

The Twelfth St. Times

12th Street Elementary
6501 South 12th Street
Portage, MI 49024

Principal: Mr. Ron Jones
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Dec. 2009

From Our Principal:



DEAR PARENTS AND STUDENTS:

On behalf of the 12th Street Staff I would like to wish you and your family HAPPY HOLIDAYS! This school year is flying by. It is hard to believe that you're receiving the December/January 12th Street Times already! School will be closing at the end of the day on Friday, December 18th, for Winter Break, and will resume on Monday, January 4th. I encourage you to read the "Times" in its entirety so that you will be aware of all the information and activities pertaining to your children.

I am pleased to see so many parents attending our PTO meetings this year and getting involved in our PTO. We would like to see even more of you. Our next PTO meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 19th at 7:00 p.m. Please join us!

TOYS NOT ALLOWED – Just a reminder, at this time of year when children are excited about their new toys, please remember that toys are not allowed at school as they cause classroom interruptions. If children are bringing a special item for "show & tell", it is to remain in their bag/backpack for the remainder of the day.

END OF FIRST SEMESTER – Friday, January 29, 2010, there will be **no school** for students. This is the official end of our first semester and is a work day for teachers as they prepare report cards. Report cards will be sent home with students on February 12, 2010. Please sign and return the signature sheet so that we know that you have received your child's report card. Thank you.
Ron Jones, Principal

VISITORS

Parents, if you would like to visit your child's classroom or have lunch with your child, you must stop by the office first to sign in and pick up your Visitor Badge. We also ask that you do NOT visit your child's classroom with younger siblings.

SEVERE WEATHER & SCHOOL CLOSINGS

When severe weather causes school to be closed during the day, please remember the following procedures:

Radio stations and television stations (News 3 and Channel 8) are notified immediately, in order to alert parents that school closing is imminent. They also carry news in the evening concerning the following day.

Secondary students are dismissed first so that they are home when younger siblings arrive. Elementary buses do not arrive here

for a minimum of 1-2 hours after the initial closing announcement.

Our students who walk home may be dismissed before the buses arrive, in order to let them get home before conditions worsen. Please be certain that you review immediately with your children **WHERE THEY ARE TO GO IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY CLOSING**. You are welcome to pick up **YOUR OWN** children, but please don't try to pick up others.

FOR SECURITY REASONS
we are unable to deliver last-minute messages at these times of emergency.



SNOW DAY NOTIFICATION – MORE IMPORTANT INFO...

When the school district closes for a snow day we not only notify the news media by 6 a.m., but we have that information available online and by phone. Visit our web site at www.portageps.org and click on the “Parents & Visitors” box and then on that next page look for the school closing link on the right-hand side. This link will take you to the WWMT-TV web site which posts school closings (we have found that this is faster than waiting until someone can reach the district administration building to post it ourselves). Also, you can call the *school district’s “School Closing Hotline” at 323-6800*. This message is updated at the same time that we notify the news media of our closing. Also, note that when the district cancels classes for a snow day, that automatically cancels afternoon and evening events that take place in our buildings. Portage Cable Access, Channel 20, also posts school closing information.



Please let us know if you have a child who will be eligible to enroll in school in **August of 2010**. (To be eligible for entry in school, a child must be **FIVE YEARS OLD ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2010**.)

If you have a neighbor who has a child in this age group, please pass the word along that it is time to notify 12th Street School. Thanks for your help!

RECESS--INDOORS OR OUT??

We do check the temperature and the wind chill index each day. We believe that children need to go outside daily. We consult a wind chill chart and children **DO** go out for 28 minutes each day when the temperature is at least 0. When we are close to the “danger” zone, the younger children are kept in and the older ones (3rd-5th) are given a choice of staying in or going out for recess. On some occasions the condition of the playground is such that we do not send the children out. You can help! **Please send your children to school dressed for the weather! An extra pair of socks that “live” here at school also come in handy when feet get wet. With proper clothing, children enjoy the time to play with friends and run around.**

WRITING – FOCUS CORRECTING

Your child will be doing a great deal of writing this year. Frequent writing is essential to your child's language development. We will be doing a lot of journal writing and quick-writes we call Type One and Type Two writing. We will also do more formal writing, which will be stories and other compositions. We call these pieces of writing Type Three and Type Four.

A special feature of Type Three and Four writing is focus correcting. On each piece of writing, we will concentrate on a few aspects of writing such as end punctuation or reasons to support a point of view. We call these focus correction areas (FCA). Focus correcting is based on the belief that student writing improves more quickly when the student works to improve a few writing skills at a time. The focus correction areas are always discussed and taught before writing begins, and you will know immediately what they are because they are written at the top of your child's paper. When you see *FCA* written at the top of your child's papers you will know what is being emphasized in that piece of writing.

HEADCHECKERS

Our wonderful, faithful head checkers have done a great job of alerting us to the few cases of head lice we have had this year. A big thank you to the parents and our visiting nurses who have done this job.

NEED HELP WITH HOMEWORK NOW???

You can get live help with homework online! Go to www.portagelibrary.info. Enter your grade level and the subject you need help with: Math, Science, Social Studies, or English. Connect to a qualified tutor in the *Online Classroom* for up to 20 minutes of live help! Tutors are available 7 days a week from 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

EMERGENCIES SOMETIMES HAPPEN

We need to have up-to-date information at school. Please be sure to keep the school informed if emergency contact people or phone numbers change.

JUST A REMINDER...

Parents please check out our Lost & Found Bins, located in the cafeteria near the exit for the playground. Next time you are here at school feel free to dig through to find any of your child's missing belongings. There are several coats and sweatshirts in the bins just waiting for their owners to come and claim them. It would be easier to

find the owners if you would label your child's belongings that come to and from school.

DO YOU DO BABYSITTING IN YOUR HOME?

We are in the process of updating our babysitting list that we give out to parents needing that service. If you would like to be included on this list, please stop by the office or send us a note with your name, address and telephone number. You may also include what ages you are accepting and whether or not you do babysitting during breaks and during summer.

PLEASE WRITE A NOTE:

The office must have a hand written note from a parent or guardian for any changes in transportation for students at the end of the day. We will not be taking phone calls to change who will be picking up your children. It's too hectic trying to answer phones and get the messages to students to tell them of the changes. This is also a safety and legal issue as we don't really know it's you on the other end of the phone making these changes. Teachers need to know this information in the morning so they can continue teaching throughout the day without so many interruptions. Thank you for your cooperation with this matter.

GIRLS ON THE RUN COACHES NEEDED:

Coaches are needed to lead a team of our third through fifth graders during Girls on the Run (GOTR) March through May. GOTR is a national program that offers a life-changing curriculum. The program combines self-esteem enhancing, uplifting workouts with training for a 5k run/walk celebration event and is in its fourth year of existence in the greater Kalamazoo area.

Greater Kalamazoo GOTR provides comprehensive training for coaches who will lead the girls in lessons that are intended to reduce the incidences of low self-esteem and depression, negative body image that sometimes results in serious eating disorders, high risk behaviors such as smoking, underage drinking, use of illegal drugs and early onset of sexual experiences, and violent crimes. Each lesson is accompanied by a running activity and work out designed to enhance the girls' overall physical health as well.



This after school program will be offered to 30 girls two afternoons per week of 9 weeks beginning the week of March 15, 2010. Coaches must be available to attend one day of Girls on the Run Training in March and become first aid and CPR certified. GKGOTR is a collaboration of many area businesses, agencies, organizations and individuals who are committed to the health and well being of our area's children. Donations, sponsorships, participant fees and in-kind contributions from several sources make it possible to continue to bring this program to Kalamazoo.

If you are interested in learning more about how you can be a part of Girls on the Run, please contact Connie Stoll @ 323-6575.

BUS BEHAVIOR

As we prepare for winter, we request that you review our shared expectations for bus and walking-to-school behaviors with your children. Please remind your children that while waiting for the school bus they are to arrive 5 minutes before the scheduled stop.

Children are to wait in a group at least 10 feet away from the edge of a roadway. Walkers need to stay on the designated route and be polite to the neighbors on their way to school. Children should not talk to strangers along the way. It is tempting when we are all gathered together to play and rough house but remind your children that not all drivers are watching for children. Encourage your son or daughter to create a safe environment by not running or chasing others. All elementary students know that snowballs are not permitted....not even at the bus stop or on the way to school.

Whenever possible we encourage parents to help at bus stops. Your presence helps to create a safer environment and is a great way for our children to start their day.