Message From Mr. Cerreta

Dear Seminole Elementary Families,

I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving Holiday and are now anxiously anticipating the upcoming winter holidays. It is hard to believe that there are only 3 more weeks until the end of the 2nd grading period which ends on December 21. As a reminder, winter break is from December 22- January 7. Students return for the 2nd semester on January 8, 2024.

It has been a joy watching the students grow, learn, and mature this semester! As I reviewed each report card and the students’ individual assessment reports, I am pleased to say that Seminole Elementary has a wonderful group of smart, capable, and motivated students. Your interest and encouragement in your child’s education is very important regarding your child’s attitude towards school; the more interested and enthused you are in what they are learning, the more eager your child will be to study, read, and do their best.

Please take time this season to rest and enjoy family and friends.

FAST Assessment
All students in grade K-5 complete an online assessment three times a year know as FAST Assessments. (Florida Assessment of Student Thinking) FAST assessments are used to measure a student’s growth in mathematics and reading. The Fall assessment gathers baseline data. The Winter and Spring assessments measure progress. They are used to chart a student’s academic growth from year to year. The data from the FAST assessments helps the teachers carefully monitor the student’s academic progress and provide remediation and enrichment when needed. Students will be taking their Winter FAST Assessments from December 4- December 21.

All of our Seminole families are invited to our Winter Fest Family Night on Thursday, December 14 for an evening of holiday fun. Participants will have an opportunity to make holiday ornaments, meet Santa, skate on our special ice skating rink, decorate cookies, tour the school, and see the Holidays Around the World. We look forward to seeing you on December 14, 5:00-7:00.

Congratulations To Our Outstanding Readers:
One aspect of our School Wide Reading Program is for the students to read each night 45 minutes for Grades 3-5 and 20-30 minutes grades K-2.

After students read a book or have a book read to them, they take an Accelerated Reader test to earn Accelerated Reader points.

Congratulations to the following student for earning 100 points grades 3-5, 50 points grades 2 and 35 points for grade 1.

1st Grade       35 Points
Evan Castellanos  Ethan Espaillat Sunny Lin Brayden Mccafferty Matthew Wilder

2nd Grade      50 Points
Jessalynn Alincy Burhan Demirel Xion Leshore Ella Twiss Victoria Vanguela Calzadillas

3rd – 5th Grade 100 Points
Quinn Sperling Natalya Blau Layla Gauthier
Dear Families,

Our students will be taking Progress Monitoring 2 of Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) reading and math tests beginning on December 4 and ending on December 21. Teachers will communicate the exact date of testing for your child.

By the time of this administration window, students will have had an opportunity to learn the grade-level standards, and this administration will provide a mid-year score to compare to the baseline score from PM1. Letters went home this week explaining the tests in more detail including how to find additional information about the test.

Score reports for PM2 will be sent home with your child before winter break. If you have any questions, please contact me at 547-7668 or at mccaffertyj@pcsbo.org.

I look forward to seeing you at our WinterFest on 12/14!

Dr. McCafferty

Congratulations to the First Quarter Principal’s List Students

3rd Grade
Tanner Highnote
Jaidon Cunningham
Maya Castellanos

Lucas Ruse
Elsie Taylor
Quinn Sperling
Rowan Plomatos

4th Grade
Bryce Henshaw
Vuk Veljkovic

Noah Hoang
Ajna Goxhaj

Layla Gauthier

5th Grade
Cameron Westbrook
Numan Demirel
Colton Taylor

Lyla Aguillard
Carson Richmond
Amya Auten
Elliot Sperling

This month in classroom guidance we are working on conflict resolution skills. Students are learning three steps to follow when facing a conflict with a peer:

Step 1: Take a deep breath and calm down
Step 2: Share feelings
Step 3: Choose a solution.

Usually sharing feelings is the most difficult step, so I give them a script to follow to help them get started. The script says: “I feel ______ when you ______ because ______. What I would like is ______.” This asks them to name the feeling they are experiencing, which is an important life skill, and then think about what exactly it was that made them feel that way; another very important life skill! Filling in the “because” part is a little more advanced, but with practice, they can do it!

We have been using Goldilocks and the Three Bears to practice these skills. I play the role of Goldilocks, and students take turns being one of the bears and talking through what I did and how it made them feel, as well as what they would like to see happen moving forward. They have done a great job at working out the conflicts in this story. This is a fun activity you can do at home with them to help them practice conflict resolution. Read a story, talk about the conflict, and then role play the characters working out their conflict peacefully.

The students at Seminole continue to amaze me with their empathy and grace. I believe they all can learn conflict resolution, we just need to give them the skills, and patiently remind them to practice as conflicts arise. Much like playing catch with a child every day, or practicing lay-ups with them out in the driveway, they need coaching and repetition in expressing their feelings and working through problems. Working as a team, school and home can help our students master conflict resolution, setting them up to face challenges with confidence.
How Can Parents and Guardians Create a Language Enriched Environment at Home

Building a language enriched environment will help your child become an avid reader as they grow. One way is to read newspapers, comic books, magazines, street signs, recipes, or directions to them every day. Create a special time in the evening or at night to read with your child, such as, before bed or while eating dinner. Encourage your child to talk about the book(s) they are reading. If they seem hesitant, ask them questions to help them get started. The more you do this, the more your child will get comfortable with the idea of discussing their books with you or anyone. Share poetry and rhyming books with your child. Identifying and using rhyming words will help them develop letter sound recognition which is important for reading readiness as they grow. Lastly, as you walk around outside, point out words on street signs, buildings or store fronts and have your child try to read it to you. The more they read the more confident they become with their reading skills.

Surviving Holiday Meals with Picky Eaters

It’s a pain to have spent hours preparing a beautiful holiday meal only to have your child reject most of the dinner and request having chicken nuggets or mac ‘n cheese. Here are some helpful tips I found that might be (or not) helpful with those picky eaters.

Test out some of the food early. Many kids need to see the food a few times before they will accept it to try. Do a small taste test and see if you can get them to try a little of some of your family’s favorites. You’ll know and they’ll know what they like when they see it at the big dinner. Many grocery store delis and restaurants have a thanksgiving plate that you can pick up early and try with your kiddo days before.

If you have a picky eater who rejects the veggies, use a dipping sauce or a topping like cheese or ranch. It might be a little less healthy, but they will learn to try it without the parts without toppings or dips eventually. Have them help prepare the dinner. They can assist with much of the meal preparation and by involving them, they might be more interested in eating what they have helped to prepare. Ideas include pouring, measuring, and stirring. They can also help by serving people portions or setting the table.

Kids might like sitting with other kids at the nearby “kids table” and though they might fill up on the buttery, yummy dinner rolls and pie, it’s just one meal (or two) out of a year! They’ll be ok! It’s a social opportunity for them as well as you to share a meal. They might be encouraged by other kids trying the foods on their plates.

If you have a super picky eater who is adamant on not trying anything on his plate, be prepared with at least one of their favorites. If they won’t eat the turkey, you could provide the chicken nuggets to eat with the other traditional side dishes. If you’re a guest for dinner somewhere else, be prepared with at least one of their favorites. If you have a picky eater who rejects the veggies, use a dipping sauce or a topping like cheese or ranch. It might be a little less healthy, but they will learn to try it without the parts without toppings or dips eventually.

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Thank you to the following organizations for their support of our school:

Remax Hustle & Heart Group  PDQ  Horace Mann Insurance
Seminole First Baptist Church  Kiwanis Club of Seminole  5/3 Bank
VFW Post 9272  Seminole Women’s Club  Seminole Elementary PTA
Osteria Bricco  El Jalisco  The Backpack Lady Project
Treasure Island Fun Center  Anona United Methodist Church  Sub Pubs Restaurant Group
Dairy Queen  Curlew Hills Memory Gardens  Smuggler’s Cove Mini Golf
McDonald’s

Business Partners & Community Partners:

Thank you to Dairy Queen for hosting our November Spirit Night. A portion from all of the sales was donated to Seminole Elementary. There will not be a Spirit Night in December.