Happy New Year! The staff at Highland Lakes is excited to continue into 2020 with a variety of exciting learning opportunities. We have several afterschool programs to interest your child and help enrich their learning. The opportunities include: Face to Face tutoring, a Coding Computer Club, a Spanish Club, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics-STEM (primary and intermediate) Academies, and an Art Club. We are proud of all of the opportunities we are providing to meet the needs of all of our students!

As you kick off the new year, please make the following suggestions high on your child’s academic priority list:
- Read or be read to at least 15-20 minutes each day
- Incorporate “real world” problem-solving skills into the day
- Make meaningful connections between what is taught at school and what is happening in your child’s surroundings

Florida Standards testing is rapidly approaching. Please make sure your child has a good breakfast and is well rested before the tests each day. Highland Lakes Elementary’s School grade can be affected by the number of students who do not take the tests due to absences. Please make every effort to make sure that your child is present and on time for the tests.

Coming to school and eating in our courtyard on Fridays with your child is a special treat that I am sure is treasured by you and your child. Pinellas County School guidelines prohibit anyone other than a child’s parent/legal guardian from taking a child outside for lunch. Please remember to only take your child outside to eat. Thanks for your help and cooperation on this important safety issue.

If you bring in birthday treats, please make sure that they follow Pinellas County School Healthy guidelines. Approved snacks include: crackers, fruit, pretzels, muffins, vegetables, juice boxes, trail mix, granola, applesauce cups, cereal bars, yogurt, and Rice Crispy Treats. All food must be store-bought and in its original container.

Communication is important to me to help me best meet your family’s needs. Please feel free to email, call or drop by with comments, concerns or kudos.

Mrs. Gehringer
Principal

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**JANUARY IS NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH**

We are fortunate to have 7 mentors at HLE, but we need more! With 545 students, only a small percentage are able to participate in the Lunch Pals Program. Lunch Pals are mentors that have lunch once a week with a student. If you are interested in becoming a mentor, go to pcsb.org/mentor or contact Suzy Jones at jonessusa@pcsb.org or 727-724-1429.
PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Hard to believe the new year is here. The physical education department at Highland Lakes Elementary is very excited about the new year. We have already made goals for the new year to help encourage sportsmanship and cooperation among our students. We are ready to continue to GROW our students in having school pride and being a good student, using physical activity!

As the new year begins, we encourage our families to set goals with your children regarding getting more exercise. Exercise is proven to help reduce stress and help anxiety, while promoting uplifting feelings and overall better health. What a better way to start the new year then to create family goals together to encourage better mental and physical health!

Here’s what is coming for this third report period:

K-2: Rhythm and Dance, Kicking, Jump Rope, Throwing and Catching, and Review of Locomotor Skills
3-5: Dance, Striking, Jump Rope, More Invasion Games, and Lifetime Activities

When we get back from break, we will be reviewing PE expectations and guidelines. Our goal is for your children to be good sports and take ownership in their learning, not only at PE, but also in their classrooms and at home. Remember if you have any questions you can ALWAYS email us at the emails below.

As a physical education program, we just want to say how thankful we are that you entrust us with your students. We have amazing students here at HLE and it is a result of our amazing families. Thank you for all you do for our school. We wish you a nice Winter Break! See you in the NEW YEAR!

Coach Lester (lesterde@pcsb.org)
Coach Mac (mcdowellja@pcsb.org)
Coach Chris (juraskinjc@pcsb.org)

We would LOVE to see pictures of you and your family being active over the break!
Please send pictures to lesterde@pcsb.org so we can celebrate!

NEWS FROM THE MUSIC ROOM

Congratulations to all chorus students who participated in the 2019 Renaissance December concert, as well as the Chorus concert at Carwise Middle School. We will have several more performances this year that you may want to put on your calendar! We will begin learning the music for these shows very shortly ☺ -Ms. K

Here are the remaining dates for concerts in 2020:

1st grade- Valentine’s Day
Feb 12 at 7:00pm and Feb 13 at 8:45am

Kindergarten- Spring time
Mar 11 at 6:30pm and Mar 12 at 8:45am

2nd grade- Lion King/Disney
April 22 at 7:00pm and Apr 23 at 8:45am

4th & 5th Chorus- End of Year
May 20 at 7:00pm and May 21 at 8:45am
A message from Ms. Sboukis, Highland Lakes School Counselor
Happy New Year 2020!

The Character trait for January is Self-Motivation.

“A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.” Chinese proverb

HLE has a Comprehensive Bullying Prevention program. Below is important information regarding bullying. First and foremost, if you suspect that someone is being bullying, please report it to the Say Something online anonymous reporting website, https://www.saysomething.net. Please contact me if you would like more information or have any concerns at sboukisv@pcsb.org or (727) 724-1429.

In December, we trained 10 students from grades 3-5 as Peer Mediators for incidents of interpersonal conflicts (not bullying: that process is different and handled by school staff). In January, we will start promoting this service to our student body. Peer mediation is preventative, and the benefits of Peer Mediation include:

- Resolving Student Conflicts
- Teaching Students Essential Life Skills
- Building Students' Conflict Resolution Skills Through Real-life Practice
- Motivating Students to Resolve their Conflicts Collaboratively
- Empowering Students
- Increasing Self-Esteem
- Improving School Climate

Additionally, we are happy to say that a Buddy Bench has been donated to HLE. The concept behind the Buddy Bench, also called the Friendship Bench, is a simple idea to eliminate loneliness and foster friendship at school. You will hear more about this in the coming months.

In February, all students will be selecting work for the school-wide art show on March 26th.

K-Africa: Artists have focused on the elements of art lines, patterns, and texture this second nine weeks. Students learned about Ndebele dolls from South Africa and created clay ornaments with texture created by stepping on them with their shoe. Coming up, students will be focusing on shapes, colors, and portraits.

1st Australia: Artists have focused on the elements of art lines, texture, and colors this second weeks. They learned about Aboriginal symbols and dot art! Students also learned about endangered sea turtles and created a turtle out of clay. Coming up, artists will focus on the elements of art shape and space.

2nd Central and South America: Artists have focused on the elements of art lines, texture, shapes and form. Students have learned about Sugar skulls and the Amazon rainforest. They created clay either toucans or parrots, and will add details with feathers. Coming up, Artists will focus on the elements of art shape and space.

3rd Asia: Artists have focused on the elements of art line, shape, value, color. Students learned about the artist Yayoi Kusama and designed their own pumpkins. They are also learning about the influence of dragons on the Chinese culture. Coming up, artists will focus on the elements and principles color, texture, balance and line.

4th Europe: Artists have focused on the elements of art line, texture, space, value, and color. They used chalk pastels to draw tulip fields, learned about mosaics, and create two different types of self-portraits. Coming up, students are learning about the elements of art value, color, and space while finishing their mosaics and portraits.

5th North America: Artists have focused on the elements and principles of art color, value, space, emphasis, and texture. Students learned about endangered animals in Florida and chose one to focus on to bring awareness to the problem. Students also used chalk pastels to create aurora borealis drawings. Coming up, artists will learn about the elements and principles of art color, texture, and unity.

ART UPDATE
Reminder to follow, HLE_PantherArt on Instagram! Please also check out our Artsonia, and make sure your artist has an account! Please email me at martinstay@pcsb.org if you have any questions.
Parenting support starts in January! Parenting is hard. Despite advice from many books and experts, there is simply no specific “one size fits all” approach to successfully parent your child. If you have multiple children, you probably personally already experienced how differently the same techniques work despite so many similarities even within your own home. On January 31st at 10am, you are invited to join our social worker, Mrs. Copeland for “Coffee Talk”. Coffee Talk will be a monthly parenting support group open to all parents interested in hearing or talking about some of the challenges of parenting as well as information on resources or strategies that you can apply to your personal toolkit. The topic for the month of January will be “Developing Coping Skills and Resilience in Children.” We will talk about common frustrations and disappointments children may experience in elementary school and how to better help them (and you) survive those challenges as they arise. Please come to listen or share.

We have lots to celebrate at Highland Lakes Elementary!

Come and join Mrs. Gehringer, our principal at 8:45am on Tuesday, January 28th in the Multipurpose Room for an informal Q & A.
Have you noticed that you and your child communicate more through technology than face to face? Do you panic if you leave the house without your phone? Do you wonder if your child is spending more time on a device than with family or friends, or in other activities? Here, according to pediatrician, Dr. Susan Sirota, are five ways to help establish a balance between family time and technology:

TIP ONE: CREATE A FAMILY TECHNOLOGY POLICY Make clear the devices that can be used, when they can be used and have a plan for monitoring usage and safety that is age appropriate for your child. Set clear consequences for not following the policy. Don’t reward children with technology time that exceeds your established time limit.

TIP TWO: BE AN EDUCATED ROLE MODEL Monitor your own electronic use and model the balance of technology time you want your children to achieve. Follow the policy you set for the family. Children are tech savvy, and parents need to be clued in to the latest games, apps and social media that appeal to their children.

TIP THREE: DESIGNATE TECHNOLOGY-FREE ZONES Establish restricted areas in your home such as family meals and children’s bedrooms and restricted times such as family social activities. Many children lose sleep to homework and after school activities and screen time should not add to their sleep deficit. Direct face-to-face communication is still our best tool in the family.

TIP FOUR: DESIGNATE TECHNOLOGY TUNE OUT TIMES Schedule regular family time in the evening and/or on weekends without screens. These times allow for quality interactions, playing games, cooking and being physically active together. Encourage children to plan or choose the activities for this time. Children need to preserve the art of relaxing and observing the world around them.

TIP FIVE: TALK TO OTHER FAMILIES Collaborate and let other families know what you are doing. Inquire about their family policies. Work as a community to support one another in helping children find the balance between tuning in and tuning out.

Supporting Better Readers
Ideas from Scholastic.com

Early Readers:
1. Make reading part of your child’s world. Read books with her and to her, aiming for a total of 30 minutes of book-sharing time each day. Also incorporate reading into everyday activities. Post a chore list on the refrigerator, ask her to read signs as you drive, and play board games like Scrabble Junior.
2. Take turns. When he is ready to read to you, start by taking turns. You read one page, he reads the next, and so on.
3. Ask deeper questions. Help her build comprehension skills by asking questions about the story, such as why she thinks a character did something and what may come next. Talk to her about which books are her favorites and have her try to explain why.
4. Be patient. Wait quietly as your child tries to sound out a word he’s unfamiliar with.
5. Help her when she needs it. If she makes a mistake but is close, quickly repeat the word correctly and let her continue without interrupting the flow. If she guesses wildly on a word, help her get the right meaning from the context of the sentence. Answer questions about the meaning of words, but don’t drill her on vocabulary words as you read.
6. Read different-level books. It’s okay if he chooses an “easy” book to read. Reading a familiar favorite is a good confidence booster. Read more advanced books to him to introduce new words and challenging stories.
7. Praise her. Learning to read smoothly is hard work and might frustrate her at times. Encourage her by praising her efforts, paying attention when she wants to read, and making your reading time together fun.

More Experienced Readers:
1. Read aloud with your child. Find a comfortable spot where the two of you can read together every day for about 30 minutes. Take turns reading chapters from a book for pleasure or read books that are above her reading level but are about things that interest her.
2. Encourage all reading. Comic books and magazines can provide a good reading experience. If they are age-appropriate, don’t discourage his interest, but keep a stock of high-quality books in your home so he has other options easily available.
3. Keep a dictionary handy. Together, look up words she doesn’t know and invest in a dictionary that she can use on her own.
4. Use informative books. Encourage reading for information. If he has a science report, help him find books for his research rather than only going to the Web. While the Internet is an easy resource, teach him that books are often more detailed.
5. Discuss the books. Ask your child what an author’s main theme is, how characters are alike or different, what she likes or dislikes about the story, and how it compares to other books she’s read. Share your own thoughts.
6. Expect plateaus. Following some big leaps in his progress, your child may stay at the same reading level for several months. Keep encouraging him and offer praise.
"PBIS is not fully implemented until it is culturally responsive."

Culturally Responsive PBIS systems (CR-PBIS) are uniquely designed to fit the cultural backgrounds of the individuals they serve. This sometimes requires educators to change the way they think about, support, and/or address student behavior.

**CR-PBIS systems are characterized by:**

**A student-centered focus**

*Culturally responsive practices utilize the cultural knowledge, life experiences, and learning styles of culturally and linguistically diverse students to make learning more relevant and effective for them* (Banks & Obiakor, 2019). A student’s unique cultural and learning experiences are used as the starting point for establishing expected behaviors and learning goals, not an afterthought.

**A strengths-based perspective**

Culturally responsive schools validate and affirm all student and family cultures, and focus on the strengths of each individual. Practices that frame students’ cultures in a negative light are avoided, and school personnel work to provide opportunities where culturally-based behaviors and language may be used and respected.

**Integration of staff, student, family and community perspectives**

Culturally responsive PBIS (CR-PBIS) systems are much more than an occasional expression of appreciation for diversity. Disciplinary procedures, behavioral lesson plans and reward systems will reflect students’ and families’ perspectives, and evidence of students’ cultures will be readily observed in hallways, classrooms and textbooks.

**Authentic and meaningful collaboration**

Culture is flexible and dynamic, and changes across settings, context, and time. Culturally responsive schools take steps to engage stakeholders from marginalized groups, ensuring that school practices and policies reflect ideas from all stakeholders, not just standing committee members or school and district personnel.

**Self-Reflection as a regular part of practice**

Culturally responsive practices require educators to learn more about their students’ backgrounds and engage in self-reflection to uncover personal biases that impact their understanding of others’ behavior. All behavior serves a function, and it is the responsibility of school staff to understand the ways in which “different” behaviors serve their students and families.