

Valerius Eagle News - December 2015

Dates to Remember in December

12/2	Late Start
12/7	2nd grade field trip to the Des Moines Playhouse
12/16	Late Start
12/17	Chorus Performance at Merle Hay Mall 5-6pm
12/21	Donuts with Dads 8-8:45am
12/23	Classroom Winter Parties 2:45-3:30pm
12/24-1/1/16	Winter Break - No School
1/4/16	School Resumes

Online Calendar

1. Click the web address

https://www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=urbandaleschools.com_3k6635dg1lvt3b74his743b6n8%40group.calendar.google.com&ctz=America/Chicago

2. Once the calendar pops up, go to the bottom right of the screen and you'll see +Google Calendar. Click on the + sign.

3. The calendar will pop up and a message will say, "Do you want to add this calendar?"

4. Click yes.

News from the Health Office

Winter weather has arrived; please make sure you send your student with the appropriate clothing to wear outside for recess.

Occasionally emergencies/accidents happen and a change of clothes is needed by students here at school. Currently the health office is running low on pants for boys and girls. We would gladly accept any donations of sweatpants or leggings which are easy to get on and comfortable for all sizes. Thank you!!

Message from Mrs. Mauro



Valerius Elementary School Strategic Plan
2015-16 School Year



MISSION STATEMENT

All Valerius learners will soar to success.

VISION

Valerius will be a school that brings learning to life for all learners.

VALUES AND COMMITMENTS

At Valerius, we value...

- Dedication to doing what's best for all kids
- Flexibility
- Professionalism
- Focus on problem solving
- Collaboration and communication
- Contributing to greater good
- Respect for students and staff
- Growth mindset

We are committed to....

- Using data to help all students improve their learning
- Showing Respect for all
- Maintaining a culture of collaboration
- Engaging in teaching and learning with integrity
- Implementing new ideas, strategies, and best-practice
- Committing to excellence for all students and staff

BUILDING GOALS

Goal 1: 92.5% of Valerius 3rd-5th grade students will be proficient or advanced in the area of reading as measured by the 2016 Iowa Assessment Reading test.



Goal 2: 89.7% of Valerius 3rd-5th grade students will be proficient or advanced in the area of math as measured by the 2016 Iowa Assessment Mathematics test.



Goal 3: 86.7% of Valerius students will identify themselves as "Engaged" and 80.3% as "Hopeful" as measured by the Gallup student poll data administered in spring 2016

Valerius Families,

The document to the left is an overview of the Valerius strategic plan. It is a guiding document that we use to set clear direction and guide the work we do at school each day.

This plan was created collaboratively with Valerius staff members. Our mutually shared values and commitments are what makes being a Valerius staff member or student special! We are excited to share our love of learning with your students.

Field Trips:

This year, we've been busy learning at lots of off-site locations! Here's where Valerius students go to learn for "school away from school":

Kindergarten: Jester Park, Civic Center, Blank Park Zoo

1st: Jester Park, Civic Center, Harvey's Greenhouse-Adel

2nd: Des Moines Playhouse, Jester Park, Living History Farms

3rd: Civic Center, Blank Park Zoo

4th: Saylorville Lake Prairie habitat, Iowa State Capitol, Historical Building, Civic Center

5th: JA Biztown, Jester Park, Civic Center

A big thanks to the generosity of our PTO's fundraising efforts and Connecting Kids and Culture grant. This funding support makes learning fun for Valerius students!

Counseling Corner

The next several weeks in Guidance classes all grades will be working on learning skills for problem solving. We worked on this last year, as well, so this should be a helpful skill to review and practice right as cold weather sets in and the winter doldrums hit! The neat thing about our problem-solving model is that it can be used at home, too. Encourage your children to work through problems with siblings and friends...what a great life skill to develop now!

Each grade level will review and learn the basics of a problem-solving model that includes recognizing signs of approaching anger (voice levels increase, face turns red, fists clench, body temp increases) and calm down strategies (count to ten, take three deep breaths, go to a quiet spot, read a book, listen to music, shoot baskets, etc.). After learning some of the background knowledge, we will focus on the steps of problem solving using a stoplight as our model.

The red light reminds us to STOP and calm down. Our school's universal strategy is to take three deep breaths since this option can be used anywhere throughout the school or on the playground. This is also a time where we think about feelings. How are you feeling in this situation? How is your friend feeling?

The yellow light represents THINK. Students are asked to think about the problem and two or three possible solutions. At this point, they should also think about the consequences of their choices so they can make the best decision.

Finally, when the students reach the green light they are asked to CHOOSE an option to try. If the first choice does not solve the problem, the students know they should try another option before going to an adult for help. (On a side note, students have been taught that bullying behavior should be reported to an adult immediately.)

Our teachers and recess supervisors will be encouraged to guide students in using this model and to remind them to use this method in the classroom and at recess. Here at Valerius our goal is for all students to solve problems independently and practice at home would be a great help! Encourage your children to become problem solvers!

Thank you so much for your support at home. Enjoy the holiday season!!

PTO Corner

BOX TOPS/LABELS

Our next Box Tops and Labels collection contest ends this week on Friday, December 4. The class that turns in the **most Box Tops and Campbells Labels** will win a popcorn and movie party! So keep those Box Tops and Labels coming!

NEW THIS YEAR: DONUTS WITH DADS

Join us for a new community building event this year on **December 21 from 8-9am**...enjoy a donut with your child(ren) while spending time getting to know other Valerius Dads! Don't worry Moms...we've got a special time planned for you too! Muffins with Moms will take place in May.

FALL BOOK FAIR RESULTS

Thank you to all the Valerius families who helped support our Fall Book Fair! We raised \$2,400 for our school's library, and 132 books were donated to our teachers!

WELLMARK FOUNDATION COMMUNITY KICKSTARTER GRANT

When we put our talents together, we can achieve great things! A huge thank you for the talents of the Smith family (Joscelyn, Mark and LT) who submitted a proposal to rehabilitate the Valerius soccer field and address the drainage issues surrounding the track. Thanks to all of your voting for the public portion and the overall grant package that the Smith family put together, Valerius is pleased to announce that we were selected as one of 32 recipients. We will receive \$6,600 to rehabilitate the soccer field/track. Improvements will take place in the spring and summer of 2016.

PTO BOARD VACANCIES

For less time than it takes to coach a weekly sport, lead a scout troop, or plan and teach Sunday school, you can help shape your child's education. Still think being on the PTO Board takes too much time? Become a Board Member and help us change that! We have immediate openings that need to be filled by January and welcome new ideas so inquire today!

PTO SURVEY - ONLINE OPTION

If you did not get a chance to fill out our brief survey at conferences, please click on the following link for an online version. The surveys are anonymous and we appreciate your feedback to help shape the future of the Valerius PTO.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/valeriusptofall2015>

NEXT PTO MEETING: THURSDAY, JANUARY 7 from 7-8:15pm with a special presentation by Jill Miller and 2nd Grade teacher, Kelly Squires, regarding our new Wonders literacy curriculum.