

Gator Gazette

HUGH GREGG SCHOOL - WHERE WE PLEDGE TO LEARN TOGETHER EVERY DAY!

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 4

DECEMBER 2011



PTA President's Message

I hope everyone had a safe and happy Thanksgiving. I know this year my family had a lot to be thankful for, and I hope yours did too! December is one of my favorite months. I love the magic of the first snow fall that sticks, watching the kids get excited as their holiday traditions draw near, and the anticipation of the New Year.



On Saturday December 10th from 9am-11am we will be having our annual Santa's breakfast and workshop. Your children will get to shop for their family and friends with the help of our elves—no parents aloud in the work shop. It's a lot of fun, and it's great to see the kid's faces as they work hard to pick out that perfect gift! Then you can get a bite to eat and your kids can tell Santa what they would like. Notes and envelope will be going home for this event, so please keep an eye out for them!

We still need someone to help us out with BLT. If you are interested, please email me at daebanas8@yahoo.com. I hope the magic of this month reaches you and yours, and everyone has a safe, happy and joyous Holiday and New Year!

Stacy Banas, President

December dates to remember

12/1

No Salvation Army program

12/6

PTA Meeting
6:30 p.m.

12/10

Santa's breakfast
9-11 a.m.

12/22 through 1/2
NO SCHOOL

School re-opens
on Tuesday,
1/3/12

Principal's Post

Dear Families,

"Then give the world the best you have and the best will come back to you." ~Madeline Bridges

Something about the holiday season moves many of us to look beyond our own lives and reach out a hand to others. Here at Gregg in the past few weeks, we have generously donated to the Chemung County SPCA, The Corning Meals on Wheels, The Salvation Army Food Bank, and the district coat bank! It certainly is a time when we stop and lend a helping hand and Gregg School continues to carry on a long tradition of bigheartedness! What a blessing to be affiliated with a school community with such kind values. By being a family that participates when they can in such giving, you are instilling the qualities of character, service, and leadership in our young people - our next generation!

December promises to be as busy as ever with all of the holiday events and traditions. Our Gator band and Chorus will be performing on Thursday, December 15 during an afternoon assembly for students and in the evening at 7:00 pm for families. Additionally, I do hope your family will consider joining in the fun at the annual "Breakfast with Santa" event sponsored by the PTA. It is such a heartwarming event complete with holiday shopping for the children! Another December favorite is Pajama Day on December 21st. It really is ok to wear your favorite "jammies" to school on that day with all your friends and teachers!

Back to Madeline Bridges' quote- I do hope you realize that the Gregg School staff gives the best that they have each day to assist, support, nurture, and inspire your children each day! In turn, the best does come back to us! We thank you for your continuing support of your child's education and for sacrificing all you do to make that happen! The things that may seem to go unnoticed like ensuring that homework gets completed, that the instruments get practiced, the books returned, the items donated, the notes returned, and the children dressed for the weather- we are so thankful that you attend to them- they all add up to LOVE!

Thanks for sending the very best children to Gregg School every day!

Wishing you the best,

Ann Collins



What's happening at the Southeast Steuben County Library this month?

Winter Solstice Celebration

Wednesday, December 21, 3:30-5pm
 Celebrate the new Winter season with Winter themed stories, food and crafts.



Fit and Strong Together

Thursday, December 29, 10:30 a.m.

Join this community wide initiative for healthy children. In conjunction with the Cornell Cooperative Extension and the YMCA. We'll hear stories and learn about nutrition and active play.



DECEMBER 2011						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
		1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Month of GIVING

Week 1: December 4-10

Donations for local food pantries– canned and non-perishable products as well as paper supplies.

Week 2: December 11-17

Donations for SPCA– cat litter, dog or cat food, etc.

Week 3: December 18-23

Donations for the Little Red Bookshelf– gently used children's books.

Week 4: December 24-31

Donations of winter clothes of all sizes to be given to the Salvation Army clothing room

Starting December 4, running the entire month, the library will be accepting donations for other local organizations.

SAVE-THE-DATE: December 10 at 9-11 a.m.

Don't miss Gregg School's annual "Santa's Breakfast!"

It is time to make your list and check it twice!

Next PTA Meeting:

Tuesday, December 6 at 6:30 pm

Join us! Childcare available.



Find us on
Facebook

Search for "Hugh Gregg Elementary PTA" and hit LIKE!

Visit us on the web to view a color version of this newsletter:

<http://www.corningarea schools.com/gregg/index.htm>



The Fourth and Fifth grade chorus will participate in the following performances.

Saturday, December 3 @ 10 AM
Corning Museum of Glass

Saturday, December 3 @ 11:00 AM
Ben Patterson Inn

Wednesday, December 7 @ 3 PM
Emeritus Senior Living

******Thursday, December 15 @ 7 PM– Main Concert******
Gregg School Gymnasium



Invitation to Breakfast at Gregg School

If you have ever wondered or been interested in learning about having your child attend breakfast at school, here is some information to take into consideration.

Breakfast is served daily in our cafeteria starting at 7:50 am until 8:20 am. Children have time to eat prior to entering their class at 8:20 am. The cost for the meal is \$1.30, 25¢ for those who meet the requirements for reduced meals or free for qualifying families. There are many healthy selections available 5 days/week (and hot menu items too!) and we encourage you to give it a try!

Some thoughts about eating breakfast:

- 1. No child should start the school day hungry** - Studies show that children who skip breakfast are at an academic disadvantage: They have slower memory recall, make more errors and are more likely to repeat a grade.
- 2. Not all children are able to eat at home-** Whether they come from a family with a tight budget, are too busy, or simply have a poor appetite in the morning, not all children get the energy and nutrients they need to get a healthy start to the morning.
- 3. Your school has a breakfast program!** – Every day, meals are available to students that meet USDA guidelines. They provide $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Recommended Daily Value of protein, calcium, iron, vitamin A and vitamin C for the day, and less than 30percent of calories from fat.
- 4. ... and can have great payoffs!** Studies show that eating breakfast can help math, reading, and standardized test scores. Breakfast also helps students pay attention in class, perform problem-solving tasks, and improves memory. Eating breakfast in the school can help reduce tardiness and absences, and help children behave better.



PE NEWS

Students in grades 3-5 had a Physical Fitness Data Sheet with their recent report card. On the last PE day before Thanksgiving break we did a lesson together on the Smart Board to learn how to read the data. Information that was covered:

1. Please make sure personal information is correct (name, gender and birth date)
2. Please make sure classroom teacher and grade level is correct

The following are events that we participate in:

- 1 Curl-ups (sit-ups) = Abdominal Strength
 - 2 Shuttle run = Agility
 - 3 Sit and Reach = Flexibility
 - 4 One-Mile Run = Endurance
 - 5 1/2-Mile Run (3rd grade only, some 3rd grades completed the mile run)
 - 6 Pull-ups and Flexed-Arm Hang = Upper Body Strength
4. Scores are measured in the following: Curl-ups (how many in one minute), Shuttle Run (in seconds), Sit and Reach (in centimeters), Mile and ½ Mile (in minutes and seconds), Pull-ups (in how many repetitions) and Flexed Arm Hang (in seconds)
 5. The column for your scores is how your child did
 6. The column for your percentiles is how your child did on average with the national criteria (100 being best)
 7. If a child meets the National Requirements their percentile will be 50 or higher
 8. If a child meets the Presidential Requirements their percentile will be 85 or higher
 9. To be a National award winner one would have to be in the 50th percentile or higher in every event. To be a Presidential award winner one would have to be in the 85th percentile or higher in every event.

The bottom section gives suggestions on how to improve specific areas when not meeting the National or Presidential Requirements.

With the winter-like weather on its way, please remember to pack your sneakers in your backpack or plastic bag on PE days!

Enjoy your Holidays and we will see you all in 2012!!!

Mr. Wert

PARENTS—YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

(excerpted from Thomas Freidman, 11/19/11)

There's no question that a great teacher can make a huge difference in a student's achievement, and we need to recruit, train and reward more such teachers. But here's what some new studies are also showing: We need better parents. **Parents more focused on their children's education can also make a huge difference in a student's achievement.**

How do we know? Every three years, the Program for International Student Assessment, or PISA, tests 15-year-olds in the world's leading industrialized nations on their reading comprehension and ability to use what they've learned in math and science to solve real problems — the most important skills for succeeding in college and life. America's 15-year-olds have not been distinguishing themselves in the PISA exams compared with students in Singapore, Finland and Shanghai.

To better understand why some students thrive taking the PISA tests and others do not, the PISA team went to the parents of 5,000 students and interviewed them "about how they raised their kids and then compared that with the test results" for each of those years. Two weeks ago, the PISA team published the three main findings of its study:

"Fifteen-year-old students whose parents often read books with them during their first year of primary school show markedly higher scores in PISA 2009 than students whose parents read with them infrequently or not at all. **The performance advantage among students whose parents read to them in their early school years is evident regardless of the family's socioeconomic background.** Parents' engagement with their 15-year-olds is strongly associated with better performance in PISA."

PISA overseer, Andreas Schleicher, explained to me that "**just asking your child how was their school day and showing genuine interest in the learning that they are doing can have the same impact as hours of private tutoring.** It is something every parent can do, no matter what their education level or social background."

For instance, the PISA study revealed that "students whose parents reported that they had read a book with their child 'every day or almost every day' or 'once or twice a week' during the first year of primary school have markedly higher scores in PISA 2009 than students whose parents reported that they had read a book with their child 'never or almost never' or only 'once or twice a month.' On average, the score difference is 25 points, the equivalent of well over half a school year."

Yes, students from more well-to-do households are more likely to have more involved parents. "However," the PISA team found, "even when comparing students of similar socioeconomic backgrounds, those students whose parents regularly read books to them when they were in the first year of primary school score 14 points higher, on average, than students whose parents did not."

The kind of parental involvement matters, as well. "For example," the PISA study noted, "on average, the score point **difference in reading that is associated with parental involvement is largest when parents read a book with their child, when they talk about things they have done during the day, and when they tell stories to their children.**" The score point difference is smallest when parental involvement takes the form of simply playing with their children.

Another study called "Back to School: How parent involvement affects student achievement," found something "somewhat surprising," wrote Barth: "Parent involvement can take many forms, but only a few of them relate to higher student performance. Of those that work, parental actions that support children's learning at home are most likely to have an impact on academic achievement at school.

"Monitoring homework; making sure children get to school; rewarding their efforts and talking up the idea of going to college. These parent actions are linked to better attendance, grades, test scores, and preparation for college," Barth wrote.