

Arena Union Elementary School

# The Beacon

October  
2009



## PRINCIPAL'S LETTER

Dearest Families:

It seems late to be writing you all the first newsletter of the year. We are well inculcated into the school year and I feel a strong sense of seasonal change in the air.

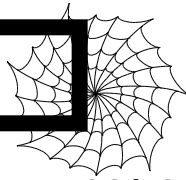
Our Indian Summer has been sparse, and perhaps it has increased our anxiety over the impending flu season. Please know that the school is taking several measures to keep our students and staff healthy. We have hand sanitizers in the lunchroom and dispensers in every classroom. We are encouraging students to wash their hands frequently as well as educating them in effective hand washing. Please look over the information enclosed with this newsletter from the county regarding your student's health relative to the flu virus. The most important advise we have had from the county is urging parents to keep their sick children at home until they have been fever-free for twenty-four hours. We have thermometers in the front office available if you should need one.

The county is no longer testing for the H1N1 virus, so if your child shows three or more symptoms of the flu virus listed in the checklist from this packet, it will be treated as H1N1 if it is the virus or not. If absences due to the flu rise above standard absence levels or in classroom clusters, I will alert parents to the fact and leave it to your discretion to send your student to school. Please be aware, however, that your child will have already been exposed to the flu and may potentially not be affected. At this time, our attendance levels are better than average and we are grateful that reported flu-like symptoms have been minimal. If you have any questions regarding the information we have sent home, please contact our school nurse, Christina Chapman.

On a more positive note, I am pleased to report that we had a twenty-five point gain on our "API", (Academic Progress Indicator), the state measure of standardized testing. Many students showed growth, particularly in those areas where we applied intensive interventions. The staff was pleased to see gains made and the students were pleased with the concrete incentives they received or will receive as a result of their efforts.

Students at the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and now 9<sup>th</sup> grade level received their incentives at an assembly last week. They received a \$10.00 gift certificate for each subject they either improved a level, or for a score of proficient or advanced. The certificates were from a variety of locales the students chose, such as iTunes and Franny's. Our 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade will be receiving their gift certificates for \$10.00 per subject improved, proficient or advanced to the Four-Eyed Frog at an assembly, Monday, October 5<sup>th</sup>. Grades 5 and 6 will be presented at 8:45, and grades 3 and 4 at 9:15. Joel Crockett from the Four-Eyed Frog has graciously offered to bring a selection of books for the students to choose from to the school so that they may shop with their gift certificates on site should they choose. We will be releasing students by grade level beginning at 10 a.m. to peruse the books for purchase in the library. If you would like to attend the assembly or select books with the students, feel free to join us for this celebration of student achievement.

Despite the API progress made, we did not meet the federal standard of achievement, "AYP", or Adequate Yearly Progress, and we find ourselves back in year one of Program Improvement. You will be receiving a letter from the District Office about what this implies for your student and the options you may choose as a parent. As our scores increase, the target for achievement increases also, but we are committed to your children and intend to redouble our efforts to succeed. Once again, if you have any questions regarding standardized testing or results, please feel free to contact me.



## **K-5 Parent Conference Week October 26<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> and Middle School Parent Conference Forum on November 16<sup>th</sup>**

Please be sure to take advantage of **Parent Conferences** to create a positive and supportive relationship between you, your child's teacher and your child. This relationship is extremely important: as you understand the teacher's expectations of your child, you will be better aware of what it is that you can do to support your child in his/her pursuit of academic excellence.

### **Kindergarten through Grade 5:**

**Dismissal will be at 1:35 p.m. for grades 1-5 during conference week.**

Middle school students, grades 6-8 and kindergarten student dismissal times will remain the same.

### **Middle School, Grades 6 through 8:**

A Parent Conference Forum will be held on Monday, November 16 from 3:45-7:00 in the Multipurpose room. This is an open forum for parents to meet with their child's teachers to discuss their progress, their strength and all concerns. All middle school teachers will be stationed throughout the multipurpose room with a sign-in sheet for a brief appointment. Please contact Ms. Patterson if you have questions about the parent conference forum at 882-2131 ext. 203.

### **What Should Parents Ask Teachers?**

Q: I want to get to know my child's teacher. But I'm not sure what to say. Are there certain topics I should mention?

A: Building a relationship with your child's teacher will have wonderful benefits. You'll be more involved in your child's education. The teacher will better understand your child. And your child will have a greater chance for success.

Start by explaining things that might help the teacher, including your child's strengths and weaknesses. As time goes on, tell the teacher about any changes in your child's life that could affect school performance.

It's also informative to ask questions. Here are some examples:

- What will the class be learning this year?
- What types of homework will my child have?
- How much time do you expect my child to spend studying?
- What kinds of tests and feedback will you give?
- How can I support my child's learning at home?

How can I help at school?

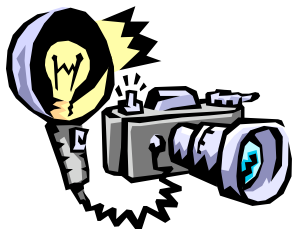
This unified effort to support learning, in the classroom as well as at home, will provide our students, your children, with a supportive and educated net of caring, concerned adults.

## **School Bus Safety**



Bus Safety day is Wednesday, October 14<sup>th</sup>. At 9:00 am, our students will review and learn all about safety on the school bus. Please take time to talk to your child about this at home as well. Bus safety information is provided in the Parent/Student Handbook. The more we reinforce the safety rules, the better prepared the students will be in case of an emergency.

\*Kindergarten and preschool students in Session Two will review and learn bus safety at 2:00 pm on October 14<sup>th</sup>.



## Picture Retake Day

Retake day is Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup>. If your child was absent on picture day or would like to have your child's pictures redone, this is your chance. Incidentally, pictures taken on September 22<sup>nd</sup> are still being processed and should arrive here by October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Lifetouch Photography would like to hear from you directly if you have a problem with your child's pictures. Their studio is in Santa Rosa and their toll-free number is (800) 339-1541.

Order forms are available in the office for those who missed picture day on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. Please remember to send payment with your order. If you are requesting a retake, please send your child to school on picture day with the entire photo packet that the student received last week.

### **Halloween Riddles and Jokes**

What is a vampire's favorite test?

*Answer: A blood test*

What do you get when a mummy joins a band?

*Answer: Wrap music*

Why did the ghost take his family on an elevator ride every day?

*Answer: To Raise their Spirits*

What is a ghost's favorite breakfast cereal?

*Answer: Scream of Wheat.*

What kind of street does a ghost live on?

*Answer: A dead end*

What do you call a skeleton who won't work?

*Answer: Lazy bones*



## **Arena Halloween Friday, October 30, 2009**

### **Costume Parade**

Students in preschool and kindergarten through grade five are invited to participate in our costume parade on Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. The parade will begin from the classrooms to the primary playground.

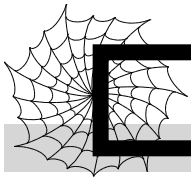
Students may come to school in costume on this day, provided they follow these rules:

- Students are expected to wear safe costumes.
- Students must arrive at school in complete costume/attire: no changing, putting on make-up, etc... will be allowed during school hours.
- Costumes shall not include weaponry or accessories (masks, wands, swords, brooms, or other held items).
- Students shall abide by the district dress code.

## **Middle School Halloween Dance- Friday, October 30, 2009**

On Friday, October 30, from 6:30 – 9:00 p.m. the six-grade class will sponsor a middle school dance to raise funds for their class. The dance is a costume optional affair with great fun and music.

Concessions will be available at an additional cost. Every one who attends the dance is expected to abide by the middle school dance rules and district dress code.



***Arena Union  
Elementary School***

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**We're on the Web!**

*See us at:*

[www.pointarenaschools.org](http://www.pointarenaschools.org)



## Parent Participation and School Site Council

We encourage your support through your participation as a volunteer or in Site Council. Site Council meetings are held the third Monday of each month.

This is a wonderful way to be proactive about your child's education and to become involved in the school. If you are interested in becoming a member or would like to attend a meeting, please call the school office and contact our principal, Paula Patterson, at 882-2131X203.

The next Site Council meeting is Monday, October 20 from 3:30-4:30 in room 6.

We also need your help in the classrooms, at recess and even during lunchtime. We enjoy seeing our parents eating with their children during the lunch period.

## Arena Clothes Closet Donations

Throughout the school year, students have emergencies that require a change of clothing. Our clothes closet carries a variety of sizes of used, clean, good condition clothing, which consists of jeans, sweatpants, sweatshirts, shirts, and jackets for boys and girls. We also provide students with brand new underwear and socks that are purchased with monetary donations.

We are in need of primary size clothing (Kindergarten through fifth grade), especially pants and sweatpants. If you are cleaning out your child's closet and dressers to remove those pieces of clothing they have outgrown, please remember us for a donation. Donations may be dropped off in the school office Monday-Friday 8:00a.m. -4:00p.m.

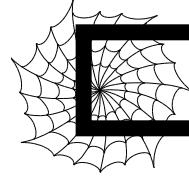
## McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Education Assistance Act

Our school district has recently received funds to help homeless students. The definition of homeless is anyone who....

- Lacks a regular, fixed and adequate nighttime residence (substandard housing).
- Is sharing housing due to economic struggles (double up).
- Is living in a shelter, hotel or motel.
- Is living in a public place not designated for sleeping (cars, parks).
- Is an unaccompanied youth.
- Is a child or youth awaiting foster care placement
- Is a child or youth abandoned in a hospital.
- Is a migrant child who qualifies under any of the above.

If your child fits any of the above definitions, he or she may be eligible for assistance. Please contact Holly Rawlins at 882-4090.

# PRINCIPAL'S LETTER continued

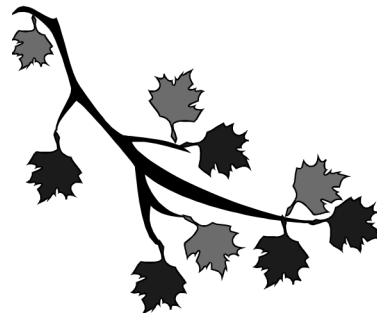


Please take note in the newsletter of the changes we have made to conferences at the Middle School level. It has been my observation that conferences at the Middle School Level have not been as successful as those at K through 5. With the early release schedule, we notice a drop in momentum and the loss of academic focus. For this reason we have decided that grades 6, 7, and 8 will maintain their regular weekly schedule during Conference Week for the elementary grades, October 26<sup>th</sup> through the 30<sup>th</sup>. Wednesday will remain an early release day. We will be holding a forum-style conference in the Multi-Purpose Room, Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, from 3:45 until 7 in the evening for parents of Middle School Students. Report cards will be distributed to parents at that time and you can rotate through the Middle School Staff with any questions or concerns. We hope that more parents will attend with the late afternoon/evening format. Please calendar this event and join us if you have a student in the Middle School. In grades K-5, if you have not already scheduled a conference for your student, please contact the teacher as soon as possible.

By this time next week, we will know the results of our Student Body Elections. I am so pleased that so many students have shown an interest in participating in an elective process that we hope will engage them in the decision-making process of our program, as well as initiate activities and change. As always, I encourage families to be a part of our school and your student's school experience in any way you possibly can. We are so pleased to welcome parents to the campus, whether to offer support in the classroom, joining your student for lunch, or to be a watchful eye at recess. A collaborative effort between school and family is the key to success for every student. We need you to partner with us in ensuring your child has the building blocks that will facilitate the choices in life affording personal success. Please know as well, that every child at our school is important and valued.

Peace and love,

Paula Patterson  
Principal  
October 1, 2009



## Poem Of The Month – As Autumn Returns...

“As autumn returns to earth’s northern hemisphere, and day and night are briefly, but perfectly, balanced at the equinox, may we remember anew how fragile life is..... human life, surely, but also the lives of all other creatures, trees and plants, waters and winds.

May we make wise choices in how and what we harvest, may earth’s weather turn kinder, may there be enough food for all creatures, may the diminishing light in our daytime skies be met by an increasing compassion and tolerance in our hearts.”

Kathleen Jenks, *Autumn Lore*