

Vansville Elementary School



Home of the Wildcats

Tom Smith
Principal

January 2011

Shawna Holden
Asst. Principal

From the Principal's Desk

HAPPY NEW YEAR!! I do hope that all got a well-deserved rest over the winter break. We are excited about getting back into the swing of things and re-focusing our children on academic rigor. As we prepare for the second semester, here are some tips on maintaining an effective working relationship with your child's teacher:

How Parents Can Help With Their Children's Homework

There are things you can do that will help your child do assigned homework and that results in learning, which, after all, is the reason for being in school.

Communicate with your child about school. This includes talking to him about his friends, activities, teachers, and assignments.

Show enthusiasm about school and homework.

Set realistic goals for your child, and then focus on them one at a time.

Help your child get organized. Break down assignments into smaller, more manageable parts. Set out needed items (clothes, homework, permission slips, etc.) the night before to avoid last-minute rushing around in the morning.

Provide a quiet study corner in your home complete with paper, markers, a ruler, pencils and a dictionary.

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Expect, and praise **genuine** progress and effort. An opinion: don't praise or otherwise reward your child for doing what you and he **know is expected**. This practice leads you down a slippery slope, often with really bad consequences for you and your child.

Be specific when you do praise something.

Focus on your child's strengths in school.

Build associations between what is taught and what your child already knows and understands.

Incorporate concrete materials and examples whenever possible, especially with younger children. Try to help your child learn about the subject in more than one way, using as many senses as possible.

Separate your child's school weaknesses from your child. If your child fails a test, that is all the child fails. He or she is not a failure.

One more thing: Never do your child's homework! (deliberately repeated)

Questions to Ask at a School Conference

Is my child performing at grade level in basic skills? Above/Below?
Math/Reading?

What are the objectives my child is supposed to attain? How do these objectives lead to the overall goal for the course/grade?

What achievement, intelligence, or vocational aptitude tests have been given to my child in the past year? What do the scores mean? (Be very specific and be sure you understand completely what the reported scores mean).

What are my child's strengths and weaknesses in major subject areas?

What subjects do my children enjoy most?

Can we together go over some examples of my child's class work?

Does my child need special help in any academic subject?

Who are my child's friends and how does he or she interact with other children?

Has my child regularly completed assigned homework?

Have you observed any changes in learning progress during the year? Has learning improved or declined during the year?

I hope this helps all continue to make the 2010-2011 school year productive!!

Dates to Remember

- January 6-7: Reading FAST testing
- January 10-11: Math FAST testing
- January 12: 5th grade Science FAST testing
- January 12th: MAKE and TAKE for STEM fair
- January 13-14: 5th Grade Camp Schmidt
- January 17: No School - Holiday
- January 18: 5th grade Science FAST testing
- January 19: VES Chorus goes to WinterFest
- January 21: End of 2nd Quarter
- January 24 - No School
- February 3: 2nd Quarter Report Cards released
- February 16: STEM fair project due by 8am
- February 18: ½ day for students
- February 21: No School - Holiday



HAVE YOU JOINED THE PTA?
MEETINGS ARE HELD MONTHLY AT 6:30 ON THE SECOND TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH!!



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News from inside the classroom...

From the Guidance Counselor

Welcome Back! I trust everyone had a restful "Winter Vacation." Now that we are back please attend the Specialty Programs, Public Charter School and Career & Technical Education Programs Showcase, at Dr. Henry A. Wise, Jr. High School, 12650 Brook Lane, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772. January 19, 2011 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. 2011–2012 Lottery Information/applications and Career/Technical Education program applications will be available. Program representatives will share information and answer questions. Please contact me if you have further questions or concerns about this event:
Diane.Hopkins@pgcps.org, (301) 931–2830, ext. 3008.

CAMP SCHMIDT

On January 13 & 14 our 5th graders will be going to Camp Schmidt. Also, as a reminder, keep working on STEM projects and take note of due dates. –Mrs. Payton

First Grade

In science, we will be practicing the scientific method getting ready for the STEM fair in February. It is a whole class activity and we will be focusing on the process. Please read 20 minutes every night with your child. When finished reading, discuss what the story is about trying to remember as many details as the student can without looking back in the story. January is our testing month for reading level and comprehension, word wall words, and writing.

Kindergarten

The kindergarten team would like to wish everyone good health and happiness in the New Year. Please visit the kindergarten hallway to see our students' wonderfully creative "Snow Friends!" During January, kindergarten students will be assessed on their reading skills. Parents are encouraged to help their child review letter names and sounds as well as the 30 kindergarten sight words. Students should also practice retelling a story in correct sequence with character names and detailed information about the story events.



Vansville Chorus

The Chorus will be attending the PG County Elementary WinterFest on January 19th. This festival is a competition to rate our choir and our sight-reading abilities. Please wish the Chorus luck as we wish to do our best!
 – Mrs. Delaney

PE Department

The Vansville FIT Club will be commencing later this month. The club will meet on Mondays from 2:15–3:15pm with a focus on performing various health and various physical activities. Registration forms will be given only to grades 4–5 with limited spaces. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Monjes at jason.monjes@pgcps.org or at 301–931–2830 ext 3063.

Also, just a reminder that during the winter months, students should be wearing socks and sneakers for safety issues in the gym during PE classes. Preparation is part of the PE grading policy.

BASELP (Vansville Before and After Care) has available spaces in our program. Our # is 301–931–2860. Ask for Ms. Logan.

STEM Fair!

Make & Take: January 12th at 6:30. Teachers will be available to help with any last minute questions. Students will also have access to materials that will help them put together a beautiful board. Materials such as construction paper, glue, and computers will be available.

STEM Fair Set-Up: February 16. All finished projects must be in school by 8:00 am in order to participate in the fair.

Parent Preview: February 16, 5–7. If you would like to preview all of the projects please stop by the Vansville Community Center.

STEM Fair: February 17. If you are able to volunteer as a judge please contact Ms. Cobb at Kathryn.cobb@pgcps.org.

Questions? Your child's teacher will be able to provide specific information. Additional resources are also available at www.vansvillestemfair.wikispaces.com.

NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS FOR THE THIRD GRADE STUDENTS

1. Come to school on time every day.
2. Show PRIDE.
3. Complete all assignments.
4. Do your best!

MSA TIPS

Continue to review all the skills in Math and Reading during the first and second quarters. Review how to answer Reading and Math BCR questions. For additional resource, parents can go to www.mdk12.org. Click the Maryland School Assessment tab under Assessment for public release examples of the MSA.

A Big Thank You!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Vansville PTA for their generous gifts to the media center. It is a lift to the media program to have these resources. The dictionaries, atlases, flannel board and listening center will help support student achievement.

In addition, I am looking for volunteers to help out in the media center. You can volunteer for any amount of time. If you are interested in volunteering, please send me an email at Avis.Horowitz@pgcps.org. – Mrs. Horowitz