

STCS



# Westdale News

## From the Principal

November 2014

Volume 1, Issue 1

Dear Westdale Families,

It has been a busy and eventful month! In case you haven't heard, Westdale has been selected as a National Title I Distinguished School! This is especially prestigious because we are only one of two schools recognized from Michigan. Westdale has been selected as a Category 1: Exceptional student performance for two or more consecutive years. It is an exciting honor and I am so proud of all the hard work of our staff to make this happen.

On November 14th, we will have our first popcorn sale. Popcorn is 50 cents a bag. If your child would like to order popcorn please send money in with your child on Friday morning.

Thank you for attending our October conferences. Report cards will be sent home with students on November 18th. If you have Family Access, report cards will be available on November 19th. If you have questions about your child's report card, please contact your child's teachers. On November 7th and November 19th school will be dismissed at 10:55 a.m. On November 20th school will begin at 11:30 a.m.

I want to thank all who have sent in Box Tops for Education. Last week we submitted 14,312 box tops. Our PTO should be receiving a check for \$1431.20 soon. This money will be put towards this year's projects (field trips, Buddy Benches on the playground, etc.). I also wanted to take a moment to thank all who participated in our fall fundraiser. Top Sellers and winners of the Target Gift Cards were Mason Hollingsworth, Preston Thurston, and Logan Miller. Luke Langschwager was the lucky winner of our Target Gift Card drawing.

The weather is beginning to grow colder and we go outside everyday for recess (unless the wind chill or temperature is 10 degrees or lower). Please make sure that your child is dressed for the weather (coat, hat, mittens, etc.). Once we have snow, students will need snow boots and snow pants for recess.

Sincerely,

Karen M. Volk

Westdale Elementary Principal

### Important Dates:

- November 12th: PTO Meeting 6 p.m.
- November 14th: Popcorn Sale
- November 18th: Report Cards will be sent home.
- November 19th: 10:55 Dismissal
- November 20th: School begins at 11:30
- November 21st: Popcorn Sale
- November 22nd & 23rd: Westdale Painterly Pottery Fundraiser
- November 26th: Thanksgiving Break Begins
- December 1st: Back to School

## Young Fives

During October, the Young Fives students have been studying all about fall, pumpkins, and bats. We had a great time on HOWL Day learning about the lifecycle of a pumpkin, counting on pumpkin shaped tens frames using candy corn, and making our Orange Pumpkin, Orange Pumpkin books. We also learned many finger plays such as Five Little Pumpkins. The Young Fives students are looking forward to the activities that we have planned for HOWL Day in November!

## Kindergarten

This year grade levels are working together to create some fun hands-on learning days for students each month. These days are called Westdale HOWL-Days and will typically involve science or social studies themed activities.

In Kindergarten our students rotated around the Kindergarten wing. Each teacher instructed a science and Halloween themed activity. Mrs. Torres discussed static electricity that students used to make ghosts fly. In Mrs. Romain's room students learned about the life cycle of a pumpkin. Mrs Keith taught about pumpkins and objects that sink or float. In Miss Watt's room they learned about spiders. Everyone really enjoyed the stations and we are planning more educational and fun activities to celebrate HOWL day again the day before Thanksgiving break.

## First Grade

We had a great H.O.W.L Day in October!~ First grade had fun learning about living and nonliving things. We focused on plants & animals, as well as other interesting science facts. Students learned that plants and animals grow, change, move, and breathe. We experimented with pumpkins, apples, worms and how to make scientific observations. Ask your student about the differences between living and nonliving things.

During November's H.O.W.L Day we look forward to learning about Thanksgiving's history and geography.

## Music News

Hello from the music room! In kindergarten we've continued to work on using our best singing voices and we also learned how to read rhythms this month – with Ta, ti-ti and rests. In first grade, we are listening to, moving to, and creating/playing music that is low and high. We talked about using our head and chest voices when singing and how to tell the difference. We are just starting to listen for music moving upward and downward. In second grade, we have been working daily on our music for our music program, "How the Penguins Saved Christmas." The second graders are doing a fantastic job of reading music, Miss Simmermacher and I are very excited to be working together to present a wonderful program to family and friends on Monday, December 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at Arrowwood School in the commons area. We hope to see you all there. ~Mrs. Casler

## Second Grade

### *Second Grade Howl Day*

*On October 31st, we had our very first Howl Day! The students enjoyed a variety of science themed activities while traveling to each second grade classroom.*

*In Mrs. Goidosik's class, they learned the difference between a compound and a mixture. They were able to create two mixtures and enjoy a tasty treat.*

*Did you know that bats live in camps or that their babies are called pups? Well, after a visit in Mrs. Carlisle's class, our second graders sure did! They learned many interesting bat facts and made their very own bat to take home.*

*In Mrs. Miller's and Ms. Barron's class, the students carved and explored pumpkins. They also learned about the pumpkin life cycle and completed a life cycle craft.*

*Mrs. Mikoleizik led the classes in an interactive game on the promethean board about the states of matter. The students were able to use the "clickers" to select their answers.*

*Learning has never been more fun!!! Our second graders cannot wait for the next Howl Day!!!*

## From the Gym

### Physical Education News

October was a great month to get outside and be active. During the month of October, students worked hard on our soccer unit. We worked on fundamental skills such as dribbling, passing, kicking, and goaltending. The skills they worked on during P.E. will benefit them whether they are playing on an organized team or in their own back yard!

During the month of November, Westdale students will be practicing Sport Stacking in Physical Education. Sport Stacking is an exciting individualized & team sport where participants stack & unstack twelve plastic cups in a predetermined sequence.

Sport stacking helps students develop bilateral proficiency, which assists in equal performance on both sides of the body. By increasing bilateral proficiency, a student develops a greater percentage of the right side of the brain, which houses awareness, focus, creativity and rhythm. Stacking helps train the brain for sports and other activities where the use of both hands is important, such as playing a musical instrument or using the computer.

If you are interested in learning more about this great sport, please go to [www.speedstacks.com](http://www.speedstacks.com) or contact Mrs. Bordeaux.

## Making Math Fun at Home

Your home is full of opportunities to explore math with your child and, at the same time, build his or her self-confidence and understanding of mathematical ideas. This is a chance for you and your child to "talk math" that is, to communicate about math while discovering relationships between numbers. Being able to describe mathematical patterns and relationships, such as those between "addition and subtraction" or "odd and even numbers," is important to later success in math

While riding in the car to and from school try this fun math activity out during the month of November.

. Let your child think of a number between a stated range of numbers while you try to guess the number by asking questions.

Here is a sample conversation:

Child: I am thinking of a number between 1 and 20.

Parent: Is it more than 10?

Child: No.

Parent: Is it an even number?

Child: No.

Parent: Is it less than 5

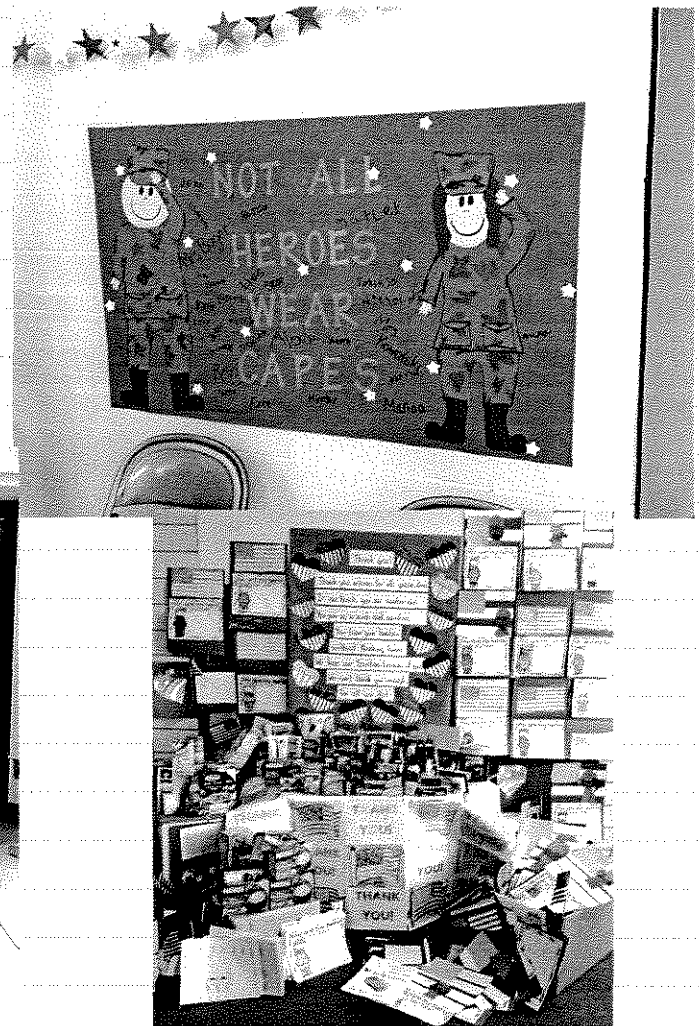
Child: Yes.

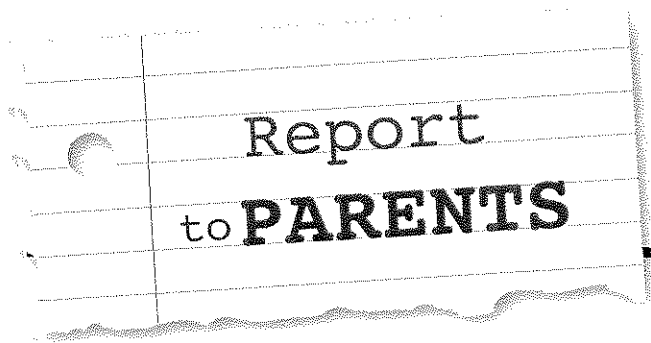
Parent: Is it 1 more than 2

Child: Yes.

What is the number parents?

## Veteran's Day Assembly





## Encourage Your Child's Creativity to Flourish

**C**reativity has been called a key 21st century skill. That means it—along with skills like communication and critical thinking—will help students navigate the increasingly collaborative and information-rich world that awaits them once they leave school. The arts have been shown to boost students' academic performance, perseverance, self-confidence, and more. Here are strategies for supporting your child's creativity.

**Take stock of your toys.** Flashy electronic toys are fun, but they don't offer children opportunities for open-ended, imaginative play. Make sure to have basic art supplies—paper, crayons, glue, clay—at home, along with toys like building blocks, puzzles, or costumes for dress-up.

**Cut the screen time.** Set limits on TV and iPad time. Try designating a certain time during the week when your entire family will put down cell phones and work on a creative project.

**Embrace mistakes.** Children who are afraid of failure are less likely to think creatively. Teach your child that mistakes are opportunities for growth. Ask, "What could you do differently next time?" Be patient with your child—and model patience as he or she learns new skills or tries a new project.

**Encourage curiosity.** Don't squelch kids' natural curiosity by being frustrated when your child asks lots of questions. Embrace it! Ask, "What if" questions, and encourage your child to use his or her imagination.

**Offer constructive praise...** Too much praise can make a child "hooked" on success. Instead of offering general praise ("You're so smart!"), offer specific feedback that praises your child's effort or the process he or she used ("You found a great way to paint that scene," or "I can tell you've been practicing.") Offer non-verbal praise (a hug



or a thumbs-up), or implicit encouragement by displaying your child's work on the refrigerator.

**...but step back sometimes.** If a child feels constantly watched, he or she may be less likely to try new ideas. Give your child space to play on his or her own. Wait until your child is finished drawing to ask what he or she has made.

**Look for community resources.** Check your local library, museum, or community center for art

classes or workshops to try new creative skills. Keep an eye out for poster or story contests offered by community organizations, too. Or, try teaming up with a neighbor or friend to host an art playdate. Some projects can be time-consuming or expensive, but working together with other families can help ease the burden.

### Web Resources

Visit Crayola's **Creative Parenting Web page** for activities and tips to spark creativity at home.  
[bit.ly/creativeparenting](http://bit.ly/creativeparenting)

The **Tinkerlab** offers dozens of hands-on art, science, writing, and craft ideas for families to try.  
[tinkerlab.com/](http://tinkerlab.com/)

At **The Artful Parent** blog, explore interviews with children's art experts along with lists of the best supplies.  
[artfulparent.com/](http://artfulparent.com/)

## Report to PARENTS

# Fight Flu and Germs

**Y**ou've probably already heard it: the telltale sniffles of flu season, which peaks in January and February. Navigate flu and germ season with these tactics for prevention and care.

### About the Vaccine

Though it's best to get vaccinated in the fall, it's not too late to get a flu shot at the start of winter. Everyone age six months and older can receive the vaccine, which is available as a shot or nasal spray. Children are at a higher risk for the flu, since their immune systems are developing. It's especially important to vaccinate children younger than 5 and those with chronic health conditions. Don't forget to get vaccinated yourself!

If you're not sure where to get a flu shot, ask your principal or school nurse for information on clinics or community agencies that may be providing flu shots.

### If Your Child Is Sick

Children who can't keep their eyes open, even after having a normal night's sleep, may be coming down with something. Add an "achy" feeling and loss of appetite, and it's likely that the flu is on the way. If, before school, you think your child may be starting to get sick, alert the teacher and make sure an adult is available for pick-up in case your child needs to come home.

Children who are feverish, nauseated, or bone-tired can't learn well, and can spread their illness to others. So, keep them home. Before returning to school, your child needs to have gone without a fever or vomiting for at least 24 hours.

Talk to your child's teacher to find out the best way to make up missed work. Often, a child not quite well enough to return to class can complete assignments at home, making the workload easier to manage once he or she is back in school. Have your child make up the work as soon as possible.

### Preventing the Spread of Germs

Keep your family healthy all winter long by practicing everyday disease prevention tactics.

**Stress the importance of handwashing.** Because germs are invisible, it's difficult for children to understand how dangerous a cough or sneeze can be. Be sure to stress

the importance of washing hands, using lots of soap and water, and scrubbing until there are bubbles—before meals and snacks, and after coughing, sneezing, or using a tissue. Many brands of liquid hand soap come in fun designs, scents, or colors, and letting children pick their own can be a fun way to encourage hand washing.



**Use the "birthday song" method.** Teach your child to wash his or her hands for as long as it takes to sing the entire "Happy Birthday" song.

**Cough like Dracula.** Children need to learn to always cover their mouths when they cough. Have your child cough into his or her sleeves, not hands, to prevent the spread of germs.

**Keep hands away from eyes, nose, and mouth.** Children sometimes absentmindedly put their fingers in their mouth or nose, or rub their eyes. Help

your child keep his or her hands away from "germy" areas—eyes, nose, and mouth.

**Trash the tissues.** Used tissues are full of germs. Teach your child to immediately put used tissues in the trash, and then wash his or her hands.

**Set a healthy example.** Model all these healthy behaviors—sneezing into your elbow, washing your hands frequently—and your child will follow suit.

### **Web Resources**

Visit **Flu.gov** for the latest updates on this flu season.

For a round-up of germ prevention techniques, visit this **Centers for Disease Control** page.  
[www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/stopgerms.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/stopgerms.htm)

This "Too Sick for School?" quiz from **Parents magazine** will help you decide whether your child should stay home.  
[www.parents.com/kids/too-sick-for-school/](http://www.parents.com/kids/too-sick-for-school/)