

Principal's Update

October 29, 2010

(Click to see last week's edition)

Dear Clifton Families,

It's been quite a week at Clifton ES! Although there have been many high points, such as the delicious Soup and Salad Luncheon provided by our dedicated PTA, a cute Creepy Crawly Day, and action-packed field trips to Hemlock and Sully Plantation, the most poignant experience for me was co-teaching PE with Dr. Dillon last Friday afternoon. Dr. Dillon gave me the honor of timing the children as they ran the mile. I thought it was odd that the panting students who had just finished running the mile headed out for more laps. Then I realized that the children had decided to join a classmate to encourage him as he ran his last two laps. The classmate is a cancer survivor. The students cheered for their friend as they ran with him, and the boy was able to run the entire distance. He was glowing with pride, and there was genuine joy on all of the children's faces. It was an extremely touching moment that brought tears to my eyes, and it says everything about the compassion of our students at Clifton.

Unfortunately, there were some challenges for all of us this week, too. The most difficult task has been dealing with the new wave of emotions that flooded our school as parents and community members shared about their participation in the boundary meetings on Monday and Tuesday. Change and uncertainty are stressful for all of us, whether we are students, parents, or staff. Adults and children perform best in a calm, supportive, and safe atmosphere. Because change and uncertainty can be unsettling, a calm, structured environment allows children and adults to feel safe and know what to expect. Our focus at Clifton ES will continue to be providing the most positive and engaging learning experiences possible for our students in a supportive and structured environment. I'm sure you would all agree that it is extremely important for our students and staff to be able to focus on teaching and learning right now. For this reason, I am encouraging everyone to please refrain from discussing these concerns at school, especially when children are present. When our students and staff hear the concerns repeatedly, it causes them to feel anxious and distracts them from the business of teaching and learning. I believe it is critical that we provide an atmosphere of normalcy for the students, as well as the staff, at this time. Many of you have done a beautiful job maintaining a sense of calm reassurance for your children. I have so much confidence in you as a loving and caring community, and I know you will continue to work with me to do everything possible to help our students manage these uncertain circumstances in the best possible way. Please feel free to call, email, or visit me if you have concerns you would like to discuss, and let's allow our staff and students to focus on learning. Thank you for supporting me in this endeavor.

Conferences on Monday and Tuesday

Our teachers are looking forward to discussing your child's progress with you on Monday, 11/1, or Tuesday, 11/2. I know that the teachers will celebrate your child's successes with you. They will also provide information that will enable you and your child to reflect on his/her progress and to set academic goals for the remainder of the school year.

SCA Bake Sale Reminder: Tuesday, 11/2, from 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Parents, please remember to bring in your donations for the bake sale on Mon. , 11/1, or early on Tues. , 11/2. Also, please remember to label your product and indicate if the baked good contains nuts. Questions? Ask Mrs. Lessard, Thank you!

Thanksgiving Feast!

Our annual Thanksgiving Feast will be held Wednesday, 1/17/10 grades 1 through 6. The menu will include turkey and dressing, cranberry sauce, whipped potatoes and gravy, green beans and frozen pumpkin yogurt cup. Milk and bottled water will be available for children and iced tea and lemonade will be available for adults. Ticket prices are \$3.40 for adults and non-students (including all children who do not attend Clifton) and will be purchased in the cafeteria. Clifton Elementary students will either purchase their lunch using their lunch card, or buy a ticket in the cafeteria. The cost to Clifton students is \$2.40 per meal. (Parents may not purchase meals for themselves or other guests using a student meal card.) Tickets will be sold in the cafeteria. Do not send any money to school for the tickets in advance. Plan to arrive about 10 minutes before your child's class is scheduled to eat so that you will have time to purchase tickets for anyone in your family who may need one. All students and guests will eat in the gym. Please remember to allow additional time due for overflow parking conditions, and please observe all "no parking" signs. I hope you will be able to enjoy this annual school event with your child!

Please note that the special lunch schedule for our Thanksgiving Luncheon is below and that it differs from the normal lunch schedule.

- 10:30 Mrs. McGourty's class
- 10:40 Mrs. Zaman's class
- 10:50 Mrs. Dipert's class
- 11:00 Ms. Johnson's class
- 11:15 Mrs. McAllister's class
- 11:30 Mrs. Siry's class
- 11:40 Mrs. Menotti's class
- 11:50 Mrs. Owens's class
- 12:00 Mrs, Ashley's class
- 12:15 Mrs. Gardner's class
- 12:25 Mrs. Godfrey's class
- 12:35 Mrs. O'Quinn's class
- 12:45 Mrs. O'Brien's class

Thanksgiving Luncheon Volunteers

Volunteers are needed to help with set-up after school on the 16th (kids welcome too!) and during the luncheon between the hours of 10am and 3pm on the 17th. If you can spare some time to help make the day a success, please let us know! 8th graders needing community service hours frequently enjoy the set-up activities after school, so pass this opportunity along to them, too. Contact Cyndy Pratt by email at cpratt98@cox.net or at (703) 250-1017. Thanks for your support!

Mark Your Calendar:

- 11/1-11/2-Parent -Teacher Conferences
- 11/2-Election Day
- 11/3-2nd Grading Period Begins
- 11/3-Federal Impact Aid Forms Sent Home
- 11/4-K Field Trip to Cox Farm
- 11/9-Report Cards Sent Home in Tuesday Folders
- 11/10-PTA Meeting with Jim Raney @ 7 p.m.
- 11/11-Veteran's Day Observed at School
- 11/17-Thanksgiving Luncheon
- 11/17-FLE Parent Night @ Laurel Ridge

Best wishes for a fun and relaxing weekend with family and friends!

Renee C. Miller
Principal