

East Syracuse Elementary School

Newsletter

January 2021

Happy New Year!

I would like to wish the entire East Syracuse Elementary School community Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year. May all of us enjoy a happy, healthy, and productive New Year.

Please note that school is closed on Monday, January 18, 2021, for Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday. See our school calendar for other important events.

We will continue to practice Covid-19 safety protocols in 2021. This includes wear a mask that covers the mouth and nose, washing hands frequently, and remaining physically distant from each other. Our custodians and staff do a great job of sanitizing surfaces between student use. These practices have been very successful. As of the writing of this newsletter, not a single infection has originated from a school source (knock on wood). This does not mean that it will not happen. By following these measures, we reduce the likelihood of such a spread. We appreciate your support at home.

I want to remind our families that we do a series of safety drills each year to teach our students and our staff how to respond in various situations. A “lockdown” drill requires staff and students to practice hiding and being silent inside a locked room or office. We held such a drill in December. Our lockdown drills look a lot different this year. We do not huddle together and hide. Instead, teachers have students remain at their desks. They present a brief lesson on the purpose and process of a lockdown. We train our staff and students to respond only to law enforcement or a school authority figure. We will do three more lock-down drills one during each of the winter months. Please talk to your student/s about our fire and lockdown drills. Call me if you have any questions or concerns.

I also like to remind our school community in January, the start of a new year, that we are a Responsive Classroom school. Responsive Classroom practices stress social and emotional skills including Cooperation, Assertiveness, Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-control. Our staff begins building relationships on the first day of school. We do this every day all day. There is special emphasis of these traits during Morning Meetings that begin at 8:30am each day in each classroom. A Responsive Classroom class ends each day with closing circle to review the day’s activities. These meetings help us build community and relationships.

We compliment Responsive Classroom with the 7 Habits of Effective Kids. You have probably heard your student talk about these habits. The 7 Habits include: Be Proactive; Begin with the End in Mind; Put First Things First; Think Win-Win; Seek First to Understand then to Be Understood; Synergize; and Sharpen the Saw. Discussing these habits could be a good conversation starter over the evening meal.

This year, ESE will present its 28th annual science fair. This one will be very different because it will be a virtual fair. We align our *Science and Engineering Fair* to the New York State Science and Technology curriculum standards. This ensures coherence and alignment with the MOST's Science and Technology Fair. We hope to be able to compete though I assume the competition will be virtual also. Normally they host the event at the SRC arena on the OCC campus. Your children will bring home information about the fair in the coming weeks. It is never too early to begin thinking about project ideas!

We will begin administering the New York State ELA test in April and the Math test in May 2021. There are two days of testing for each. Tests are not timed but generally speaking, it takes most students about 45 minutes or less. The ELA test I have every reason to believe we will have a positive testing experience this year due to the teacher input along with the input from our families. The tests are a program assessment and *not* a student assessment. Our goal at East Syracuse Elementary is to have maximum participation. By doing so, we can demonstrate the positive impact of good instruction combined with family support at home. Call if you have any questions about the NYS tests.

Counselor's Corner

Welcome back to the counseling corner! I hope everyone will have a relaxing and restful holiday recess. I wanted to take a minute to highlight the introduction of Mindful Mondays. Each Monday there will be a mindfulness activity during the morning announcements. When we get into the habit of practicing daily mindfulness it helps us to reduce stress, refresh our bodies and be more focused. We have introduced mindfulness while washing our hands, practicing deep breathing and talking about our emotions. Take time to practice mindfulness with your child each day to help them get into the habit of slowing down and calming their minds and bodies.

Character Education

Here's what's happening in January 2021 with PBIS...

Welcome back! Our team is hopeful that everyone will have a relaxing and restful holiday recess. We are excited about all things 2021 including our January word of the month. In January, we will be focusing on Leadership. Leadership is a perfect word to begin the new year as we look for opportunities for our students to shine as leaders.

Leadership is defined as the act of leading a group of people or organization. We can look for ways to teach students about the importance of leadership while giving them opportunities to practice. This extends into our students' lives at home. Leaders are cultivated within the school setting and within the home environment. Be sure you are modeling qualities of a good leader, looking for opportunities for your child to be a leader and discussing what makes a good leader. Check out discussion points below to have with your child while you eat dinner together or spend time in the car.

Read About It!

Grace for President

By: Kelly DiPucchio

The Rainbow Fish

By: Marcus Pfister and J Allison James

Sheila Rae, The Brave

By: Kevin Henkes

Practice It!

Talk with your child about examples of leaders in the world around you. Discuss what makes them strong leaders.

Talk About It!

What does it mean to be a strong leader?

Tell me about someone who you think is a strong leader?

Do you think you are a strong leader? If not, how can we practice leadership?

Tell me about a time when you have had to be a leader? What went well? What could you have done differently?

Our character education theme for January is “**Leadership**”. I hope you will join our staff in highlighting this theme, perhaps over a dinnertime conversation.

Ronald L. Perry
Principal
East Syracuse Elementary School