

PRENDERGAST AND YOU

October 2009 Newsletter



FROM THE PEN OF THE PRINCIPAL...

This year John G. Prendergast School is home to over 830 K-6 scholars. The staff believes that each student is unique and can learn. First, we believe that every child can and will encounter a challenging curriculum with high standards of performance. At the same time, we believe that learning must also be differentiated, engaging, and reflect the individual needs of each learner.

One of our mottos is “Excellence is the norm at John G. Prendergast School.” How will we accomplish excellence? The learning community of Prendergast will:

- *Set clear goals for themselves.**
- *Believe everyone is everyone’s responsibility.**
- *Create a collaborative school climate.**
- *Use data to drive all instructional decisions and monitor student progress throughout the year.**

Strong relationships among the school, the families and the community are essential to academic success. Research has clearly indicated that the greatest indicator of student success is the level of family involvement in education. I challenge each family to work collaboratively with the staff of our school by attending all our school events, by meeting with our teachers on a regular basis, and by joining our PTO.

It is indeed an honor for me to be the principal of John G. Prendergast School. It is an honor to work with our dedicated staff, awesome scholars, welcoming parents, my professional peers, and the supportive community members of Ansonia. I know and believe that we are all in store for a great year. Welcome aboard!

Mr. Lawrence P. Di Palma

Prendergast School **Pledge Established**

You might ask what is The Prendergast School Pledge? It is the code of conduct by which the adults and children of Prendergast School community live.

Each morning during announcements the Prendergast community recites this together, all grades, many voices but one pledge.

As a member of the Prendergast School community,

I will be the best I can be.

I will respect myself.

I will treat all people with respect.

I will take responsibility for what I say and do.

I will resolve all conflicts peacefully.

I will respect the property of others.

I will make positive contributions to my school community.

I will believe in myself.

From Our Nurses...

Medications

If prescription and over the counter medications need to be given during the school hours by a nurse, a form must be filled out and signed by your health care provider and the parent/guardian. Students can not have any medications in school without authorization from the nurse.

Illness: Strep Throat

Precautions must be taken to protect others. Children can return to school after taking the first antibiotic for a strep illness.

Head Lice

Call your child's health care provider for a prescription shampoo and directions for use. Immediately notify the school nurse

so classmates can be checked. After the lice have been treated effectively at home, your child may return to school but, may not ride the bus. You must bring your child to the nurse's office for a head check before your child can enter the classroom.

Fever:

Any child with a temperature of 99.9 degrees or higher must stay home for 24 hours or until the temperature returns to normal.

Pink Eye:

This is highly contagious. Children may return to school with written permission from your treating health care provider.

Absences:

Notify the school attendance line (736-5021) if your child will be home for a minor illness or a prolonged illness. Any absences for 3 or more consecutive days require a note from your health care provider.

Emergency Numbers:

The office must have an Emergency Form for every child. Notify the office immediately of any changes to your emergency form.

Physical Injuries:

If your child is injured, please ask your health care provider for a note to allow your child to use crutches, splints, etc. A note is also needed from the health care provider to excuse your child from gym and recess.

THANK YOU PTO

Thank you to our PTO who did a wonderful job creating our September foyer display. The J. G. Prendergast rocket is awesome. Their creativity is appreciated and admired by all! We can't wait to see what is in store for Halloween!

Reading Strategies for Parents

Read To Your Child.

The most important thing you can do for your readers is to read to them. Read things that they are interested in and things for just pure enjoyment. Stop and talk with them about what you have just read - you thought it was funny. I liked the way the author said something, you liked that idea. Talk about any part of the story or writing that you want.

Point out different aspects of the text; for example: see how the pictures help tell the story, did you hear all those rhyming words, what do you think will happen next, look at all the lines that repeat, see how long that word is, did you notice all the words that started with Z. We already know a lot about this story because of something else we've read or heard about.

Remember, as a significant adult in your reader's life, your uses of reading and writing for real purposes, enjoyment and information, are the most powerful demonstrations you can give. Just as your child learned to speak by your demonstrations, she/he will learn about reading through your modeling.

Uninterrupted Reading

Remember that the most important aspect of reading is constructing meaning.

If you have a reader who reads making some miscues (unexpected responses to text) that are mostly meaning-making, do not interrupt except when the miscues do not make sense or do not sound like language.

If a reader reads the sentence "The horse ran down the road" as "The pony ran down the road," do not "correct" the reader. That sentence made sense in the context of the story and sounded like language. But if your child reads "The house ran down the road,"

ask if that made sense. Then ask the child to reread the text to make it sensible. If he or she says it did make sense, ask that it be reread anyway because it didn't make sense to you.

Focus readers on reading to make sense of what is most important.

Skip and Go On

Too often readers will not take any kind of risk in an attempt to read something unknown. They use no other strategy than sound-it-out or ask for help.

When a reader comes to a word he/she doesn't know and cannot identify after a very brief sounding out attempt no more than a couple of seconds, ask him/her to skip the unknown word, phrase, or concept. Have the child read on to try to gain the meaning through the context of the rest of that sentence or maybe several of the following sentences to help determine the unknown word.

Suggest that he/she reread to help find the meaning. Sometimes hearing the rest of the sentence or the beginning of the sentence again provides enough information to give a clue to the unknown word.

This is an automatic strategy used by efficient and proficient readers. Since reading is a meaning construction process, knowing how to say the word is less important than knowing what the sentence says in this particular context.

Monthly Notes From Mrs. Merlone on Ansonia's Website

Carol Merlone, the Ansonia Superintendent of Schools, presents "Notes from the Desk of the Superintendent" from each month's regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting. Check it out each month!