

**Holdingford Elementary School
Principal’s Newsletter
October 2017**



I would like to start this newsletter by sending a HUGE Husker thank you to my families, students, and our staff. What a wonderful start to the school year. Our Husker work ethic is intact, our Husker manners are top notch, and student behavior on the new playground, in the hallways, the lunchroom, and when working with our teachers has been exemplary! I love the way our 5th and 6th graders have led our school this fall. Great job 5th and 6th graders! Thank you so much for looking out for our littlest Huskers on the bus and throughout the school day. Your leadership and kindness are inspiring!

Community members, parents, and staff, thank you very much for five very special years. It is an honor and a privilege to be your elementary principal. Much of my happiness comes from being part of our healthy and strong Husker Family! I feel blessed to lead one of Minnesota’s best schools.

The hustle and bustle of a new school year have given way to daily routines for learning, classroom procedures, and Husker High Five good behavior.   Please take a moment this month to ask your children the exciting things happening in their classrooms, on our playground, and, yes, even on the bus.  By highlighting the positive happenings in our daily routines, we empower each other to make our school and community a better/safer place to learn, laugh, and live. Positive celebrations help teach our children the importance of their education and help foster healthy relationships between our staff and students.

Beautiful fall weather continues to extend summer activities and family fun outside.  While the weather is nice, invite your children to help with household chores, and turn off the TV and electronics.  Put down cell phones and jump into a good book, practice spelling words or math facts, and please don’t forget to go through your child’s backpack and help them finish homework.  We truly appreciate your support and help.  I know life is busy, but please enjoy these elementary years.  They go by quickly and you can never get them back.  The educational foundation and work ethic built today create better, more productive tomorrows.

We have an amazing and top notch school!  Thank you for supporting our teachers and support staff and thank you for sharing your children and family with us.  I love Holdingford Public Schools!  From our littlest Huskers in our Early Childhood/School Readiness programs to our outstanding high school students, our hallways are a vibrant buzz of humble Husker pride and integrity.

Please know that homework sent and high expectations from classroom teachers are put in place to help your child grow socially, emotionally, and academically.  I have never worked with a staff that pours so much time and passion into their teaching and classrooms. Together we make a difference.  Have a wonderful October.  Fill it with good books and fun family memories!  Help us build a better Holdingford Elementary for our children and a better future for our communities.  Go Huskers!

Sincerely,

Jim Stang

Holdingford Elementary Principal

**Our school, our staff, and our children need your help:**

Our school is in desperate need of support staff and teaching staff substitutes! Spread the word! Invite friends and family to learn about our school and our amazing children! Every day in teaching is not easy, but I can guarantee it is rewarding!

Please contact Linda Zapzalka at 320-746-4307 to learn more about the many wonderful opportunities here at Holdingford Elementary School! Or visit our website at http://www.isd738.org/.

**Please Review Fall Bus Safety:**

Bus director Rodney Ebnet, bus drivers, and our teachers have been working hard to teach and reinforce bus safety and good choices on the bus.  Please support us by talking to your child about the following:

1. Always stay seated and face the front while the bus is moving.
2. Always keep our school bus aisles clear.
3. Please use a quiet voice at all times.
4. If you send electronic devices with your child, please cover safe and responsible usage.

It is one of my greatest fears that as a volunteer fire fighter for Avon and Holdingford, I will be paged to the scene of a bus accident.  Let’s do everything we can to ensure our drivers’ number one responsibility is roadway safety and our students are supporting our bus drivers by following bus rules and expectations.  Remember, no eating on the bus, and please and do not hesitate to call me if your child needs help navigating bus friendships.

Thank you.

**Scholastic Book Fair is Coming Soon!**



The Holdingford Elementary Scholastic Book Fair runs from November 2nd – November 14th. Please stop by the Elementary Library, purchase a book or two, and make nightly reading a priority.**Please note, Holdingford Elementary will receive 50% of all profits, and 100% of book fair profits will be spent on new books for our library and classrooms.** Thank you for your generosity and support!

**Please Help Foster Your Child’s Love of Books and Literacy!**

**1. Provide Reading Material…Over 24,000 books were checked out in the month of September! Wow!**

Children cannot read if they don't have anything to read! We know that children in homes full of reading material are more likely to read themselves. Even if children are not reading yet on their own, reading material should be available. Both books and magazines for children should be in the house.
The books should represent a wide variety of topics and genres. These should include picture books, fiction, and nonfiction on a variety of topics.

**2. Read Out Loud Together**

Reading to children is a great way to encourage reading. Many parents think that once their children begin to read, they no longer need to read to them. However, reading together can be a very special time. It not only fosters a love of reading, it also provides an opportunity to strengthen emotional bonds.

**3.** [**Ask Your Child To Check Out Books From the Media Center That You Can Read Together**](http://giftedkids.about.com/od/nurturinggiftsandtalents/ht/library_visits.htm) Children cannot read if they do not have anything to read! Sometimes parents think their children are not interested in reading because their kids don't enjoy the typical children's books. However, many gifted kids prefer to read non-fiction. If they have material to read on their favorite topic, dinosaurs or computers for example, they may be voracious readers.

**4. Include Notes with School Lunches**

This activity is especially fun to announce special events, celebrations, or days of the year!  Your child is never too old to receive encouragement, and what better way to show your care, concern, and love, than with a personalized note.

**5. Show How Much Fun Reading Is**

When reading to your children, take time to admire the book.  Talk to each other about the cover, the illustrations, and make predictions about what the book might be about.  Take your time!  Instead of flying through the pages, turn them slowly, build anticipation and excitement.  What will happen next?  Can your child guess?  Talk about it!  What did you and your child think of the story?  Can you relate to it in any way?  Discuss what you might read next and challenge them to check out more books by favorite author or subject.

**Literacy is a rare gift you can give your child inexpensively, and it will last a lifetime!**

 **the HUSKER HIGH FIVE way:**

Please explore our website and enjoy pictures from a sensational start to the school year.  If you have a moment, please go to Parent Information, and explore the HUSKER HIGH FIVE logo and behavior matrix for our school.  Thank you for your support.  Husker pride shines every day and everywhere!  Great manners, hard work ethic, integrity!  The Husker Way starts with our supportive families and amazing preschool, flows through the elementary, flourishes throughout the high school, and guides our children into adulthood and down the road of success and prosperity!   While visiting our website, please take time to review our new Bullying Report Form.  I firmly believe we have a wonderful student body, but know too well that sometimes issues between peers arise and need our assistance to help resolve.  By filling out the form and forwarding it on to my office, together our staff and parents will work together to address and resolve all concerns.

**Notes from our K-12 social worker, Ms. Johnson:**

The beginning of school can be an exciting time for many of our students, but for some it can bring anxiety and be one of the most stressful times of the year.  It is my hope always that parents and school staff can work together to meet your families’ unique needs and have a fantastic 2017-2018 school year!   It's important to set good routines and learn about new and old resources in the school for all of our learners!  If you have a student, young or older, worrier or not, these 6 simple tips and resources can aid you during our school year.

Consistent bedtimes are a must!  Children who do not sleep well or get enough sleep are often more prone to stress and anxiety.  They are also more easily overwhelmed and exhausted.

Keep your school nurse informed of any medications your child takes to manage mental health, physical, and medical conditions.  Consider signing releases of information to help the school nurse and social worker aid you and your child in coping with any challenges.

Kill two birds with one stone by finding time to check in with your child about their school day over a nutritious meal.  Children who eat a well-balanced meal have more energy and focus better on academic tasks in school.

If you notice that your child is having a hard time coping in school, help them establish a relationship with a trusted adult who can become their "go to" person.  This can be a teacher, counselor, support staff, and many more!

If your child visits two homes during the week, make a calendar to help them know where they go home to each day.  Try to find a fun way to illustrate days that the child goes to daycare or Husker Kid Zone and be sure to include different bus numbers and drivers’ names.

If there are concerns regarding your child's safety, please connect with the building principal and school social worker to develop a plan to keep your child safe and both of you feeling comfortable.  Keep the lines of communication open so that we may be partners in addressing your child's needs in whatever way possible.

If you need any assistance throughout the school year please feel free to email or call at your convenience.  After school is the best time to call as all the children are on their way home and I can give you my undivided attention!  Sheila.johnson@isd738.org or (320) 746-4496.



**Fire Prevention Week**

**In a fire, seconds count. Seconds can mean the difference between residents of our community escaping safely from a fire or having their lives end in tragedy.**

That’s why this year’s Fire Prevention Week theme: “Every Second Counts: Plan 2 Ways Out!” is so important. It reinforces why everyone needs to have an escape plan. Here’s this year’s key campaign messages:

* Draw a map of your home including all members of your household, marking two exits from each room and a path to the outside from each exit.
* Practice your home fire drill twice a year. Conduct one at night and one during the day with everyone in your home, and practice using different ways out.
* Teach children how to escape on their own in case you can’t help them.
* Make sure the number of your home is clearly marked and easy for the fire department to find.
* Close doors behind you as you leave – this may slow the spread of smoke, heat, and fire.
* Once you get outside, stay outside. Never go back inside a burning building.

A huge Husker thank you to our Holdingford Volunteer Fire Fighters for allowing our kindergarteners to visit the fire hall and for talking to us about fire safety.



**Celebrate Our School Early Childhood School Readiness Program…Great things are happening for our littlest learners…Help spread the word!**

Preschool quote of the week:  “I got an owie and my blood hurt!”

“Two cows pooped out eggs. I didn’t see that coming.”

Husker ECFE and School Readiness Programs are very beneficial for both children and parents.  The families enrolled in these classes learn valuable skills while becoming familiar with our school, staff, community members, and other resources the school district has available.  Overall Early Childhood programs equip children and their parents with the necessary knowledge and comfort to make a smooth transition into becoming a kindergartener at Holdingford Schools.

**Volunteers:** We continue to recognize that volunteers are an essential element in our successful educational system, and welcome your assistance. A huge thank you goes out to local PTA members and volunteers for their support and service with our annual fundraiser.  Thank you, PTA members!



1. When changing transportation plans…Please call the elementary office or your child’s classroom teacher before 2:30.  This will keep us organized and your child safe!
2. Students Kindergarten - 6th grade:  If students do not have a note or a phone call changing plans by 2:30, teachers and Ms. Christy will follow regularly scheduled transportation plans.
3. Supervision for children dropped off in the morning begins at 7:45 am. Parents, please come to door #8 to pick up your child after school.  Regardless of age, students will not be allowed to wait outside for parents.

**Let’s help each other out and keep our wonderful children safe!**

**Family Technology Considerations:**

**The Good**

* it's a tool
	+ it can make life easier, simpler, better...
* makes us more connected

**The Shocking**

* In some households, 70 hours a week of peer-to-peer contact but only 30 minute a week with dad or mom

**The Dangers**

* texting/sexting
* dual lives/fantasy
* online is public & permanent
* addictions
	+ gaming, social media
* cyberbullying/gossip/predators
* pornography

**The Positive Parenting Strategies**

* no tech in your child’s bedroom
	+ especially night time
* open device policy
	+ passwords, text logs, check-ins...
* keep accounts private
* be where they are... (social media)
* internet filter & monitoring software
	+ Mobile Spy- Mobile-Spy.com
	+ OpenDNS- OpenDNS.com
	+ Circle by Disney
* **teach and re-teach clear boundaries**
* **have open and honest conversations**

**Be a Role Model for Your Family**

* what does it look like to use technology wisely and appropriately?
* do you follow your own rules?
* does how you spend your time, show your priorities to your kids?



**Dear Holdingford Elementary Staff**,

In 2012 under the state’s No Child Left Behind Flexibility Waiver, Minnesota established a goal to reduce achievement gaps by 50 percent by 2017. Schools and districts have received annual data showing progress toward the goal, and many have set local goals under the World’s Best Workforce in alignment with the state goal. It is now 2017, and I am reaching out to share that your school has met Minnesota’s goal of reducing the achievement gap by 50 percent in math.

You, your staff, your students, and your community are congratulated for this incredible accomplishment and commended for all the hard work you did to make it happen. Achievement gaps do not close without hard work and commitment.

2017 goals were established in reading and math for every student group, including American Indian, Asian, Hispanic, Black, White, Free or Reduced Price Lunch, Special Education, and English learners. A school or district must have at least 20 students within a student group for that group to be included in the data. A school or district was considered to have met the goal if the proficiency index rates for all applicable student groups exceeded the 2017 target. You can find data for all schools attached. This data was posted to the [MDE Data Reports and Analytics page](http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/Data.jsp) soon.

As a state, our results are promising but also show there is more work to do. Minnesota is establishing new goals under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that will be aligned to the goals for the state World’s Best Workforce (WBWF) system.  The state is working towards building one coherent accountability system for schools and districts that focuses on closing gaps and increasing student achievement. The new statewide achievement gap goal is to reach a math and reading achievement rate of 90, with no student group below 85, by the year 2025.

I again want to extend my congratulations on your accomplishment. I encourage you to share this celebration with your staff, students, and community. With the continued hard work and dedication from leaders like you, we will continue to make strides in ensuring all students are on paths to post-secondary success.

Thank you again for your leadership and the hard work you do every day to ensure all Minnesota children receive an excellent education.

In the interest of children,

Dr. Brenda Cassellius

**Congratulations Holdingford Elementary! I am proud of you!**

**Dates to Remember:**

October 4: PTA Fundraiser Kick Off/Packets Due Back/Fundraising Delivery 11-20-17 After School Pick Up in Elementary Gym

October 6: Open School 10-11 am

October 10: PTA Meeting 7 pm Elementary Media Center

October 11and 12: Early Childhood Picture Days

October 19: No School MEA Break

October 20: No School MEA Break

October 23: Fundraising Packets Due Back to School

October 26: ECFE Fall Festival 6-7 pm Elementary Gym/Elementary Cafeteria

November: 2-14 Holdingford Elementary Scholastic Book Fair

November 3: No School Teacher Workshop

November 9: 1-8 pm Elementary Conferences

November 10: No School Teacher Inservice

November 13: 1-8 pm Elementary Conferences