



BILL METZ ELEMENTARY  
**METZ MESSENGER**

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

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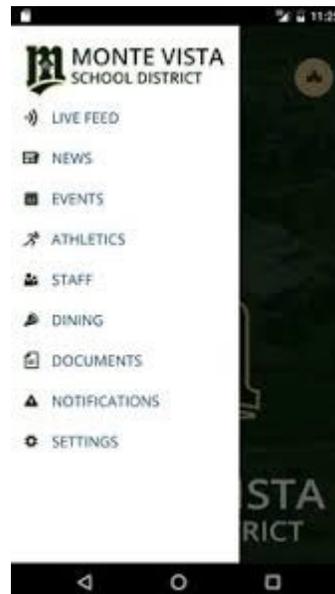
SEPTEMBER 5, 2017

**Why Are We Here?**

That is the ultimate question that we have to continually ask ourselves. Our staff wants to have a positive impact on students' academic, social, and emotional learning. We have spent a lot of time the last 4-5 years focusing on the social and emotional work at our school. This year we will be increasing our focus on academics by having intervention/enrichment time for reading and math for every student at BME. Your child will get their grade level learning from their main teacher (s) as in the past, and they will also get targeted instruction in reading and math to give them whatever they need to catch up or challenge them above grade level. We will be learning as teachers as well during our professional development days. **In September we will have a two day training for staff which will require us to cancel school for elementary school students (both Metz & Marsh) on Thursday, September 14th. Kids Connection will be open that day and can take the first 45 children that they have signed up. Please see their staff soon if you would like them at Kids Connection that day.** If you have questions about how things are going with intervention/enrichment time, feel free to contact your child's teacher or the principal.

**Monte Vista School District App**

Do you want to know what's going on at school? One easy way is to download the Monte Vista School District App from the Apple or Play Store for free. You can access all of the district's schools in one place. You can get important updates that are sent out and find documents such as the school calendar, parent-student handbook, and monthly newsletters. You can also go to the "events" part of the app to see when things are scheduled for the year and add things directly to your calendar. Staff emails are listed on the site as well if you need to contact them.



**IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES:**

- *Friday 9/8 - School is in session*
- *Tuesday 9/12 @ 3:45pm SIT meeting*
- *Tuesday 9/12 - School pictures*
- *Thursday 9/14 - No school for elementary students*
- *Thursday 9/21 - Smile 4 a Mile during PE class*
- *Thursday 9/21 @ 6:30pm - Family Fun Night*
- *Monday - Wednesday 10/9-10/11 4th grade swim program*
- *Monday - Wednesday 10/16-10/18 3rd grade swim program*

**School Information**

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 Monte Vista, CO 81144  
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 Principal: Gabe Futrell  
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## Teaching Emotional Literacy



Welcome back to school! I am very excited to be starting my fifth school year here with you all. After reading a book over the summer called Unselfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World by Michelle Borba, I've decided to spend the year on empathy and giving some helpful hints on how to encourage it in our children.

As described by this book, "empathy--rather than being a nice "add-on" to our kid's development--is in fact integral to their current and future success, happiness and well-being." and "...empathy is not an inborn trait." Empathy is the ability to understand feelings and do something for another person to show you understand and share the feelings of another. As described in *Unselfie, empathetic children use nine habits that help them respond to challenges throughout life and inspire them to help others.*

The first of the nine habits is to teach emotional literacy in kids; in other words we need to teach kids to recognize emotions. This is one of the big skills I teach in counseling class that is harder than we expect for kids. It starts with adults noticing and naming the feelings for the child. Then kids start to be able to name their own feeling, the easiest being happy, sad, angry, scared. Next, they need to be able to read nonverbal cues in others such as facial expressions, gestures, posture, and tone of voice. The next thing is that kids are able to "step into someone else's shoes" to understand how they are feeling. Finally, when a child sees someone else's uncomfortable feeling (sad, grumpy, angry, etc.) they do something to show compassion.

So, what can we all do to encourage this process of growing empathy? Here are some ideas I have compiled that work to build empathy in kids:

- Model the behavior we wish to see. Showing compassion to others, encourages kids to do it too.
- Help them learn the nonverbal cues, such as "Do you see the frown on grandma's face? How do you think she's feeling?"
- "Specifically teach different emotions, why they occur and how to respond as those feelings occur, so it builds emotional intelligence and empathy."
- Reading books, watch emotional videos, look at pictures of people showing different emotions, watch silent videos.
- Use a baby or a puppy to help teach emotions to your children. Because they cannot speak, we must be in tune to the other cues they give us.
- Empathy building exercise:
  1. Stop and tune in: no technology or interruptions
  2. Look face to face: encourage kids to look at the color of the talker's eyes (you can try it with a staring contest)
  3. Focus on the feelings and ask questions to help kids notice their feelings. Are you angry? You seem to be scowling. Your fists are clenched.
  4. Focus on how your child felt, even if someone else is the one who is sad. Only after they have mastery of their own feelings can they understand how others feel.

*If you would like more ideas, please don't hesitate to ask!*



## School Improvement Team (SIT)

We would like to invite parents/guardians to be part of our Bill Metz Elementary School Improvement Team (SIT). We meet quarterly after school and daycare for elementary age students is provided free of charge. We discuss relevant school-topics and any questions that parents may have. Our first meeting will be Tuesday, September 12th right after school. Please contact Mr. Futrell with any questions you have about SIT. If you are not able to attend the meetings but are interested in other ways to help and be involved you could help organize and run the Box Tops program. This is our main way to raise money for the school. We use the money to buy playground equipment, art supplies, help with field trips, etc.



## Monte Vista in Motion

Monte Vista in Motion is a program that challenges students to get moving before the school day starts. Starting in early October, the students will have a choice of staying on the playground or going into the gym from 7:30-7:42am. If students go into the gym they are required to participate in the games or dancing to get their bodies moving. Because of space, we will have 1st-3rd graders be able to go to the gym on Mondays and Wednesdays and 4th-5th graders can participate on Tuesdays and Thursdays. They must enter the doors by the gym by 7:35am in order to participate. After that they will be required to stay on the playground. Ms. Barbosa will be running the program with the help of a couple of Americorp members. If you have any questions or would like to volunteer, please contact Ms. Barbosa at [brandidb@monte.k12.co.us](mailto:brandidb@monte.k12.co.us)



## Assessments

Why do we test students? At the beginning of each year we want to see where each student is at so we can find their areas of strength and weakness. We feel it is the best way to meet the needs of each and every student. During the first couple of weeks classroom teachers, intervention teachers, para-professionals, and AmeriCorps members have all been working hard with students to gather this data. We have been using last years PARCC data, Galileo pre-assessments, I-Station, Moby-max and BVSD math screeners. Students will be divided into small groups during the intervention/enrichment time based on their testing data and teacher observations. We don't typically just send the assessment data home because it can be confusing if you don't know how to interpret it; however, if you are ever want to know more about how your child is performing on these, we can share them with you. Later in the year, students will be creating data notebooks and setting goals for themselves to drive their learning in reading and writing.

