

PARENT INFORMATION



SCHOOL DISTRICT

WHERE YOUR CHILD IS MORE THAN A STUDENT!

www.ozarkmountainschooldistrict.com

Ozark Mountain School District
250 South Hwy 65
St. Joe, AR 72675
(870) 439-2218

Bruno-Pyatt Campus
475 Hwy 125 South
Everton, AR 72633
(870) 427-5227

St. Joe Campus
250 South Hwy 65
St. Joe, AR 72675
(870) 439-2213

Western Grove Campus
300 School Street
Western Grove, AR 72685
(870) 429-5215

PRINCIPAL AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT COORDINATOR MESSAGE

It is with great pleasure that we take the opportunity to welcome you to Western School. The purpose of this packet is to introduce you to the Western Grove School and community.

You are always welcome to visit our school and we encourage our parents and guardians to visit often. If you wish to have a conference, an appointment will make it more convenient for the teacher. Conferences with the teacher or the principal can be arranged by calling the school office at the number listed below.

When you have a suggestion for us, please let us know about it. It is through our working together that the children will benefit. This booklet will never answer all of your questions, but we hope that you will keep this handy and refer to it throughout the year.

The school staff is looking forward to working with you to make the coming year a valuable and enjoyable experience for your child. If you should have questions, please call us at the school.

Once again, welcome!

Billy Carter
Principal
bcarter@omsd.k12.ar.us

Cyndi Brummund
Parent Facilitator
cbrummund@omsd.k12.ar.us

SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jesse Rose, President

Travis Freeman

Brad Gibson

Gary Lovell

Donald Morris

John Spence

Ben Taylor

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Ambulance	911 or 870-449-4416
Newton County Police	911 or (870) 446-5214
Fire	911
Poison Hot line	800-376-4766
North Arkansas Regional Medical Center	870-414-4000
Department of Finance & Administration	870-449-6535
Newton County Public Library	870-446-2983
Western Grove School Office	870-429-5215
Western Grove Office Fax	870-429-5276
District Office	870-439-2218
Western Grove PTO	tinarro@me.com

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL/BELL SCHEDULE

Students should not arrive at school before 7:30am and no later than 8:00am. K-5 students will be dismissed at 3:10pm and 7-12 students dismissed at 3:10pm to load the buses, cars or walk home.

ROLE OF THE PARENT

Parents also have an important role to play in fostering open communication between themselves and teachers. They can:

- **INTRODUCE THEMSELVES.** At the beginning of the school year, parents can contact teachers and let them know when they can be reached most easily, daytime or evening, to discuss their child's classroom experience, and how they would prefer to be contacted (telephone, email, letter, etc.).
- **BE INVOLVED IN CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AT WHATEVER LEVEL WORK AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES ALLOW.** If parents cannot volunteer or go on field trips, they can let the teacher know that they are interested in helping in other ways with a special display or some activity that can be done on an occasional weekend, for example. They can let the teacher know that they have skills that they would be willing to share even if they are not sure how they can be useful in the classroom. Or, they can let the teacher know that special circumstances (an extremely ill parent, or an especially demanding job, for example) prevent them from being formally involved, but that they are always interested in how their child is doing and would welcome communications about their child on a regular basis, not just when there's a problem.
- **INITIATE REGULAR CONTACT.** Parents need not wait for the teacher to call them; they can contact the teacher at times the teacher has indicated are convenient.

ROLE OF THE TEACHER

The foundation for good parent-teacher relationships is frequent and open communication. Both teachers and parents share the responsibility for creating such a foundation. There are several strategies teachers use to establish a climate conducive to open communication.

Teachers:

- **LET PARENTS KNOW HOW AND WHEN THEY CAN CONTACT THE SCHOOL AND THE TEACHER.** As early in the school year as possible, teachers can explain that: (1) they can be reached at specific times or in specific ways; (2) they can be contacted directly as questions or concerns arise; and (3) they have given a lot of thought to their teaching philosophy, class rules, and expectations. In addition to personal interaction, teachers often use newsletters or letters home to provide this information to parents, perhaps including a phone number and, if available, an electronic mail address by which they can be contacted (Barnett, 1995). Some teachers encourage two-way communication by including in newsletters or letters home a short survey about children's interests or parents' hopes or expectations for the school year.
- **PRACTICE AN OPEN-DOOR, OPEN-MIND POLICY.** Teachers can invite parents to visit the class at any time that is convenient to the parent. When they visit, parents can monitor their child's perceptions of a situation and see for themselves what the teacher is trying to achieve with his or her students.
- **ELICIT EXPRESSIONS OF PARENTS' CONCERNS AND INTERESTS IN PREPARATION FOR PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES.** Some schools organize parent-teacher meetings to discuss their goals early in the school year. On these occasions, teachers can ask parents to share their main concerns and goals for their child. Brief questionnaires and interest surveys also provide good bases for meaningful discussions in parent-teacher conferences (Nielsen & Finkelstein, 1993).
- **INVOLVE PARENTS IN CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES.** Teachers can let parents know how they can be helpful and solicit parents' assistance with specific activities. The more involved parents are in what goes on in the classroom, the more likely they are to understand the teacher's goals and practices.

ROLE OF THE ADMINISTRATION

Those who manage elementary, middle, and secondary schools are called principals. They set the academic tone and hire, evaluate, and help improve the skills of teachers and other staff. Principals confer with staff to advise, explain, or answer procedural questions. They visit classrooms, observe teaching methods, review instructional objectives, and examine learning materials. They actively work with teachers to develop and maintain high curriculum standards, develop mission statements, and set performance goals and objectives. Principals must use clear, objective guidelines for teacher appraisals, because pay often is based on performance ratings.

Principals also meet and interact with other administrators, students, parents, and representatives of community organizations. Decision making authority has increasingly shifted from school district central offices to individual schools. Thus, parents, teachers, and other members of the community play an important role in setting school policies and goals. Principals must pay attention to the concerns of these groups when making administrative decisions.

Principals prepare budgets and reports on various subjects, including finances and attendance, and oversee and requisition and allocation of supplies. As school budgets become tighter, many principals have become more involved in public relations and fund raising to secure financial support for their schools from local businesses and the community.

Principals must take an active role to ensure that students meet national, State, and local academic standards. Many principals develop school/business partnerships and school-to-work transition programs for students.

Increasingly, principals must be sensitive to the needs of the rising number of non-English speaking and culturally diverse students. Growing enrollments, which are leading to overcrowding at many existing schools, also are a cause for concern. When addressing problems of inadequate resources, administrators serve as advocates for the building of new schools or the repair of existing ones. During summer months, principals are responsible for planning for the upcoming year, overseeing summer school, participating in workshops for teachers and administrators, supervising building repairs and improvements, and working to be sure the school has adequate staff for the school year.

Schools continue to be involved with students' emotional welfare as well as their academic achievement. As a result, principals face responsibilities outside the academic realm. For example, in response to the growing numbers of dual-income and single-parent families and teenage parents, schools have established before – and after-school childcare programs or family resource centers, which also may offer parenting classes and social service referrals. With the help of community organizations, some principals have established programs to combat increases in crime, drug and alcohol abuse, and sexually transmitted diseases among students.

HOW TO HANDLE A DISAGREEMENT WITH A TEACHER

Parents' discussions of disagreements with teachers need to be based on knowing the facts. Parents can:

- **TALK DIRECTLY WITH THE TEACHER ABOUT THE PROBLEM.** The best approach is to address complaints at first directly to the teacher, either in person or by telephone, and then to other school personnel in the order specified by school policy. Sometimes the teacher is unaware of the child's difficulty or perception of a situation. Sometimes a child misunderstands a teacher's intentions, or the teacher is unaware of the child's confusion about a rule or an assignment. It is important to check the facts directly with the teacher before drawing conclusions or allocating blame. Direct contact is necessary to define the problem accurately and to develop an agreement about how best to proceed.
- **AVOID CRITICIZING TEACHERS IN FRONT OF CHILDREN.** Criticizing teachers and schools in front of children may confuse them. Even very young children can pick up disdain or frustration that parents express about their children's school experiences. In the case of the youngest children, it is not unusual for them to attribute heroic qualities to their teachers. Some even think that the teacher lives at school and thinks of no one but them! Eventually such behavior is outgrown, but overheard criticism is likely to be confusing in the early years and may put a child in a bind over divided loyalties. Besides causing confusion and conflict, criticizing the teacher in front of the child does nothing to address the problem.

In the case of older children, such criticism may foster arrogance, defiance, and rudeness toward teachers. Children's respect for authority figures is generally a shared goal in most cultures (Katz, 1996).

- CHOOSE AN APPROPRIATE TIME AND PLACE TO DISCUSS THE DISAGREEMENT. Parents should keep in mind that the end of the day, when both teachers and parents are tired, is probably not the best time for a discussion involving strong feelings. If an extended discussion is needed, make an appointment with the teacher.

INFORMATION ON CONTENT STANDARDS

What are content standards?

Content standards identify what students are expected to know and be able to do at each grade level in reading, language arts, science, mathematics, social studies, and other academic content areas.

For example, when they complete Grade 2, all students should be able to

- Count, read, and write numbers up to 1,000.
- Sounds out words with ease when reading

The content standards represent an essential core of knowledge and abilities that all students must have to be successful in school and in their adult life. Content standards help teachers decide what to teach at each grade level so that every student is prepared to go to the next grade, and, most importantly, be academically successful throughout school. If we expect every child to meet the same standards, then "no child is left behind."

Why do we need content standards?

The content standards provide common goals and expectations for student learning across the state.

Consistent expectations for teaching and learning provide meaningful information about how students are achieving. Content standards help ensure that a third grader in one school is learning the same important skills in reading, writing, math, and other academic areas as the third graders in any other school.

Why do parents need to know and understand standards?

With set standards for learning in each subject area and at each grade level, parents have better information about what their child are expected to know and be able to do. With this knowledge, parents are better able to talk with teachers about their child's abilities, support their child's learning at home, and understand the results of standardized testing. Parents can request the standards for their child's academic performance from their teacher(s).

How are standards used in helping students to be academically successful?

Teachers use them to

- ★ Guide decisions on what and how to teach students
- ★ Coordinate what is taught in different classrooms and from year to year
- ★ Select teaching materials, such as textbooks, so there is a match between what is taught and what students are expected to learn
- ★ Measure student progress

Parents use them to

- ★ Connect home activities, such as nature walks or even a trip to the grocery store, to content being taught in their child's classrooms
- ★ Help them in understanding the individual student progress reports sent home each year
- ★ Help them know what questions to ask at teacher-student-parent conferences when teachers talk about learning expectations

Preparing for Tests: Suggestions for Parents

You can be a great help to your child if you will observe these do's about tests and testing:

- ✓ **Do talk to your child about testing.** It's helpful for children to understand why schools give tests and to know the different kinds of test they will take. Explain that tests are like yardsticks. Teachers, schools, school districts, and even states use them to measure what is taught and how well students are learning what is taught. Most tests are designed and given by teachers to measure students' progress in a course. These tests are associated with the grades on report cards. The results tell the teacher and the students how well they are doing. The results of some tests tell schools that they need to strengthen courses or change teaching methods. Still other tests compare students by schools, school districts, or cities. Tell your child that occasionally, he or she will take "standardized" tests. Explain that these tests use the same standards to measure student performance across the state or even across the country. Every student takes the same test according to the same rules. This makes it possible to measure each student's performance against others'.
- ✓ **Do encourage your child.** Praise your child for the things that he or she does well. When children feel good about themselves, they can do their best on tests. Children who are afraid of failing are more likely to become anxious when taking tests and are more likely to make mistakes.
- ✓ **Do meet with your child's teacher as often as possible to discuss his progress.** Ask the teacher to suggest activities for you and your child to do at home to help prepare for tests and to improve your child's understanding of the schoolwork.
- ✓ **Do make sure that your child attends school regularly.** Remember, tests reflect children's overall achievement. The more effort and energy your child puts into learning, the more likely it is that he will do well on tests.
- ✓ **Do provide a quiet, comfortable place for studying at home and make sure that your child is well rested on school days and especially on the day of a test.** Children who are tired are less able to pay attention in class or to handle the demands of a test.

What's the best way for me to stay involved in my child's school activities?

At the beginning of the school year, attend back-to-school night or other orientation events.

Get to know the teachers and other school personnel. Listen to their plans, know what they hope to accomplish with their students, and understand why they chose these goals.

Attend school events.

Go to sports events and concerts, student exhibitions, parent-teacher meetings, parents' night, and awards events, such as a "perfect attendance" breakfast.

Learn what the school offers

Read the information the school sends home, and ask to receive information in your native language if necessary. Talk to other parents to find out what programs the school offers. Maybe there's a music program, after-school activity, sports team, or tutoring program your child would enjoy. Remember to keep track of events throughout the school year.

Attend parent organization meetings

At most schools, a group of parents meets regularly to talk about the school. This group is usually called the PTA or PTO (Parent Teacher Association or Parent Teacher Organization). The meetings give you a good chance to talk with other parents and to work together to improve the school, as well as the chance to voice your hopes and concerns for your child and for the school. Help organize parent-teacher meetings around your interests and those of other parents. If you are unable to attend these meetings, ask that the minutes of the meetings be sent to you. Or, find out if the school makes these minutes available on its Web site.

Volunteer in your child's school

If your schedule permits, look for ways to help out at your child's school. Schools often send home lists of ways in which parents can get involved. Schools often need volunteers who can:

- Chaperone field trips or dances (and if your child thinks it's just too embarrassing to have you on the dance floor, sell soft drinks down the hall from the dance)
- Serve on the school committees or advisory councils as a parent representative
- Help on projects such as the school newsletter may need an editor
- Help in your child's class, in the school library, in the cafeteria, or in the school office
- Make food for a school event
 - Tutor students in areas such as reading, math, English, Spanish, computer skills, or other subjects
 - Work in a parent resource center or help start one. In these school centers, parents may gather informally, borrow materials on parenting and children's schoolwork, and get information about community services

If work or other commitments make it impossible for you to volunteer in the school, look for ways to help at home

For example, you can make phone calls to other parents to tell them about school-related activities or maybe help translate a school newsletter from English into another language.

ACTIVITIES PLANNED

- Parent-Teacher conferences are held in the fall (Sept. 20, 2018) and spring (February 7, 2019)
- Open House - August 9, 2018
- Grandparents Day Breakfast - September 7, 2018
- Watch D.O.G. Dads meeting - September 17, 2018
- Fall Festival - October 18, 2018
- School-Parent Compact Meeting - October 17, 2018
- Title I Meeting - October 17, 2018
- Music Programs - Dec. 2018 and Spring 2019
- Veterans Day Program - November 9, 2018
- Thanksgiving Meal - November 2018
- Gift of Reading - December 2018
- Field Day - May 2019
- Terrific Kid - grades K-6 - held monthly
- Warrior of the Month - grades K-12 - held monthly
- PTO meetings are held monthly - Tina Robinson, President