

Alexander Elementary



Parents Make A Difference!

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A note from:
Mr. Wade
Elementary Principal

John C. Maxwell is credited for saying, "Change is inevitable. Growth is optional."

In the field of education, we are often involved with change. Many of these changes come and go. Over the next three months, I will use this space to address three reforms affecting our schools in a major way. As you may be aware, the implementing of these new laws is having a significant impact on how schools operate in the following areas:

Student Academic Standards- Oklahoma, along with 47 other states have agreed to adopt the Common Core State Standards. Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, all Oklahoma schools will no longer use the Priority Academic Student Skills commonly referred to as P.A.S.S. as their guide for teaching major core subjects such as Math and Language Arts.

Teacher Evaluation- A new method for evaluating teachers is scheduled to go into effect in three years. The new mandate requires administrators to use both student learning and progress along with classroom observations when evaluating teachers. The law requires teachers to maintain an "effective rating average" or face dismissal.

Student Retention- A new Oklahoma law requires students that entered the first grade this year to master grade-appropriate reading skills by the end of third grade in order to be promoted to the fourth grade. This law is being referred to as, "The law to end social promotion". The mandate directs schools to identify reading deficiencies early and if necessary to retain students before they reach the third grade.

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In the months to come, we will look at each of these areas and discuss how Alexander Elementary is currently working to implement these mandates. We realized these changes come with challenges. It is our desire to use these changes as an opportunity for growth. It is our goal to insure the means in which these changes are addressed have our student's best interest in mind.

If you ever have any suggestions or ideas on these matters or any others, please call me at 918-675-4336.



Grade Cards Go Out-
Wednesday, January 4.

Rise and Shine Assembly-
Monday, January 9.

Chuck E. Cheese AR Reading Reward Trips-
K&1st- January 11 (10AM-2PM)
2nd & 4th January 12 (10AM-2PM)
3rd & 5th January 13 (10AM-2PM)
Joplin, MO

Spelling Bee- Thursday, January 19.

Progress Reports Go Out- Thursday, February 2.

Prevent Blindness- All students at the elementary will have their eyes checked on either February 8 or 9.

Parent-Teacher Conferences- February 16 and 21. 3:30PM – 6:30PM.

No School- Friday, February 17.

"In the end, it's not what you do for your children...but what you've taught them to do for themselves."

-Ann Landers



Help Your Child Write and Develop a Better Vocabulary

To be a good writer, children need a good vocabulary. To

help your child develop her vocabulary, encourage her to:

- *Read a lot. The more she reads, the more new words she'll encounter.
- *Examine the context of new words. See if she can tell what a new word means by the text around it.
- *Look up words she doesn't know in the dictionary.
- *Keep a list of new words and their meanings in a special notebook.
- *Learn the roots of words. See how many words she can think of that contain the same root—predict, verdict, dictionary and dictate, for example.
- *Do word exchanges. Together, read over what she writes. Then have her see how many words she can replace without changing the meaning.
- *Regularly use a thesaurus. Find synonyms for words she uses often.
- *Play word games like scrabble and Mad Libs. Find more games on the internet at sites like http://dmoz.org/Games/Internet/Browser_Based/Word_Games/
- *Do crossword and other word puzzles.

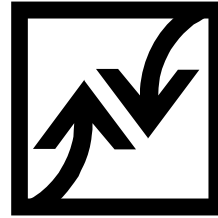


Look for Signs When Your Child Has Trouble Reading

You can tell when your child comes to words he can't read. He's likely to squirm in his seat, get sleepy, look anxious or act up.

When you see these signs, you can help.

- *Look at the book to find out where your child was last reading well. Ask him if there's a word he doesn't understand.
- *Help your child look the problem word up in a simple dictionary.
- *Check his understanding. Have him use the word in several sentences. If your child says he knows all the words, do some spot checks. Ask him, "What does this word mean?" Look up the words he doesn't know. Have him use them in a sentence.



Get Children to Talk About Their Day by Playing "High & Low"

Some children bound in the door from school and tell you every detail of their day. But many others just don't seem to have anything to say. They need more coaxing to open up to you.

Some parents have found playing "High and Low" with their children works well at getting them to open up. Each day, each person has to tell the high and the low point of his or her day.

Through talking, listening families learn something new about each other every day. This is a fun and healthy way to for families to communicate.



Limit Your Child's Intake of Foods That Hinder Learning

Eating the right foods helps children learn better. Milk, eggs, nuts and other protein sources support brain cell growth. Bread, cereal, potatoes and other carbohydrates provide energy for the brain. Dark green leafy vegetables have vitamin A needed for normal vision. They also have iron. Children who don't have enough iron can show a lack of attention.

But you must also help your child avoid foods that are bad for learning. The following are known to overstimulate children. They reduce a child's ability to sit still and concentrate. They shorten attention span. Plus they can interfere with short-term memory. Try to limit:

- ***Sugar.** Candy, cookies, soft drinks, sweetened cereals and many canned foods.
- ***Caffeine.** Chocolate, cola drinks, coffee, tea.
- ***Additives.** Preservatives, artificial coloring and flavoring.