

ALEXANDER ELEMENTARY

Monthly Newsletter



FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER -Mrs. Rouse, Principal

It is hard to believe that we are more than half way through the school year! I am so proud of our staff and students who are a constant reminder that this is a GREAT place to be. We have seen tremendous growth in our students, socially and academically.

Our kindergartners have made impressive gains this school year, and we have seen great improvement in not only their academics, but also in becoming acclimated to school, communicating with others, and their capacity to feel and show respect, empathy and determination.

Our building adopted a new math curriculum, iReady. We have worked to provide professional development opportunities for our staff in effort to support successful implementation this school year. Our staff has done a tremendous job, and we are beginning to see promising results, which is a good sign that we are moving in the right direction. During the first semester, we were able to move an additional 96 students who were previously considered "off track" to "on track". We are committed to seeing this number continue to grow.

We have a number of exciting changes planned for our reading program, which I will discuss in more detail on page 4 of this newsletter. We continue to provide daily reading intervention for students in need, under the direction of our Literacy Specialist, Shauna Kostival. This allows us the ability to provide targeted reading support to our students.

While academic growth is among our top priorities, we also focus on the social and emotional well-being of our students. We have had more than 450 Spartans Live RED nominations this school year. Students have been recognized by staff members for showing respect, empathy, and determination. We have also had a number of classes and individual students complete service learning projects, helping them move one step closer to becoming a SUPER SPARTAN!

We are incredibly proud of our students. We encourage you to continue to support your child's academics at home and become involved whenever possible. What you do at home can have the biggest impact on your child's success here at school!

FEB.16/17 PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent teacher conferences will be held on Thursday, February 16 (from 5 p.m.- 8:15 p.m) and Friday, February 17 (from 8 a.m.- 11:15 a.m.) . Make your appointment by calling the elementary office at 740-698-8831 between the hours of 7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. **The secretaries will begin scheduling conferences on February 6.** Please **DO NOT** call to schedule a conference prior to this date. You need to speak directly to the school secretaries to make sure your appointment is confirmed. Do not leave a message on the answering machine.



PARENT- SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

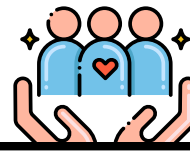


COMMUNICATION is an essential component of a successful relationship between school and home, and we welcome and encourage parent involvement. There is extensive research showing the correlation between parental involvement and student success, including academic gains for students, higher grades and test scores, improved social skills and time on task, better attendance and participation, and decreased behavioral problems in the classroom.

We encourage you to communicate with your child's teacher whenever you have a question or concern about what is happening in the classroom. Your child's teacher spends a lot of time with your child throughout the day, and they are the best source of information when it pertains to your child here at school. If your question or concern cannot be addressed by the teacher, reaching out to the principal can be a good next step.

There are many ways to communicate with the school. Parent teacher conferences are a fantastic place to start; however, there are other avenues. All teachers can be contacted via school email or by telephone through the school office. Many teachers also use our Remind messaging system to communicate with parents.

It is important to be mindful that a teacher's day is very busy, and throughout the school day our focus is on your child. Therefore, if you contact your child's teacher or a building principal, please be aware that a response may not come immediately.



Spartan Service Learning

We are committed to doing our part to help promote civic responsibility among our students. Each year we challenge our students to become **SUPER SPARTANS** by earning a Live RED nomination for respect, empathy, and determination AND completing two community service projects throughout the year.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate **Austin King** and **Nick Maskiell** for completing one service learning opportunity during the first semester.

Austin and Nick both worked with their Cub Scout group to help shop for and purchase food to donate back to the Athens County Food Pantry. Austin and Nick both donated money they earned through selling popcorn to help fund this project. Austin thought this was a good project because he wanted to help others who need it, including other kids. Nick learned that it is good to help other people in your community. We are proud of both Austin and Nick for participating in such great work to benefit their community.

Please remember that it is not too late for your child to become a Super Spartan. If your child completes a community service project, please contact your child's teacher for more information.



Mark your calendar!

The Alexander PTO will be hosting
their annual

Alexander Elementary School Carnival

Friday, March 10, 2023

6-8 p.m.

Please join us for an evening of fun!



JANUARY STAFF MEMBERS AND STAR STUDENTS OF THE MONTH



We are excited to announce our Staff Members and Star Students of the Month for the month of January! Each month we will recognize two staff members for their continued hard work and dedication to our students. We will also recognize one Star Student from each grade level. These students are nominated by their teachers for exemplifying our Spartans Live RED characteristics of Respect, Empathy, and Determination.

STAFF OF THE MONTH:

Shauna Kostival is officially our Reading Specialist, but ask anyone and they will tell you that Mrs. Kostival wears many hats in our school! She is loved by staff and students alike. She makes students feel successful, appreciated, and loved. She greets everyone with a smile and she is a tremendous source of support and guidance for our teachers.

Carla Pratt-Harrington is a 5th grade Intervention Specialist. She is kind, patient, and willing to jump in and help out with anything that needs to be done. Others recognize her for going above and beyond to meet the needs of her students academically, socially, and emotionally. She is also an excellent resource and support for our teachers.

STAR STUDENTS OF THE MONTH:

Millie Lahman is our Kindergarten Star Student of the Month. Millie is a big help in the classroom. She is kind to her classmates and is always quick to help others, including her teacher!

Esmee Moore is our 1st grade Star Student. Esmee is a leader in math class. She shows respect to her peers and offers to help them whenever she is able to!

Emma Metcalf is our 2nd grade Star Student. Emma demonstrates respect by helping keep her class and school clean. She is a friend to everyone and goes out of her way to help others.

Gunner Crawford is our 3rd grade Student of the Month. Gunner shows dedication to his school work. He has made astounding progress this year thanks to his hard work, especially in writing!

Ava Haddox is our 4th grade student of the month. Ava tries her best each and every day. She is also an excellent friend who always demonstrates kindness and respect.

Noel Allen is our 5th grade Star Student. Noel has a fantastic attitude and a great work ethic. She approaches every challenge with a smile and is a wonderful student and friend.

Congratulations to all!

Winter Weather Reminders:



- Please make sure that your child is dressed for the weather! We will continue to have outside recess.
- Winter weather brings the possibility of delays, closings, and early releases. Information will be communicated via the Remind system, our school website, and local stations.

Important Dates in FEBRUARY:



- February 10- *Progress Reports go home*
- February 13- *Specials Rotation 4 Begins*
- February 16- *NO SCHOOL; evening P/T conferences*
- February 17- *NO SCHOOL; morning P/T conferences*
- February 20- *NO SCHOOL; President's Day*
- February 28- *Specials Rotation 5 Begins*



Focus on READING

EXCITING CHANGES are coming in the way we think about and teach reading at Alexander Elementary. I have been working closely with Megan Karr, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and Shauna Kostival, our Reading Specialist, to identify areas for improvement in our reading instruction. Over the next several months I will be sharing information with families to help all stakeholders understand what our school is doing to ensure that every student has access to high quality, research based reading instruction. Along the way, I will also explain how these changes will impact your student.

This month our teachers will receive an introduction to the Science of Reading (SOR) during our February Professional Development, being held on February 16. The Science of Reading is not a curriculum, rather it is the culmination of decades of research on how the human brain learns to read and helps us to understand the cognitive processes that are essential for reading proficiency.

To better align our instruction with best practices in order to better serve our students, our teachers will begin an intensive training in LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling). This training will be a two year commitment, and though the wheels are already in motion, we are set to officially get started in August 2023.

In coordination with these efforts, Mrs. Kostival and I have been working to improve our reading intervention program. The state of Ohio requires that all elementary schools complete progress monitoring to determine whether a student is on track in reading. Students in kindergarten through third grade who are not on track receive targeted, small group reading intervention that is specific to their needs. We have seen success with our current reading intervention program, but we recognize that there is room for improvement, and we intend to do just that. Some of these changes will help ensure that students spend more time with their teacher, receiving instruction and support.

We will also be creating a Literacy Steering Committee to help the district identify concerns in reading, and to help guide the district in a beneficial and agreed upon direction by identifying a core mission in reading. **This committee will be formed some time in March, and we will encourage community participation.**

I hope that this gives you a brief snapshot and overview of some of the information I will be sharing over the next several months. I will continue to share this information as we initiate and implement new changes. You are the most important partner we have in your child's education. Having you be informed on our direction, including the instructional practices that will impact your child is one piece in strengthening that partnership.

CONGRATULATIONS, MRS. WILKOF!

While our building is making big changes in our approach to reading, we have several teachers who have also been taking significant steps to improve their skill set in order to better serve their students in reading. Mrs. Kaylee Wilkof is just one of those dedicated teachers. Mrs. Wilkof is currently working towards her certification as a Dyslexia Specialist through a rigorous program offered through Mt. Saint Joseph University. Mrs. Wilkof completed the Science of Reading certification and passed the KPEERI. She is now a Structured Literacy Classroom Teacher through the Center of Effective Reading Instruction (CERI). Congratulations, Mrs. Wilkof!

