas have clearly posted No Parking signs, many parents often park there during the arrival and dismissal times. Although our focus and concern with this current issue is directed at the bussing zones, I do note that the streets that surround Ohio have been consistently posted as No Parking zones. I am sure that parents can understand that as the police have been asked to help us honor the bussing zone violations, it would be hard for the police to ignore these parking signs or other specific traffic laws. This has created some additional parking conflicts for our parents who have routinely used these areas for temporary parking.

While I recognize the frustration of parents as you look for close parking to the school, I am also aware that throughout the year many of our Ohio neighbors - the residents, who live in the houses immediately surrounding the school, remain dissatisfied that the no parking signs are not more fully enforced. It is a conflict which is not easily resolved.

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

Some parents have requested that we consider dismissing our walkers *before* we dismiss the students who are bussed. Unfortunately, such a dismissal schedule would actually create increased safety hazards for our walkers and busses - as the congestion would only be increased at our dismissal time. I am equally concerned about the safety of our walkers and give consideration to all of these factors as we work to resolve these issues.

I am currently working with the North Tonawanda District Offices and our O.H.I.O. parent representatives to address this issue to the best of my ability. At this point, I am implementing a multi-tiered approach:

1. Increasing our communication with parents regarding these concerns. Our first step is including this **article in our February newsletter** to help you to understand some of the issues and the safety concerns which we are attempting to address.

2. Developing and distributing a **parent letter** - specifically addressed to parents who are parking in violation of the bussing zone and creating an increased safety hazard for our students.

3. I am working with the North Tonawanda City School District Offices to secure and install **additional signs** to more clearly mark the bus loading zones for our school.

4. I am working with the North Tonawanda City School District Offices and architects as we develop and move forward on the **Capital Improvement Project** that was approved by voters last spring. The Ohio portion of the improvement plan contains modifications and additions to the parking and bussing conditions for our school. This is inclusive of, but not limited to, the addition of a bussing circle - for busses only. It is my sincere hope that this will help to directly address the bussing zone conflicts cited in this article.

Although this multi-tiered approach will help to disseminate information regarding our safety concerns for students, we will need to be patient while the Improvement project proceeds - as we are only one portion of a comprehensive district plan.

At this time and until some of these parking issues are resolved, I would recommend that parents who are electing to drive to drop off or pick-up their children park along the adjacent streets, which are not posted to prohibit parking. Parents can then safely walk to greet their children at the school and escort them back to their cars. As I make this recommendation, I am grateful that we seem to be through the worst of our winter weather.

I appreciate the opportunity to share with you some insights regarding this situation. I will continue to give this issue my attention and support, and as always, I hope to be working with parents to resolve our concerns together.



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The Ohio Clothing Closet!



During the month of January, Ohio Elementary School has worked to open a Community Clothing Closet. In order to “stock” this closet, we have and will continue to warmly accept any gently used clothing – shirts, sweaters, pants, coats, boots, etc. that families may have outgrown. **All sizes are welcome!!**

As our clothing closet is filled, we would like to make these clothing items available to any family in need. If you or your family is in need of any item, we are happy to provide these to you!

Donations may be dropped off to the main office. Any requests for clothing may be made by using the Clothing Closet Request Form below.

If you are interested in receiving some of the clothing that has been donated – please fill out the Closet Request Form below and forward this to the main office.

Please mark the envelope: Attention: Mrs. Dawn Lowry

Cut here: -----

| Clothing Closet Request Form | | | | |
|--|------|--------|---------|-------|
| Please describe the clothing items you need: | | | | |
| 1.) Clothing item(s): _____ | | | | |
| Size: _____ | Male | Female | / Child | Adult |
| 2.) Clothing item(s): _____ | | | | |
| Size: _____ | Male | Female | / Child | Adult |
| 3.) Clothing item(s): _____ | | | | |
| Size: _____ | Male | Female | / Child | Adult |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| Please return to the Ohio Main Office – <u>Attention: Mrs. Dawn Lowry</u> | | | | |
| <u>Contact Information:</u> Name: _____ | | | | |
| Phone Number: _____ Teacher Name: _____ | | | | |

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



Strive for 25 Experience the Magic of Reading

Ohio School has been working hard to meet the goal of reading 25 books. Please congratulate the children below when you see them for reading well done! On February 23rd it is officially the 100th day of school. Ohio School has so many students that are going above and beyond the goal of reading 25 books. On this day, names will be read over the announcements of those students who have read 100 books! Keep up the hard work everyone!

Kindergarten:

John Alo, Elizabeth Ambrusko, Anthony Andolina, Marissa Barbopoulos, Eliana Benzing, Abigail Couto, Seth Franusiak, Benjamin Grawe, Jeremy Gergoretti, Joseph Heim, Christopher Huntly, Jonathan Johnson, Ronan Kasmier, Kailey Ludlow, Andrew Mallone, Casey O'Bryan, Lindsay Piazza, Adam Steingasser, Jessica Tyrrell, Emily Veiheffer

Grade 1:

Jamie Supples, Gianna Souliere, Jack Julian, Emma Corbet, Delayne Pace, Mitchell McNamee, Robert Kuhn

Grade 3:

Dylan Normandin, Gage Rossano, Ashley Hewit, Alyssa Flach

Grade 4:

Theresa Bork, Olivia Hecei, Michael Orlowski, Colby Moultrie, Katelyn Yager

Grade 5:

Marissa Mattice



Library News...

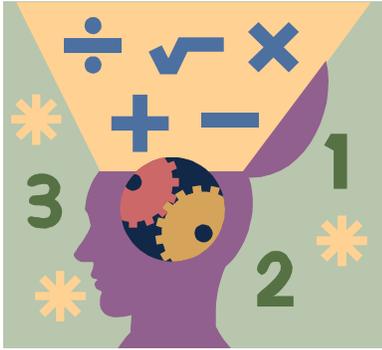
Online Catalog

Ohio School's library media center is in the beginning stages of developing an online catalog! It will be a long process, but we are hoping to have the library's fiction section completed and operating some time in the fall. The benefits for our students will be many, as an online catalog is a much more effective way of searching for books. Students will also have the benefit of using the online catalog through their classroom or home computer.

Twilight Book Series

With the recent popularity of the movie "Twilight", some of our students have shown interest in reading the book series. The book series has been recommended for grades 9 and up by "School Library Journal", and "Booklist", because of its' more mature content. These review sources are widely used by school librarians. For more information, go to www.slj.com, or contact the school library.

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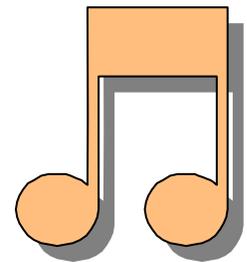
Brain Builders

In the past dozen or so years the experts in the fields of brain research and child development have worked together to investigate how a child's brain grows and readies for learning.

During those studies some important things have become evident. Music and movement have the ability to wake up the brain and get it ready to learn. Also, children are visual learners. Their earliest learning is by looking at three dimensional objects and that visual ability remains very strong throughout the elementary years.

Young people who actively participate in our curriculum extension areas have:

- Strengthened problem-solving skills
- A positive work ethic and become active learners
- Higher level thinking skills
- Strengthened critical-thinking skills
- Increased imagination and creative skills



Please take the time to dance and sing with your children. Toss a ball to music. Compare pictures from magazines and draw household objects.

Your child's brain will thank you for it.



Reminder: Telephone and Cell Phone Use

Telephone use, by the student, during the school day is discouraged. Students should work with their parents to plan ahead to include homework, field trip permission slips, physical education and musical education equipment, within their preparation for each school day in order to build responsibility and organization skills.



Additionally, while students within our schools may possess mobile and digital technology, including but not limited to personal or family cell phones, possession of these items are subject to the following rules:

1. No use of mobile or digital devices is permitted on school grounds. These devices should not be seen nor heard during the school day.
2. Students possessing these devices may NOT turn these devices on while on school grounds until the end of the official instructional day, unless during an emergency situation AND with adult permission to do so.
3. The school and/or school district is NOT responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged equipment.
4. Should a cell phone or other device be seen or heard during the school day, these possessions may, in part or in whole, be removed by the teacher or adult in charge and held until parent pick-up can be arranged.

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From the Nurse...

An important reminder: Both district policy and New York State regulations require that ANY medication, prescription as well as over the counter medications, MUST have a doctors note for the school nurse to administer to the student. This includes cough drops, inhalers, ointments, and pain relievers.

Please have your child's emergency contacts up to date and try to choose contacts that are available to pick up student when they are ill. It is uncomfortable for a child to be in the Health Office for hours when they are not feeling well.

Additionally, when your child has attended a doctor, dentist or counseling appointment and has come to school late, please remember to request a note from your health care provider.

Sincerely,

Beth Galas RN
Ohio School Nurse



Attendance:

Good attendance and being on time for school are very important factors for a successful academic experience. Missing the first fifteen minutes or more may lead to your son or daughter missing important information. Often this means that your child enters the day *already* trying to catch up with his/her classmates. This is frustrating to the student and can put the student at greater risk for failure or shutting down during the school day. A late student entering a classroom already at work is also disruptive to the class and the learning that is already taking place.



For your information...

Several parents have recently reported difficulty leaving a voice mail message regarding student attendance on our nurse's phone. These lines are likely listed as a "blocked number." Any phone line that comes in as a "blocked" line on our phone system is prohibited from leaving a voice mail message.

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ART NEWS



The art room, art projects and young artists are continuing on a very positive note! The kindergarteners began the New Year by learning about the artist Kandinsky. They will then be venturing into making artwork by incorporating hearts with pastels and watercolors.

A trip “Under the SEA” is where the 1st graders are headed. They will be working with watercolors and learning about the artist Eric Carle. The next time you and a 1st grader go to the beach or sea shore near an ocean, ask them what shell you can hear the ocean in...a conch shell! You may also ask them to name two types of coral. You may learn something.

2nd graders are viewing the painting styles of Vincent Van Gogh and his techniques in “Starry Night” while creating their own landscape using oil pastels. Carrying on the landscape theme, 3rd graders are creating miniature watercolor landscape paintings. They are also making mini versions of their paintings on bookmarks to go along with our “Strive for 25” challenge!

Meanwhile, 4th graders have been discovering the history of stamp designing their own stamp and envelope. All the student’s ideas have been very creative and inventive as they come up with their own original stamp theme.

5th graders are learning about Salvador Dali and surrealism: half real and half fantasy work. They are incorporating into an artwork two objects that are both real, but when put together become unreal. We have very creative minds in these 5th grade classes. Don’t miss this display in the hallways.

Unconventional trees and landscapes are what the 6th graders are creating as they learn about the artist Henri Matisse. Just ask a 6th grader what color they see in a tree or in the grass. It may not be a traditional color of brown and green.

As the student’s portfolios begin to fill up and our young artists begin to grow in their creativity and learning, art work is being framed and hung in large clear frames in the teacher’s lunch room, student cafeteria and conference room. In January 2010 this art work will be returned to the young artist.

CONGRATULATIONS to the following students for having their art selected!
Magnifique!

Kayla Barone
Ryan Bille
Emma Corbett
Samantha Crowe
Jewel Hewett

Sofia Grant
Jamilee Galmbacher
Spencer Hutchinson
Samantha Kennedy
Colby Moultrie

Benjamin Nicholas
Emily O’Bryan
Alyssa Privitera
Karma Regling
Ashley Wilczak

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Attention Parents: Notes to Note

Smarter Adults - Safer Kids District Training Dates:

| <u>Date - Time</u> | <u>Building</u> | <u>Location</u> |
|------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| <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.

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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 to get to the next place we need to be. We would ask, however, that you safety on the top of your "To Do" list. With added mounds of snow and winter clothing, many of our students are more distracted than usual. 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, 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



want
keep

please be

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.”



*****Please also remember** that at all times during the year, our students should be wearing shoes or sneakers that are **safe and secure on their feet**. Flip-flops or sandals worn to school increase the possibility of slipping and injury!

Thank you for working together with us to keep our children safe!



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.

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Global Connect Program

The North Tonawanda City School District has recently implemented the Global Connect program within our district. This program is designed to enable us to complete “mass” phone calling under emergency conditions or to share district-wide information with parents. Many of us should have received on during January’s recent closing due to high winds.

In order for this program to work most effectively, we ask you to maintain current contact information with us. If any of your contact information changes, please fill out the form below and submit this to Ohio’s main office. We will then forward the information to our district offices so that the Global Connect system can be well maintained.

Thank you for your support!

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

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