

Pony Express Newsletter

April 2016

Debra Hetrick, Principal

Rod Fong, Interim PTA President

Principal's Message

Dear Families,

Parents do make a difference! Research shows that family engagement improves school readiness, student achievement, and social skills. Family engagement does not happen in a void. With two months remaining of school, we still have important work to do. Rather, it takes the committed actions of both families and schools working together through parent-teacher conferences as well as other forms of support to make a student successful. As teachers prepare for conferences, there is a growing body of evidence suggesting that family engagement matters for student success. Through this shared responsibility, schools reach out to and engage families in meaningful ways, and, similarly, families do their part to actively support their children's learning and development. Partnership with the school is a vital component to show your child that you value their education.

Many outside activities will be starting for students and it can become difficult to remain focused. It will be important to continue monitoring homework, attend school each day, be on time and be prepared. Your support and help is crucial.

Please call the school if you have not received a time for a conference.

Important April Dates:

April 1-April 8	Minimum Days (Parent Conferences)
April 12	PTA Meeting 6:00PM
April 15	Ice Cream Sundae Social 5:30PM-7:00PM
May 2-6	Staff Appreciation Week

Parent Conferences / Minimum Day: Friday, April 1st through Friday, April 8th
Dismissal will be at 1:40 for 1st – 6th graders
Kindergarteners will be dismissed at their regular time

California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) System

Students in 3rd – 6th grade will be taking California's new statewide student assessment this month. The CAASPP tests are aligned with the new Common Core Standards, which are more challenging and rigorous than the old California Standards. The standards are more challenging because they require students to learn skills – such as academic writing, research and solving problems – in addition to memorizing content. Because the tests will measure skills, we expect that they will be more challenging for students. The window of testing will occur from Tuesday, April 21st through Thursday, May 8th. Please make sure your student is in school these days and ready to give their best effort. This is the time for them to show how much they have learned.

On Test Day

- **Be sure your child gets a good night's sleep. Experts recommend that students at this age need eight to ten hours of sleep to function at their best.**
 - **Have your child eat a healthy breakfast to help them be more alert and can concentrate better.**
 - **Make sure your child is organized and prepared for their day so they only need to focus on doing well on the test.**
 - **Remain positive and show interest in the test.**
 - **Staying calm will help your child stay calm. If your student gets nervous about the test or is likely to experience anxiety during the test, help him/her practice some relaxation techniques.**
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Safety Awareness

Please remember that all visitors and volunteers must enter through the front doors, sign-in at the office and receive a visitor's sticker before entering the campus. Parents must have contacted the teacher and made an appointment prior to your visit. Please do not proceed down either hallway to meet your child at the end of the day. Rather, wait until your child comes to you at the front or back gate. The safety of our students is our #1 priority.

Parent Teacher Association

I want to encourage Pony parents to attend PTA meetings that are held monthly. This organization helps support the goals of the school and provides parent/student/community nights and activities. We will be looking for a new PTA President as the year ends, and would love for more parents to become involved in the school.

I am proud of the incredible dedication and hard work from our teachers, parents and students. Pony Express is a high achieving school because of the work that each individual does each day. The home connection and partnership we have with you is important and working together will positively impact the students at our school.

Sincerely,

Debra Hetrick

Principal

PTA President's Message

Hello Pony Parents:

Depending on when you have an opportunity to read this, there will be something like nine weeks remaining of the school year. It's gone by quickly. I remember my dad telling me that as one gets older, time seems to fly by. With that understanding, I have come to believe that I am living tomorrow today and wishing it was still yesterday. At any rate, as the school year comes to an end, so does PTA, in more ways than one. During last month's PTA meeting we failed to have a single parent nominated to a board position. For this month's meeting we have elections. Without an elected-board, there is a real possibility that Pony's PTA will have to disband. Is the end of Pony PTA the end of Pony Express...of course not. But our PTA has played a large part in organizing volunteers for school events and activities; provided student assemblies; off-set the cost of field trips; and assisted in the purchasing of school supplies and equipment. The PTA and all our volunteers donate their time and efforts in the hopes of building the most positive experience for all our students. But come what may, let's finish the year strong. Join us on April 12th at 6 pm for our next PTA meeting and help elect the new board for next year. The agenda will also include time for discussing the upcoming Staff Appreciation Week and the final big event, Play Day. I also promise a sweet treat for all attending.

Sincerely,

Rod Fong

Interim PTA President

