

Debra Hetrick, Principal

David Cooper, PTA President

## Principal's Message

Dear Parents:

Many of the traditional sources of stability and direction with the California State Standards are challenging teachers as they transition to Common Core Standards. The new standards are more rigorous and lessons are much more complex than those of previous standards. This undertaking will take time and affect all aspects of curriculum and lessons. The creation of new assessments by the state will create a much needed bridge from the standards to implementation. Then we can develop tools to support students learning. Until this happens, we are in a period of transition that focuses on the process more than the product. Please be patient with your student who is being asked to learn differently and demonstrate mastery in a new way. Continue to work with your child at home, your support and involvement is appreciated.

November is a short month.

- \*Veteran's Day Holiday (No School) – Tuesday, November 11
- \*Minimum Day/Shortened Days start on – Thursday, November 20
- \*Thanksgiving Break (No School) – November 24-28
- \*Parent Conferences (Shortened Days) – December 1 - December 5

## SHORTENED DAY SCHEDULE

1-3 Grades 9:00 a.m.-1:40 p.m.

4-6 Grades 9:00 a.m.-1:41 p.m.

Kindergarten: Schedule stays the same.

**Parent Conferences** are around the corner. Start expecting a schedule to meet with your child's teacher. The schedules will be going home soon. If you have not signed up for a conference or you have not heard from the teacher by November 18, please call the school to schedule one. A parent conference is a time to meet with the teacher one-on-one to see how your child is progressing academically toward meeting the standards in reading, writing, math and science. This is the time to ask questions and learn your child's strengths and academic areas that may need more attention.

**New Report Card** parent information night will be held on Monday, November 17 from 6:00-7:00p.m. Teachers are making the transition from teaching California State Standards to Common Core Standards. To be able to grade students accordingly, the report card has changed. The purpose of the information night is to provide parents with the understanding of the grading system. The goal is to discuss strengths and concerns at the parent conference not to get educated on the new report card.

**Preparing for Colder Weather** means it's time to get out the sweaters, jackets, hats, and gloves again. Please put your child's first, last name and teacher name on all outerwear so we can identify who it belongs to.

## Important November Dates:

Nov. 11	<b>Veteran's Day Holiday</b> (No School)
Nov. 17	New Report Card (Parent Information Night) 6:00-7:00 p.m.
Nov. 17	Holiday Fundraiser Order Forms Due
Nov. 20	Minimum Days Begin
<b>Nov. 24-28</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>
Dec. 1-5	Parent Conferences (Minimum Days)
Dec. 15	Spirit Wear Order Deadline

# Pony Express Newsletter

November 2014

**Daily Attendance** is crucial to your child's education. Pony Express's attendance rate is 97%. In order to keep our attendance rate up and students on target for learning, we need to make sure students attend school daily. When your child attends schools, they are more likely to succeed academically. It's difficult for the teacher to provide academics when a student is frequently absent. In addition to falling behind in school, students who are not in school on a regular basis are more likely to get into trouble and worse case drop out of school as they get older. Lists of excused absences are listed below. All other absences are considered unexcused and could result in the student being a truant.

## **Excused Absences**

1. Illness or injury.
2. Having medical or dental services rendered.
3. Quarantine under the direction of a County or City Health Officer.
4. Funeral/memorial service and/or bereavement.
5. Court Appearance.
6. Religious holidays.

**Panther Spirit Wear** is now available. Let your student show their school pride by wearing the new Pony SMART Panther logo on school spirit days. Order deadline for spirit wear is December 15<sup>th</sup>.

**BIG THANKS!** to PTA for organizing a wonderful Harvest Festival and a shout out to the teachers, students and parents for helping with individual class games. We had a wonderful turnout and all seemed to have a great time.

During this time of being thankful, I am grateful to be at Pony Express and to work with a wonderful community of students, staff and parents.

Sincerely,

*Debra Hetrick*

Principal

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## **PTA President's Message**

I want to jump right into the Thanksgiving mood by offering a big **"THANK YOU"** to everyone who helped make last month's Harvest Festival a huge success. The event raised more than \$4,500, with all funds going to Pony's classrooms. But it wasn't just about the money. You simply can't put a price tag on seeing the entire Pony community – students, staff, teachers, parents – pull together to create such a memorable family friendly night.

While the Harvest Festival helped celebrate the transition to Fall, it's not just the seasons that are a-changin'. The PTA is making a push to update the Pony "brand" with a redone website. It's a work in progress that will eventually transform the website into *the* destination for all things Pony. Part of this "rebranding" effort is the debut of the fantastic **SPIRIT WEAR** featuring Pony's new logo. You can find the order form on the Pony website and attached to this newsletter. Just fill out and return with payment to your student's teacher or to the school office. Spirit Wear is a great gift for the family and is the perfect way to show the world that you have a Smart Panther prowling around your home.

If you need more gift ideas, our **Holiday Fundraiser** is underway to help you beat the shopping rush and raise much needed funds for Pony Express. This fundraiser offers a variety of gift and snack items, all \$12 and

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under. In addition, the PTA is selling **gift cards**, where retailers contribute anywhere from 2% to 20% to our school. Look for an order form later this month. Also, if you're an Amazon.com shopper, please use the **Amazon Associates link** found on our website so that anywhere from 4% to 8.5% of your purchase will go to Pony PTA. Bookmark this page on your web browser and use it every time you shop Amazon.com. This is an easy way to raise money for our school this holiday season and all year long.

It can get crazy this time of year, so no PTA meetings in November or December. But please **show your support** by opening up your checkbook and supporting Pony's fundraising efforts. The money raised is vital to paying for student assemblies, classroom supplies, field trips, and much more. **Thanks again!**

Sincerely,

*David Cooper*

PTA President

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## **Holiday Fundraisers**

'Tis the season (almost)! The **PTA Holiday Fundraiser** began on November 5th. Students received their catalogs and order forms and were reminded to sell safely (friends, family and neighbors). From gift wrap to kitchen items, chocolate to jewelry, this year's catalog offers a great assortment of gift ideas \$12 and under! **Orders must be returned by November 17th and will be delivered the week of December 8th.** Students win prizes for items sold, as well as \$25 to the top seller and an ice cream party for the top-selling class!

We will also be selling gift cards this holiday season. The order form will be distributed on November 17th, with dozens of restaurants and retailers to choose from. **Gift card orders will be due after Thanksgiving break, on December 1st.** *The money raised from these fundraisers helps to pay for student assemblies, school supplies and field trips, so please participate as much as possible! (If you are unable to participate, consider making a donation to the PTA.)*

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## **Pony Express Spirit Wear**

Hello Pony Panthers,

Order your 2014-2015 spirit wear now! Show your school spirit on upcoming "School Spirit Days"! T-shirts, pullovers, and polo shirts are available, with our new Pony SMART Panther logo. See the attached order form for colors and sizes. Return your order form, with payment, to your teacher or the school office. Make checks payable to Pony Express PTA. Be sure the size, color, quantity and contact information has been filled out. **Order deadline is December 15<sup>th</sup>.** Don't miss out Panthers! Order now!

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