

Mustang Message

Franconia Elementary School
March 30, 2011



The fifth graders spent a little time at the Natural History Museum as a part of their study on landforms. Scientists taught the students about tracking volcanoes and analyzing fossils. Students got a chance to see rocks from the moon and Mars, hold insects and check out fossilized dinosaur excrement!

From the Principal

It's important for students to be in school every day. Lesson plans are constructed to introduce, reinforce and practice concepts systematically based on student understanding and pacing.

While students can be absent from school for many valid reasons, there are some common reasons for student absences that can be avoided.

1) **Should my child stay home if he is sick?** Yes. But your child is usually fine to attend school if his/her fever is under 100 degrees, there is no rash, "pink eye," nausea, or diarrhea. Typically, we ask that a student stay home until he/she is fever-free for 24 hours. If you are not sure if your child is sick and you don't see any real symptoms, send your child to school. We will contact you if things change.

2) **When should my family take a vacation?** It is tempting to pull your child from school for a family trip, but you may be sending your child the message that school is not a top priority. Even if you ask for make-up work or assignments, children can fall behind because they are missing hours of instructional time while you are away. While it may be cheaper to take a trip during the school year, your child may pay the cost in lost schooling.

3) **When should I schedule appointments?** If possible, schedule doctor and dentist appointments after school or on the weekend. Look for opportunities to schedule routine appointments such as dental visits, physicals, immunizations during school breaks and holidays.

So, help us make every day at school count and avoid unnecessary absences.

Merrell V. Dade

Principal

At Franconia, we're building tomorrow!

For Your Information

No school on Monday, April 4

Mark your calendars, parents. Monday, April 4 is a student holiday, and there will be no school. If you are interested in taking a look at the 2011-2012 school year calendar, it's available online at <http://www.fcps.edu/about/11-12cal.htm>.

Yearbook orders due April 8

It's time to send in your order form for the 2010-2011 Franconia Elementary yearbook. The cost of each book is \$14. Orders can be sent in via the order envelope your child brought home last week with a check or money order. Or, you may order online with a Visa or MasterCard. To order online with a credit card, go to SplendidPortraits.com and enter Franconia's image locator number: 241297023. Payments must be received in advance to order a yearbook.

Immunization requirements for students entering 6th grade

If you have a 5th grade student, it's time to take a careful look at his or her immunization records. It is a requirement that all students in Virginia receive a booster dose of Tdap vaccine prior to entering 6th grade, if at least five years have passed since the last dose of tetanus toxoid-containing vaccine (DTP, DTaP, DT, or Td).

- If your child is 11 years old, he or she should get the Tdap immunization, and documentation should be provided to the school.
- If your child is still 10 years old, he or she may receive the Tdap vaccine, Boostrix, which is approved for 10 year olds, or you may wait until the 11th birthday to receive the vaccine approved for 11 year olds.
- If your child's 11th birthday is after the first day of school, your child must have a medical exemption from the doctor stating when he or she will receive the Tdap immunization in order to attend school.

Please provide documentation to the school prior to June 21, 2011, that your child has had the Tdap booster. It's important that families attend to this matter as soon as possible. **Your sixth grader cannot begin school in the fall without documentation of having had the Tdap booster or a tetanus-containing vaccine within the past 5 years.** If you have any questions, please contact Martha McCash at 703-822-2200.