



## From the Principal

Westridge just hosted an accreditation visit during the last week of January. The purpose of the visit was part of a district wide initiative to seek accreditation from AdvancEd. The afternoon was filled with instructional walkthroughs, student, support staff, parent, and teacher interviews. Our visitors were charged with looking for evidence that our students are engaged in learning and we are carrying out our plans for improving academic achievement. Evidence of our overall goal to improve writing in all curricular areas was a focus of their visit.

Parent/Teacher conferences are right around the corner. Please be looking for communication from teachers about your scheduled day and time.

## Thank You!

Thanks to the following parents and stakeholders for their help with the CHIP event: Rex Moats, Kara Petersen, Michelle Barker, Sherri Petersen, Larry Smith, Steve Nichols, Judi Schnoor, Maynard Smith, Dick Corwine, Jessica Morton, Toni Nichols, Julie Grace, Debbie O'Dell, Debbie Johnson, Jim Farr, Kelli Swanson

Thanks to Kelli Fuglsang for helping in Mrs. Cyza's classroom every Wednesday!

I would like to remind you all of a few things to help make drop off and pick up safer and more efficient for everyone involved. Please do not get out of your car to drop off or pick up. If you need to do this please try to find an open parking spot in the upper parking lot. In order to keep traffic flowing in the upper parking lot it is necessary that cars use the stalls and not double park in the driving lanes. Keep in mind the sidewalk along 206<sup>th</sup> street is a safe place to drop off and pick up. There are safety patrol members and staff on duty to help cross kids walking to school.

Please feel free to email or call the office if you have any questions. We look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,

Mr. Sidders

Thank you to Lynn Fast for helping in Mrs. Peterchuck's room weekly during writing time. Thanks to Rebekah Rothfuss, Leslie McCaslin, and Lisa Crouch for volunteering their time in Mrs. Peterchuck's room as well!

Jessica Morton listens to Mrs. Mejstrik's first graders read each week!

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## *ELL Department News*

The Elkhorn Public Schools English Language Learner (ELL) Department is looking forward to a productive and exciting school year. We extend an especially warm welcome to our newest staff member, Mrs. Rupnow. As a former fourth grade teacher from Skyline, Mrs. Rupnow brings a wealth of knowledge and experience with her. Our department, housed at Westridge Elementary, consists of three teachers: Mrs. Wendt, Mrs. Edic, and Mrs. Rupnow. Each ELL teacher travels to at least three different buildings daily in order to work with our students in their classrooms. Our district is also fortunate to have three bilingual teacher's assistants: Mrs. Roza, Mrs. Mora, and Mr. Villarreal, who also work with students.

In the past nine years, we have seen steady growth among our ELL student population. The Elkhorn Public Schools ELL program

continues to grow with a student enrollment of 72 students with enrollment changing continually throughout the year. Many of our students are multilingual and have backgrounds encompassing 16 different languages from around the world.

Starting this month, our department is preparing to test all of our district's ELL students on the statewide ELL assessment. We use the 'ELDA' or the English Language Development Assessment. Each identified English Language Learner is given the assessment to monitor their growth in the areas of Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening. The students look forward to the opportunity and test scores show the advances they have made over the past year with their English skills.

## *Writing Club*

"Young writers learn best from teachers who write, just as children learning to swim learn best from teachers who actually get into the water with them."- Tom Romano, *Clearing the Way*

This philosophy is the cornerstone of the Westridge Writing Club. This is our before school program available to intermediate students, giving them the opportunity to practice and develop their writing abilities. The writing club was designed to support Westridge's school improvement writing initiative. Students start their daily writing time at 7:45 with a "Free Write" activity and a breakfast snack. Teachers then present a mini-lesson focused on one of the 6 Traits of Writing; personal examples are used to illustrate the lesson. Students then work on their own writing projects.

At least four teachers are always available, ensuring that students receive one-on-one

guidance. "We feel so lucky to be able to work with such a great group of students," said Westridge teacher Wendy Wendt. This additional instruction has led to improved student writing skills across all curricular areas and significant gains have been shown on state and district writing assessments.

Additional technology has been incorporated this year, helping students become more engaged. Clickers, Document Cameras, and SMART Board activities are used. Much of this technology has been purchased with other EPSF grants. Gratitude for our donors is best expressed by a Writing Club student, who said; "Thank you for donating money to the Westridge Writing Club. The money you donated is used to buy us notebooks, snacks, flip cameras and supplies for Writing Club. We hope these will help us in Writing Club and our classes. Thank you again for donating money."-A.J. Donations to the Foundation's grant program ensure that successful programs like the Writing Club can continue. Your support is appreciated!

## *PTO News*

Our regular PTO meeting will be held Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 in the Westridge cafeteria. Please come to the meeting as candidates for a new slate of officers will be

presented. The vote for officers will take place at the March meeting. Childcare will be provided for those interested in attending with young children.

*Join us the first Tuesday of every month for our PTO meetings!*

## *Kindergarten Roundup 2010*

Westridge Elementary is excited to begin welcoming the Kindergarten class of 2010-2011. Included in this newsletter you will find an informational letter pertaining to this year's roundup. If you have a prospective kindergartener you will receive your packet during the first few days of March.

Please plan ahead for the following dates:

March 15<sup>th</sup>—Kindergarten Roundup Parent Meeting at 6:00

March 18<sup>th</sup>—Kindergarten Roundup from 9:00-11:00 (No School for current Kindergarten students)

## *Girls On The Run Coming to Westridge!!!!*

The Girls on the Run program is designed for girls in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grades. The objective of the program is to encourage and educate girls about nutrition, self-esteem, healthy relationships, and positive emotional and physical development. Mrs. Morrow will be coordinating the program, which begins in March and will run until May. We will meet on Tuesday and Wednesday after school

from 3:15 to 4:15. The lessons consist of a life skill lesson, group games/activities, and a running activity. At the season's conclusion the girls will compete in a 5K running event as a group. More information, as well as how to sign up your daughter, will be made available during conferences in February.

## *February at Westridge*

### **Westridge Elementary**

3100 N. 206<sup>th</sup> St.  
Elkhorn, Nebraska  
68022

Ph: 402.289.2559

Fax: 402.289.5725

2---PTO Meeting at 7:00 in the Westridge Cafeteria  
(Childcare provided)  
5---Family Circles  
12---Valentine's Parties-2:15-3:00  
16---Parent/Teacher Conferences 3:00-7:00 (2:06 dismissal)  
17---Parent/Teacher Conferences 3:00-7:00 (2:06 dismissal)  
18---Regular Student Day (Snow Day Makeup)  
19---No School

*Futures Under  
Construction...Bright  
Minds Being Built*

## *January Principal's Lunch!*

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.elkhornweb.org/  
schools/westridge](http://www.elkhornweb.org/schools/westridge)

Kindergarten: Sophie P., Brody S.

First Grade: McKenna D., Jordan L.

Second Grade: Stephen L., Emma C.

Third Grade: Madisyn R, James B.

Fourth Grade: Thomas B. Antonio F.

Fifth Grade: Orion-Bay T., Maura T.



## **Calendar Changes for Second Semester**

The winter of 2009-10 has been one of record proportion and there are still many more weeks ahead for additional cold, ice and snow. To date, students have missed a total of 6 days, or in terms of instructional hours 39.48 hours at the high school, 38.88 hours at the middle school, and 38.10 hours at the elementary school.

Every hour lost is a missed opportunity for student learning. In order to address that lost instructional time the Board of Education at its January Board Meeting has approved several recommendations made by the administration.

**Thursday, February 18**, was originally scheduled as a teacher inservice day. This day has now been changed to a student day. **Tuesday, April 6**, was originally scheduled as one of four spring break days. This day has also been changed to a student day.

As a back up plan the Board has also approved to change Thursday, April 1, from a spring break day to a student day if there is an additional snow day between January 18 and March 8. This decision was made now so as to provide families with as much advance notice as possible. Should a snow day occur after March 8 any additional make up time will be through a different option and April 1 will remain as a spring break day.

It is understandable that these changes will occur on dates that some families have already made plans to be out of town. This is understandable and the staff will work with students that are absent in the same manner that they would as if the student were ill. Students and parents are always encouraged to work with their teachers to plan for absences when they are pre-planned.

Finally, two other changes have been made. On January 14 and 15 the high school adjusted the semester testing schedule and removed the early dismissals on both of those days. That change gained back one full day of instruction. The second change will be the final day for seniors and doesn't pertain to other students. That date has now been set for Wednesday, May 19.



In less than four months, over 300 Elkhorn High School students will don graduation robes and cap their 13-year journey with a few short steps across the gymnasium floor. Approximately eighty five percent of our graduates will be hoping to continue their educational journey after graduation. The cost to set our graduates on the road to higher education can be prohibitive, with average annual tuition costs (excluding room and board, books, fees, etc.) exceeding \$7,000!

The Elkhorn Public Schools Foundation has a scholarship program in place to help our graduates achieve their goals; we're very proud to have awarded over \$350,000 in scholarships in the past five years. We manage scholarships which recognize a variety of accomplishments, including academics, athletics and volunteerism, as well as involvement in organizations and community service. Selection committees across the community choose recipients who best exemplify the spirit of each scholarship. If you, your business or your family would like to support our 2010 scholarship program, please contact me at 289-1727, ext.202. We welcome donations to existing scholarships or the creation of new scholarships - your tax-deductible gift can truly make an impact in the life of an Elkhorn graduate!

Be sure to check the Foundation's website at [www.elkhornfoundation.org](http://www.elkhornfoundation.org) or visit the scholarship link on Naviance for scholarship information.

The Foundation is proud to be part of the Elkhorn school district; we're looking forward to an exciting 2010, supporting our community, its educators and its students on the road to excellence in education. Elkhorn has a strong history of high achievement in our schools in many different areas; we hope you agree and would like to become involved. Please give me a call at 289-1727 for more information on our programs; I look forward to hearing from you!

Kim Riggle  
Executive Director  
Elkhorn Public Schools Foundation