



BILL METZ ELEMENTARY  
**METZ MESSENGER**

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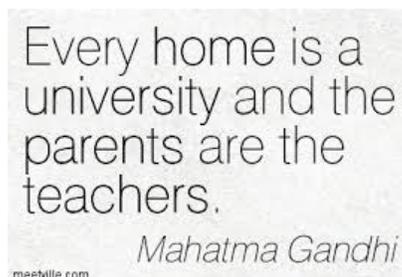
*Our mission is to inspire the pursuit of excellence, one student at a time.*

**Principal's Connection**

One of our key focuses is how we can develop and deliver differentiated and personalized learning to all students. This is our first goal in our school improvement plan. One major change we have made this year is in our master schedule. In the schedule each day students get their typical reading, writing, and math with their grade level teachers. However, we added a reading and math "IE" (Intervention and Enrichment) block to our day this year. During this time the students are with grade level and/or intervention/enrichment teachers.

Every student is given targeted instruction based on their need for reading and math. Each student participates in 30 minutes of daily intervention or enrichment in reading and 25-30 minutes in math. With this adjustment to our schedule we have seen benefits in the students' learning, and most importantly, their growth in these subjects. Students are making "high growth" according to our monthly assessments they take on the computer.

You may hear your son/daughter talk about how they have "another" teacher during the day and this could very well be the reason. Please feel free to ask your son/daughter's teacher about their IE time, and they can direct you to the adult that instructs them during that time. If you have any questions about how the "IE" system works, please contact me at the email or phone listed at the bottom right of the newsletter.



**IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES:**

- Thursday 1/11 @ 6pm - School board meeting
- Monday 1/15 - 2nd quarter report cards sent home with students
- Thursday 1/25 4pm-8pm - 5th grade girls night
- Thursday 2/1 4pm-8pm - 5th grade boys night
- Thursday 2/22 - BME science fair
- Thursday & Friday 3/1 & 3/2 - Regional science fair
- Thursday 3/15 - Spring Parent Teacher Conferences

**School Information**

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## Empathetic Children Can Keep Their Cool

"It is one of the beautiful compensations of life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

One thing we have learned by looking at research into those experiencing chronic trauma is that it is tough to feel for others when you are in survival mode. While we can't change what happens outside our doors, we can teach our children tools to handle anything in the form of self-regulation skills. Interestingly enough, the book Unselfie highlights a teacher who used restorative justice, which helps everyone affected by the problem to work together to find a solution to repair the harm. This is something we already do in our school!

The second strategy highlighted is something which is getting a lot of attention in the counseling world and is called mindfulness. Mindfulness is simply being aware of what is happening as it is happening. It is a way to help children keep stress at bay and respond without instantly reacting. Teaching mindfulness to children and having them practice it for 15 minutes a day for several weeks has been shown to have many benefits. Teaching mindfulness can be a way to teach self-regulation skills. Here is one model:

1. Teach yourself to "just breathe". Find a comfortable, quiet spot, keep your body relaxed and take deep slow breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth.
2. Explain the benefits. Tell your child that focusing on your breathing helps you relax and calm your brain so you can think more clearly and stay in control.
3. Teach belly breathing. Sit straight or lie flat on the floor with your hands low on your belly. Inhale through your nose, hold it and then let the air out through your mouth.
4. Make mindfulness a family ritual. Do breathing exercises together either before or after a stressful event such as before a sports practice, after school, or before bed.

Teaching self-regulation skills is important because stress is what happens before the release of anger and it is our job to help children learn to calm down before a meltdown. Here are some suggestions that help teach children how to self-regulate:

- **Model calmness:** How you react in front of your kids after a hard day teaches them how they should react after they have had a hard day.
- **Tune into your child:** How does your child handle stress? Does he get a headache? Avoid the person or situation? Block out the pain?
- **Identify body alarms:** Help your child recognize what it means when they have a pounding heart, flushed cheeks, quick breathing, dry mouth, etc.
- **Create a quiet space:** Find a place in your home to have family members decompress. This might mean having soft pillows, music, stuffed animals, etc.

### Empathy Quotes

Empathy is seeing with the eyes of another, listening with the ears of another, and feeling with the heart of another

Alfred Adler



### Nurse's Note

We're are in the midst of cold and flu season so I wanted to share with you a few tips on how to keep yourselves and your children healthy this winter.

Handwashing is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness. Encourage your children to wash their hands with soap and water before eating, after using the restroom and after playing.

It's not too late to get a flu shot; you can contact your doctor, pharmacy or local health department for a vaccine.

Remember reasons to keep your child home from school. These include fever, vomiting or diarrhea, severe coughing and flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, tiredness, body aches). If your child has a fever they should stay home until they are fever free for 24 hours without medication. There are more detailed guidelines in the illness policy found on the school website under parent/student forms.

Please use this as a reference. Also, I am happy to answer any questions, feel free to call the nurse's office 852-4041.

Wishing you all a happy and healthy new year!

Briana Villagomez - Monte Vista School District Nurse



### 5th Grade Band

Our 5th grade band program will be starting up soon. Mrs. Starcher has already asked students, "Who is interested?" and has received interest from around 50 students! As we return to school in January, Mr. Pascal and Mrs. Starcher will be having students play instruments to see how the students like the instruments and allow them to select one. Then in late January or early February, they will begin daily band classes during the 5th grade specials time from 9:45-10:15. If a student chooses to be in band, they will have it daily during the 2nd semester. As a result, their other specials classes (PE, computers, library, and music) will be done less frequently. Please direct any band questions to Mr. Pascal at 852-3586 or Mrs. Starcher at 852-4041 ext. 4121.

