



R.F. PETTIGREW panther tracks

A monthly newsletter from the Pettigrew PTO

ISSUE NUMBER: **DECEMBER 2020**

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Pettigrew Elementary PTO Parents

From the Principal's Desk: Mr. Kevin Dick



I hope you have all enjoyed a blessed Thanksgiving break with your family or friends. It probably was not a gathering or a holiday like any others that we have had in the past, but we are still reminded of how blessed our lives are and there are still things we can be thankful for. Given that experts are predicting a spike in our COVID-19 activity in our community, it is wise for us to remind our Pettigrew families and communities of the procedures and policies that we are required to observe, as we work to keep as many of our students and their families as safe as we can, during this time of community-wide pandemic.

- Parents and Guardians should screen the health of their students each day, based on the screening list that the school district follows (attached).
- All students, parents and staff should wear masks at all times, when on school campus. Exceptions at school are at lunch and during periods of increased physical activity (PE and recess).
- Parents and non-essential visitors are limited to the front entry of school. All exchanges of items or student drop-offs or pick-ups will be coordinated by office staff at this location.
- We need to wash hands and sanitize them as often as possible.
- Desks, tables, chairs, and other high use areas are being sanitized as often as possible.
- If a person with a positive case is present at school, office staff coordinate a contact tracing process to identify who is classified as a close contact (spent at least 15 minutes within 6 feet of the person).
- If a close contact and the positive case were both wearing masks, this is considered a mask to mask exposure. The school board has allowed the parents of the close contact to decide if they return to school with certain restrictions (always wear a mask and monitor their symptoms).
- If a close contact occurred when either student was not wearing a mask, the close contact must quarantine outside of school.
- All close contacts receive a personal call from office staff and then receive an email from the office with a letter that outlines these restrictions and other procedures. Parents are encouraged to answer their phone calls, or to have their voice mail set up and have enough room to record a brief message.
- Students who have been quarantined will have their schoolwork provided for them on their device (Chromebook or I pad) via the Seesaw program.

Our holiday season will look different at Pettigrew as well. The day before our winter break will look like this:

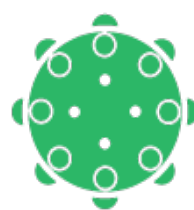
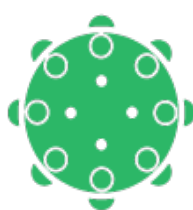
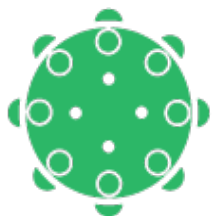
- Our Sing A Long this year will be recorded and performed in each classroom on Tuesday, December 22nd.

- Each class will have a short party, coordinated by the classroom teacher, where each student can bring a special treat for themselves only.
- No class-wide treats or gifts will be circulated or accepted this year, for safety reasons.
- School will not be in session from Wednesday, December 23rd, 2020, through Sunday, January 3rd, 2021. Classes resume on Monday, January 4th, 2021.

PTO has purchased and installed a Gaga Ball pit on our playground. If this is a new word or game to you, ask your child about the game, the pit, or the rules of this new game. Our Pettigrew staff and students appreciate PTO's willingness to provide additional activities on our playground for our students to participate in at recess time.

Have a wonderful holiday season, please observe all safety protocols and we hope that you and your family are safe, healthy and well during this conclusion of our calendar year, and during the holiday break that will be coming at the end of this month.





Student and Staff Daily Screening

Parents and staff must complete a daily health check by answering yes or no to the following questions before going to school or work.



Yes ___ No___ Temperature 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher



Yes ___ No___ Sore throat



Yes ___ No___ New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing



Yes ___ No___ Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain



Yes ___ No___ New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever



Yes ___ No___ Has the student or staff been identified as having COVID-19, and not been cleared by the SD Dept. of Health for return to work and school?



Yes ___ No___ Has the student or staff been identified as a close contact to a confirmed COVID-19 case (15 minutes or more within 6 feet or less) within the last 14 days?*



If you answer Yes to any of the above...

1. DO NOT go to school or work.

2. Contact your healthcare provider.

3. Contact your school to inform them of symptoms. You may also contact the SD Department of Health with any COVID-19 questions 1-800-997-2880.

4. EXCLUDE until negative COVID test OR if untested, at least 10 days since symptom onset **AND 24 hours without fever AND symptoms improved.**

*Close contacts must be excluded for 14 days from last close contact with positive case. You cannot test out of the 14-day quarantine.

**Screen criteria is subject to change based on level of community transmission and CDC and SD DOH recommendations.*



Pettigrew students are **gaga** for the new Gaga Pit!

You may have noticed new equipment on the R.F. Pettigrew playground this week. The large, black, multi-sided feature is a Gaga Pit, the new rage in playground entertainment. Sponsored by the Pettigrew PTO, it will be sure to provide fun and exercise for years to come!

What is Gaga?

Gaga is a fast paced, high energy sport played in an octagonal pit. The more players the better! Dubbed a kinder gentler version of dodge ball, the game is played with a soft foam ball, and combines the skills of dodging, striking, running, and jumping, while trying to hit opponents with a ball below the knees. Players need to keep moving to avoid getting hit by the ball. Fun and easy, everyone gets a serious workout.

Rules of Gaga

- All players start with one hand touching a wall of the pit.
- The game begins with a referee throwing the ball into the center of the pit.
- When the ball enters the pit, the players scream 'GA' for the first two bounces, and 'GO' on the third bounce, after which the ball is in action.
- Once the ball is in play, any player can hit the ball with an open or closed hand.
- If a ball touches a player below the knee (even if the player hits himself or herself) he or she is out and leaves the pit. If a player is hit above the knees, the play continues.
- If a ball is caught on a fly, the player who hit the ball is out.
- Using the walls of the octagon to aid in jumping is legal as long as the player does not permanently sit on the ledge of the octagon.
- Players cannot hold the ball.
- If needed, a second ball can be thrown in the pit to expedite the end of the game. The last player standing is the winner of that round.



Who Do You Know?

By Dr. Jane Stavem, Superintendent



As educators, we often say graduation is the culmination of a student's K-12 experience. But, in our school district, there are a number of learners who choose to never graduate. It's not because they didn't complete their coursework or fulfill all of the requirements for graduation, but rather because they are life-long learners who stay in school to teach others.

These people are voracious learners, always searching for something more to accomplish, some way to make an impact, and approach their work with an attitude of service. They embrace the challenges presented by their students and enjoy the conquest of cracking the code that allows them to connect with each learner.

It takes a special kind of person to be a teacher, and a super-human person to be a teacher during a pandemic.

Nominations are now open for the 33rd Annual Dr. John W. Harris Sioux Falls Teacher of the Year. For more than three decades, local business Vern Eide Motorcars has sponsored this award because it believes success is a two-way street. Strong businesses *need* strong schools and successful public schools *need* successful, locally owned businesses that are invested in the community.

Perhaps that reciprocal relationship became even more apparent during the 2020-21 school year. After schools and businesses closed in the spring, teachers went to work transforming in-person instruction to online learning in a matter of days. Was it perfect? No. But the school closure heightened the need for students, parents, staff members, and the community to access quality education, maintain a sense of normalcy, and practice resiliency.

Sioux Falls teachers turned their kitchens into classrooms mounting white boards and projecting virtual lessons on the walls to help their students stay on track. They held virtual meetings with students to check on their health and well-being. They managed their "classroom" of 25 students, some while also occupying their own young children in the background because daycares were closed.

Teachers were heralded as heroes at the start of the pandemic and they are still heroes today. We know they will continue to be viewed as such far into the future when the pandemic becomes a distant memory.

While the concepts they are teaching have stayed the same, nearly every other aspect of their profession has changed. Classrooms look different. Routine practices like lunch and recess have been modified. They wear face coverings, making it harder to teach and to connect personally with each student. These people, whose hearts are bigger than their bodies, pour every ounce of energy they have into children who are "educationally" their own.

Do you know a teacher who has gone above and beyond? Do you have a few minutes to tell us how that teacher has supported your child and others during the past year?

You have until Monday, January 25, 2021 at 5pm to submit a nomination. Thanks to Vern Eide, the winner of this prestigious award receives a \$4,000 cash prize. While that prize is certainly a generous perk, we can guarantee that every nominee on the list will feel even richer just seeing their nomination and knowing their hard work is recognized and appreciated.

<https://www.sf.k12.sd.us/parents/teacher-of-the-year-program>