



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 primary concerns everyday is to make sure our students are safe. We hear of terrible things in the news all the time. Sometimes they are horrendous like last week's incident in Florida. I wanted to highlight some things that we do in Monte Vista to try our best to keep your children safe. First of all, we have a locked campus, which means that visitors have to check in at the front office before going anywhere else in the building. Second, the doors to get into the building (not just the entryway) remain locked at all times. Third, we have a phone system that allows anyone in the building to call a "lockdown" or "lockout" if they see trouble. Fourth, we practice drills on a monthly basis so our students can practice what to do in an emergency situation. All those things help if threats come from beyond the building. Within the building we also have weekly counseling lessons for students to help with their mental health. Our counselor also holds small groups and individual sessions for students in need. We have a full time behavior interventionists who uses restorative practices to help students "repair the harm" they may cause.

There are things parents can do as well. It starts at home with your children through the conversations that you have with them. If you have questions about your child and something going on at school, it's always best to start with their teacher. If you need further assistance, then you could ask the counselor, behavior interventionist, nurse, or principal depending what the issue is about.

One way that you can do your best to keep kids safe everyday is to be careful when you are picking and dropping off children. There have been times when people expect their children to get into their cars when it's in the passing lane. This is not safe and we tell them to only get into a car once it's stopped in the pick up (right) lane. Also, remember that you should be going no faster than 5 mph through the loop. We would be devastated if any child got hurt. Thank you for helping us have as safe of a school as we can!

**IMPORTANT  
UPCOMING  
DATES:**

- *Tuesday 3/6 @  
6pm - 3rd grade  
PE / Music program*
- *Sunday 3/11 - Day-  
light savings starts*
- *Tuesday 3/13 @  
3:45pm - Parent  
School Improvement  
Meeting*
- *Thursday 3/15 -  
Spring Parent Teach-  
er Conferences (No  
school for BME stu-  
dents)*
- *3/19-3/22 -  
Spring break*
- *Thursday 3/29 -  
3rd quarter awards  
assembly*

**School Information**

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## Empathetic Children Think "Us" Not "Them"

There is a lot of research around the fact that children learn better together. It has been proven that competitiveness does not help build healthy friendships nor does it help students succeed academically. In fact, competitions have proven to harm academic success and the ability to show compassion and empathy towards others. One way to increase academic performance as well as build empathy is to learn and play cooperatively. This type of learning and play leads to more academic success as well as helps kids get along with each other better.

Another idea that now has evidence backing it up, is the idea of family meetings and classroom meetings. These are eight guidelines to help:

**Be flexible with the agenda.** When problems occur the topic may need to change.

**Hold regular meetings.** Weekly meetings for 10-30 minutes is helpful.

**Rotate roles.** Have regular roles such as meeting leader, timekeeper, meeting planner, and secretary are helpful and can be rotated among meeting members.

**Keep communication open.** Set rules so everyone can share their opinion in a safe place. Using "I" messages to help each other understand feelings.

**Give compliments.** Start the meetings with sharing good things others have done in the last week.

**Determine decision making.** Use a "majority rules" decision to be fair.

**Resolve issues fairly.** Brainstorm ways to solve the problem without judgements, then list the pros and cons of each idea.

**Keep it upbeat.** Share funny things as well and end on a good note.

Another skill that is important in empathetic people is the ability to work through problems together. There are many problem solving models out there; I teach one to your children, but this is another option using the acronym STAND.

**S=Stop, look and listen to feelings.** This means calming down!

**T=Take turns telling the problem.** Each person takes turn telling the problem and their feelings without blame, using "I feel..."

**A=List alternatives.** Brainstorm options to find fair solutions that work for everyone involved in the problem.

**N=Narrow choices.** Eliminate ideas that go against the rules, are not safe or that someone is not comfortable doing.

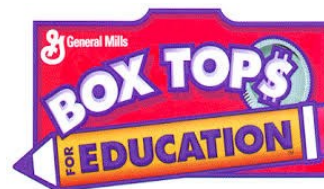
**D=Decide the best choice.** Now, choose the solution that is the best option out of the remaining choices that everyone can agree to.

Other ways we can help teach "Us" not "Them" ways of thinking to build empathy include:

- Say "we" and "us" instead of "I", "you" and "them" when talking with your kids.
- Broaden horizons by having contact with people of other cultures, races, ages, genders, beliefs and abilities.
- Look for similarities in others with your children and stress how they are alike.
- Eliminate blaming words such as "always" and "never."

## Box Tops for Education Fundraiser

We have already begun collecting box tops this year and want to thank everyone who has sent some in already. We will continue throughout the school year so keep sending them in. It is our only true fundraiser for the school to raise funds to buy things like play-ground equipment, help students who need scholarships for field trips, buy art and/or technology supplies and equipment, and other needs that come up. We also use some of the funds to have rewards for the winning classes at each grade level at the end of the year. Through December here are the top five classrooms: Haga 293, Hinds 268, Vanderpool 225, Keeling 192, and Stevenson 165. There is still plenty of time to push your classroom to the top and help the school earn money. Thanks for your help!



## Educational Needs Form

Every year the teachers take some time in the spring to start thinking about the class lists for the next school year. We will be doing that again on April 6th during our collaboration day. If you have any input about something special that your child needs regarding academic, behavioral, or social needs, please pick up an Educational Needs Form from the front office and turn it in no later than April 5th. We will do the best we can to accommodate those needs; however, please keep in mind that we have around 80 students per grade level to think about. We want to have as balanced classes as possible, which is why we need your input early on in the process so we don't have to make changes later that have a greater impact than on just one student.



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Kids are like  
a mirror,  
what they see  
and hear  
they do.  
Be  
a good  
reflection  
for them.  
-K. Heath

## Parent Teacher Conferences

It's hard to believe that we are almost done with three quarters of the school year! We will wrap up the 3rd quarter on March 14th and have our spring parent teacher conferences from 7am to 7pm on Thursday, March 15th. Teachers either have or will be sending home notes to see when you can attend a conference. Please let them know as we always shoot for 100% attendance. Teachers will be sharing your child's progress with you and giving you some next steps to help them continue to grow as a learner and person. Since we will be with parents all day, there will be **NO SCHOOL** for METZ STUDENTS on March 15th. All other schools in the district will be on their regular schedule that day.

