



All About the Owen Owls

November 2009

Owen Elementary School IPSD 204

Volume 7, Issue 1

Special points of interest:

- PD Wednesdays
- Vision and Hearing Screenings
- Dr. Birkett's Flu Prevention Strategies letter

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Continuing the PD Wednesday Journey

We have been very thankful for the opportunity to have time for professional development every Wednesday. Over the summer, the Instructional Leadership Team began the process of determining how we would use the 55 minutes every Wednesday with the focus being professional development. Two threads emerged in conjunction with our other District initiative of becoming a Professional Learning Community. The first is building the trust required to truly confront the brutal truth as we collectively seek continuous improvement. The second is having every team create SMART goals to drive their efforts this year.

SMART goals—Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented and Time-bound— are the foundation of our efforts. Teachers are working to set targets for student achievement that support our School Improvement Plan and will

Vision and Hearing Screenings at Owen

Vision and hearing screening will begin during week of October 26th. If your child does not pass, you will receive a referral letter. New students and students receiving Support Services, regardless of grade level, will be screened for vision and hearing.

Hearing screenings will be done on students in Kindergarten, First, Second, and Third grades. An audiogram will be done on students wearing hear-

ing aids that do not have any hearing evaluation results on file at school. If your child has a hearing test performed by a doctor or outside agency, please submit a copy of the most recent test results to the school health office.

guide their own professional development efforts. This is a departure from how we have operated in the past and to be successful here we need the first point I mentioned. Trust is the essential ingredient for teachers to have the conversations necessary to focus on student learning over teaching. Let's say 3rd grade gives a common reading test and teacher A's class outperforms teacher B's class. We need to foster the relationship trust that will allow teacher B to ask teacher A to talk about how she taught this skill without taking personally the fact that her strategies were not as successful. As this trust grows, our teams truly become more dependent on each other and that makes our bonds stronger. When everyone trusts each other, we can say that every teacher is responsible for every student.

Vision screenings will be done on students in Second grade. If your child has been prescribed glasses, please be sure to send them to school with your child. Students wearing glasses will not be screened for vision, but

Together, trust and SMART goals will help continue Owen's efforts to become a truly great school with all students succeeding.



Instructional Leadership Team working hard to plan Professional Development activities for 2009-2010

glasses will be checked for proper fit and repair needs.

Please remember, these screenings are not to be considered a substitute for an evaluation by a doctor.

Andrea Drolema, RN



“Out on the playground we are using the principle of Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports.”



Owen Owls can have fun in any kind of weather!

Upcoming Calendar Events

November

- 2 Picture Retake Day
- 2-5 Book Fair in the LMC
- 4 4:30–8:00 Parent/Teacher Conferences
- 10 8:00–3:00/4:30–8:00 Parent/Teacher Conferences, **No Student Attendance Day**
- 11 NO SCHOOL Veteran’s Day
- 17 6:15PM Demo Concert @ Gregory
- 19 7:00–8:00 2nd Grade Musical
- 25-27 NO SCHOOL Thanksgiving Break

December

- 4 2nd Quarter Progress Reports Sent Home
- 10 7:00-8:00 Chorus Concert
- 21-31 NO SCHOOL Winter Break

From the Desk of Mr. Martin, Student Services Coordinator

The 2009-2010 school year is off to a great start. The lunchroom and playground are once again buzzing with students. I would like to take this time to let you know of some things going on in those areas that you and your students should be aware of. The first is we are now recycling in the lunchroom. This is the first step in an overall program to help reduce waste and help

the environment. Wednesdays are waste free lunch day so please try to send lunches in containers that can return home with your child. Out on the playground we are using the principle of Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports. These principles include being Respectful, Responsible, and being Safe. Ask your child what it means to be respectful, responsible and safe on

the playground. As the weather turns please make sure your students come with the proper clothing to go out for recess. We will be going out with the exception of rainy days and days when the temperature goes below zero, but we won’t think about that for now.

Cold Weather and Recess

With fall in full swing and the cold weather coming soon, now is a good time to remind parents and students of the recess guidelines for cold weather.

Whenever the temperature with wind chill falls to 5 degrees Fahrenheit or colder, students will have indoor recess. If the temperature with wind chill remains above this temperature, the students will have outdoor

recess. It will be important for students to be prepared for cooler temperatures.

If there is snow on the ground, students will need to have boots and snow pants in addition to their normal coat in order to play in the field. Students without boots and/or snow pants will be restricted to the blacktop to avoid wet shoes and pants all afternoon.

Beyond that, we hope our

students will have as much fun during the winter as they do during the spring and fall. Certainly, snow soccer or football is only available when snow is on the ground. Though the fun may be different, the students still need to have that release time to fully enjoy their school day.

Owen Elementary's Bully Prevention Program

"Stop-Walk-Talk." Parents, if you hear your students using these words, they are following the bullying prevention program at Owen School! Stop-Walk-Talk teaches students how to respond if other students are bullying other Owen students. Our staff has also been taught how to respond if students engage in bullying behavior, that is, behavior that is disrespectful and can even be unsafe.

We would like to explain the program to you and steps you can take to see that your students are not bullied and do not engage in bullying behaviors. You are key to the success of this program! Anonymous surveys we conducted with students revealed that they are far more likely to tell parents if they are being bullied than they are to tell an adult at school.

Through "Stop-Walk-Talk" students are taught what bullying is and what it is not. For example, teasing, calling someone names, gossiping, excluding students from an activity, continuous pushing or constant poking are examples of bullying while accidentally bumping into someone or politely declining an invitation to play is not.

1) "Stop" signal. All students were taught the Owen "Stop" signal. Our stop signal requires them to look directly at the other student, make the Owen hand signal for stop, and use a firm voice to say, "Stop." Students are en-

couraged to use the "Stop" signal if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied. Students were also taught how to respond if they are given the "Stop" signal. The student receiving the "Stop" signal should immediately stop what he or she is doing, take a deep breath, count to 3, and then go on with their day following our school rules. Students were reminded that they should stop what they are doing, regardless of whether they agree that they deserved the stop signal or not. By following these guidelines, students show respect for themselves and one another.

2) "Walk away or ignore." What if a student gives another student the stop signal, but the problem behavior continues? Students were then taught to "Walk" away or ignore the behavior. When it is not possible to walk away, such as while riding the bus, students were taught to "ignore" the student by looking the other way and not responding to them further either verbally or nonverbally (through gestures).

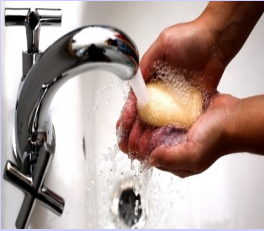
3) "Talk." Finally, if students have tried to solve the problem themselves by using the stop signal and walking away or ignoring it, then they can "Talk" to an adult. All staff has been trained to respond to a student's request to talk. First, the staff member will ask the student about the problem. Then, they will ask the student if

they used the "stop" signal and tried walking away. Students will be praised for trying these steps or reminded about using these steps first before talking to an adult. Finally, the staff member will discuss the problem behavior with the student who is engaging in problem or disrespectful behavior. They will remind students what they are to do when they are given the stop signal by another student or students (i.e., immediately stop what they are doing, take a deep breath and count to 3, and continue with their day following our school rules). In addition, staff will enforce the appropriate consequence for breaking one of our school rules. Parents will receive notification from the school if their student continues to engage in disrespectful or unsafe behaviors.

One important exception to the "Stop-Walk-Talk" sequence is when a student is in danger such as falling on the playground or fighting. In this case, students were told to immediately tell an adult.

By encouraging students to use Stop-Walk-Talk, we hope that students will feel like they have tools to deal with problem behaviors, will help one another out, will get in trouble less often, feel safer at school, and will be better able to keep their focus on learning during their school day.

"We hope that students...will be better able to keep their focus on learning during their school day."



Washing hands is one of the most important practices to help limit the spread of illness.



Covering your mouth or nose with your sleeve reduces the likelihood of spreading germs.

Reprint of Dr. Birkett's Flu Preparation Letter

Flu Preparation Information

Dear District 204 Parents/Guardians,

Our district is preparing for this year's flu season and the expected return of the H1N1 virus. We are following the guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and taking direction from the DuPage and Will County Health Departments to monitor flu conditions and ensure that our schools remain functioning in a normal manner this flu season.

The district's focus is on the following proactive measures to lower the risk of students and staff catching the flu:

- Students will be directed to wash their hands before they eat lunch.
- A video on respiratory etiquette will be shown to students.
- Hand sanitizers will soon be in all classrooms, lunchrooms, and main offices as a back-up to hand washing.
- Certified school nurses will communicate with staff about correct hand washing procedures and staff will then instruct students.
- Principals will include frequent messages in their morning announcements to remind students about the importance of hand washing and respiratory etiquette.

Building cleaning procedures were reviewed to ensure the district is following all public health guidelines.

Although the district is taking the above steps, we need the help of our parent partners to assist us in our efforts. Please take a moment to remind your children to wash their hands and instruct them not to share personal items like drinks or food. Instruct them to cover up their cough or sneeze using their elbow, arm or sleeve instead of their hands. They also need to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth to prevent spreading germs. Health officials also recommend having your family receive a seasonal flu shot. Opportunities for the H1N1 flu shot will be dictated by the county health department.

Lastly and most importantly, if your child is ill, please keep him or her at home. A child must be fever free without taking fever-reducing medications for 24 hours before returning to school. The start of the year is always a good time to review childcare contingency plans should you need to keep your child home from school. Thank you for your efforts to help us keep our students and staff healthy this school year. For more information, visit the links below or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

Sincerely,
Kathy Birkett
Superintendent

The Centers for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov/

h1n1flu

DuPage County Health Department:
www.dupagehealth.org/swineflu
Will County Health Department:
www.willcountyhealth.org/en/do.jsp?id=158