

Never a Dull Moment at Prairie Heights Elementary School

Before looking ahead to the spring semester, it is good practice to reflect on the past. The Kick Off to school and Olweus, our bullying prevention program, started with a pool party along with a picnic meal and entertainment by Ken England on August 16. The PHES Open House followed on the 18th. August 21 marked the first day of school for students. Staff diligently worked to make the start of 2015-2016 with a K – 6 building a success, and the students settled in quickly.

This fall Grades 2, 3, 5, and 6 have already taken their annual field trips. Grade 2 visited the Historical Museum in Topeka, Grade 3 spent a day at Rock Springs, Grade 5 toured the salt mines of Hutchinson, and Grade 6 toured the Discovery Center in Manhattan, as well as Konza Prairie. Grade 4 will take their Abilene trip on March 31, and Kindergarten and Grade 1 have their excursions scheduled for later in the spring.

November was eventful with Grades 5 and 6 having a Family Fun Night on the 5th. Kathy Lamberson and the PHES students presented their tribute to Veterans and the USA on the 10th. A book fair organized by Sheryl Crooks, PHES aide, took place the same week as the veteran's celebration.

During the fall months PHES incorporated Walk Wednesday, where students walk in the gym prior to the start of their school day in an effort to emphasize more healthy living habits. Reading Buddies was launched in the mornings before classes begin to allow for more structure and reading opportunities. Art lessons, under the guidance of Angela Moore, have taken place twice a month with many projects adorning PHES halls and classrooms. Children display pride, when taking home their art achievements to share with families. The music program on December 15 had the North Pole mural on display, as well as the students sharing their musical talents pertaining to winter and the North Pole.

The spring semester started, when students returned on Tuesday, January 5. January will include the annual school and county spelling bees. Grades 3 – 6 will travel to Manhattan and view the Rosa Parks production at McCain on January 26.

PTO and Site Council meet three times this spring on January 25, February 29, and April 18. PTO meetings start at 6:30 PM followed by Site Council meetings at 7:30 PM. Parents will have an opportunity to talk with teachers at conferences on February 9 and 10.

The state assessment test window opens on February 16. Teachers prepared a testing calendar for Grades 3 - 6 during their professional time on January 4. When the testing dates are confirmed, Grade 3 – 6 teachers will send a message to parents.

Kindergarten through Grade 2 will attend the "Moon Mouse" production at McCain auditorium on the KSU campus in Manhattan April 7 sponsored by the local Prairie Heights PTO. The spring music program is scheduled for April 14. Grade 3 will

participate in the Investigate Space Camp April 20 – 22 at CGES with materials from the Cosmosphere.

When you get the opportunity to view the transformation that has taken place in the PHES lunchroom, please do. The walls have been painted to depict the Kansas prairie with splatter paint symbols, created by PHES students this fall in art classes, mounted on the walls. No words give justice to the ooh's and ah's of children with looks of wonderment and delight, as they entered the lunchroom for the first time after winter break.

January and the start of another year often bring New Year resolutions. Perhaps one of your resolutions could be taking time to visit Prairie Heights Elementary School and see the magic of teaching and learning at its best!