



Mustang Express

James McGee Elementary School
Robin Hay, Principal



June

2012

...From The Desk of The Principal

Dear Parents,

It is June and summer is just around the corner. We will also send home Grade Level Curriculum Handouts and supply lists in your child's report card. Students will not be assigned to specific teachers until August. Classroom assignments will be sent to each child with our welcome back packet. Please make sure we have your correct mailing address.

The process we use to place students is very thoughtful. It includes input from parents, teacher, counselor, principal and other relevant staff members. We consider academic balance, equity of gender, special needs, classroom load, as well as personality mix and concerns to create balanced classrooms at each level.

Parent involvement and support is essential. I appreciate your understanding with the challenges we are facing and patience in the process. Our goal is not only to promote student achievement, but also to equip our students with the skills, and a passion for lifelong learning. Thanks for helping us with that goal. We are fortunate to have such supportive parents.

Although the students will not be in school for over 2 months there are still many educational activities that they can participate in during that time. Please have your children read at least 20 minutes a day or you read to them each evening. They can keep a journal of activities that they do or places that they go over the summer. Talk to them about math type activities around the home. Perhaps you are building something or budgeting for a trip, those are perfect times to discuss math and involve your children. It is always good to have children count money or have money of their own to spend. Time is another concept that is difficult for children to grasp. If you have an analog (old style) clock with the hands it helps them to see the passage of time. Even though the internet can be a scary place and I would never advocate turning students loose on it, there are many wonderful educational sites for students to visit and learn from. However, in the end nothing replaces conversation and human contact to enhance student learning. Please enjoy your summer, learn something new and we will see you in August.

Our Ice Cream Social will be changing to an **Open House and Ice Cream Social**. We will hold this on Thursday, August 23, 2012 before school begins. We will begin at 6:00 p.m. by taking school supplies to classes. Students will be in the gym for a movie while parents will attend a traditional Open House from 6:20-7:30 p.m. We ask that parents start in one child's classroom and move on to another room after our signal. We will have three rotations. Finally we will gather for ice cream, before going home. Please check our website for more details as well as watching for our flyer in August.

Finally, a big thank you to this year's PTO officers and all of our volunteers for the many hours that they spend here. McGee would not be such a great place without all of your support. Enjoy your summer and be safe.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Hay

Dates to Remember



5th Grade Wax Museum 5:30-6:30 p.m. in the gym	4
Talent Show 2:30 p.m./7:00 p.m.	5
5th Grade Moving Up Celebration and Starship McGee 9:30 a.m. 3rd-5th grades	6
Starship McGee 12:30 p.m. Kinder-2nd grades	
2nd grade Camp Out	8
5th grade to Memorial Pool 10:30 a.m.—1:30 p.m.	
Last day of school Release at 12:00 p.m.	11
Dust Devil McGee Family Night	27

Tri-Cities Exchange Club Student of the Month



May 2012
Brandon Hodgson
3rd grade
Ms. Halverson

Open Enrollment for Fall Kindergarten Classes is Now!

Now through June 20, 2012
Monday-Friday
9:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m.



A registration packet is available in the office. Immunizations must be current (booster shots after the age of 4). Verification of residency is also required.



Read for 20 minutes daily this summer!

Answers to your Questions on the Parent Survey

As a team we have read and reviewed your comments and questions on the survey from March. We appreciate the time that you put into providing feedback to us. I have attempted to answer some of your questions in the May newsletter as well as more curriculum explanations that will come home in your child's report cards.

Overcrowding/Class Size

One concern that was expressed many times is the overcrowding at McGee. As a school McGee is severely overcrowded. This affects whole school activities, family nights, our parking lot, and the cafeteria. It is a strain on the main infrastructure of the building itself. However, our class sizes are not over the capacity contracted by the district. We just have more classrooms than many other schools. In his or her classroom your child would not notice the school's overcrowding.

Students still attend specials such as Art, Music and PE, but they attend them less often. To accommodate this we have added specials such as Library, Counselor and Technology. When students attend specials, they learn another curriculum or field of study that is very important to their development. This also gives teachers the time that they need to plan as a team for student learning.

State Testing/Student Learning

Although there are many conflicting feelings on nationwide school reform and mandated state assessment, the overall affect for student learning has been a positive thing. The clear focus has helped staff to know exactly what to teach at each grade level and in each subject. Before this the objectives were not as clear, specific or standardized. As educators our concerns with the testing arise from having a clear picture of how students will be assessed and access to sample problems to align our instruction with those expectations. When we have a clear picture of the expectations and are able to teach students to the level of rigor that is needed, we feel students are able to demonstrate what they know on state tests.

A point to remember is that with school reform that began in the late 1980's the expectation for schools changed. When we were in school, it was expected that there would be a certain number of students who earned each of the letter grades A, B, C, D, and F, with the majority of students in the B and C range. The expectations for schools have changed. Now, all students are expected to attain the standards. No one in education would dispute that as a goal, it is just a change in the thinking from society. With that being said, McGee is very focused on what students need to learn and how they will learn it best. We still have struggling students and we look for alternative ways to address their needs. We don't, however, have access to funds for tutoring of students outside of school hours. Our paraeducators, support staff, are used primarily for reading support to ensure that all students attain proficiency in literacy. This has proved to be an effective use of our funds as we have few students who are not on level in reading by the end of second grade.

In closing McGee has been recognized as a School of Distinction in the state of Washington for the past three years due to our continued high rate of growth in our test scores. Those scores are available on our website under the School Report Card. This is a statewide program that is put out by OSPI.

4th Annual Science Fair Results



Kindergarten

1st Place: Elle Lehrman
2nd Place: Donny Reddout
3rd Place: Berkley Turner

First Grade

1st Place: Thomas Barrett
2nd Place: Alec Reitz
3rd Place: Caitlyn Parsons

Second Grade

1st Place: Hannah Muhlbeier
2nd Place: Sean Russ
3rd Place: Eben Frank and Bryant Ekstrom

Third Grade

1st Place: Elijah Moore
2nd Place: Tyler Landon
3rd Place: Alex DeLeon

Fourth Grade

1st Place: Couper Schorzman
2nd Place: Madison Kilbury

Fifth Grade

1st Place: Kaylee Frank
2nd Place: Eli Pritchard
3rd Place: Cole Trowbridge