

*Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower. Albert Camus*

Golly but a school year moves by quickly. November 4, 2009 is the end of the first marking period and we will be preparing the first quarter report cards for distribution during Parent Teacher Conferences in November. Reporting grades is an important component in ensuring that students are progressing appropriately. Remember, your child's grades are confidential between you and the teacher. If you have several children it is wise to avoid comparing the grades of your children or comparing your child with the children of your other family members or friends. Each child develops differently and has inherently different skills and abilities. Monitor you own child's progress rather than compare grades. Don't forget to celebrate your child's improvements even if they are slight. Praise them for their hard work and dedication to improvement. Remind them that hard work and dedication does pay off. Avoid the temptation to reward good grades with money or gifts. Children should develop the sense that doing well is the reward for their hard work. Conversely, avoid punishment for poor performance by eliminating activities that actually give children a break from the pressures of academics. Guide your child to set high expectations for themselves but don't mistake appropriately high expectation for perfection. Watch for downward slides in your child's behavior or achievement. Be proactive about such a slide and don't hesitate to contact your child's teachers about possible causes and remedies. Provide encouragement, assistance, and support to your children but don't make their grades yours. Give them the freedom to 'earn' their own grades and make their own mistakes.

During the week of November 16, 2009, we will be celebrating American Education Week and conducting Parent-Teacher Conferences. You are invited to visit your child's classroom on Tuesday, November 17, Wednesday, November 18, and Thursday, November 19. Since the children will be hard at work as usual, please do not bring young siblings who may be distracting for the students. Early dismissal days for this year will be Wednesday, November 18, Thursday, November 19, and Friday, November 20. Conferences this year will be held on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons and Thursday evening from 5:00 to 8:00 PM. Look for the school reminder that will provide specific information regarding early dismissal days during that week.

With the advent of winter, remember to prepare your children for the eventuality of weather related closings, delays, and early dismissals. Early dismissals can cause children to be fearful, especially if parents haven't discussed the family plan for them. Reassure your child that you will know about the early dismissal and that there will be appropriate care if the school dismisses early. The district provides WASD Alerts System for all emergencies including weather related emergencies. This is in addition to the methods of communication already in service, including radio and television announcements. Being well prepared will ensure that you and your family can enjoy even the worst of winter's weather.

Although we have had students who needed to absent from school with flu-like symptoms, we have maintained reasonable attendance rates through out the early fall. Our students are hearing repeated messages regarding precautions they should take to avoid contracting or spreading illness. Parents have been responsive in keeping ill

children at home for the appropriate duration. If we continue this cooperation, hopefully, our flu season will be manageable.

Enjoy the fall holidays and the beautiful, colorful fall days.