



# R.F. PETTIGREW panther tracks

A monthly newsletter from the Pettigrew PTO

ISSUE NUMBER: FEBRUARY 2021

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## CONNECT:



[www.rfpettigrew.org](http://www.rfpettigrew.org)



Pettigrew Elementary PTO Parents

## From the Principal's Desk: Mr. Kevin Dick



This year at Pettigrew, our staff are involved in a series of book talks around the book, “Ridiculously Amazing Schools.” A ridiculously amazing school is one with a culture so positive that everyone thrives: students and educators alike. Classrooms are lively, students feel they’re part of a community that cares about them, and teachers are happy and productive. In this book, principal Tracey Smith and Jeff Waller, co-author of *The 7 Mindsets to Live Your Ultimate Life*, show how taking care of educators first—and cultivating supportive relationships—results in profound and positive changes. Smith and Waller explore the five key elements of what they call courageous schools: schools that understand it takes a “whole” teacher to teach the “whole” child. They reveal the one variable that stands out as a predictor of sustained excellence...and it isn’t about leadership style, teaching practices, or demographics.

Smith and Waller offer practical solutions and a road map to drive real and meaningful change within the school and classroom. It’s possible to create a nurturing climate where teachers are respected and have the power to transform lives...not just their students’ lives, but their own.

To follow up on our book talks at Pettigrew this year, we have also focused on kindness as a staff. Either weekly or monthly, we have rolled out Kindness Challenges to our staff to encourage them to exhibit a “ridiculously amazing” amount of kindness to our fellow staff members. In our monthly staff meetings, we have established accountability partners, and have engaged various activities and discussions in these areas that were either read about or exhibited, as further wrap-around of the entire effort of making Pettigrew even more amazing than it already is.

Our staff and leadership teams are discussing and looking into the future and considering how the “7 Mindsets” that this book discusses and introduces, might fit into our work with students and social emotional learning within our school’s walls. There are curriculum opportunities to address skills that all students need in the area of social and emotional learning. There are activities to bring forward to students that help focus on kindness, being kind, and showing kindness to others around us. A grant has been awarded to an instructor at Pettigrew to support a Kindness Initiative around Pettigrew that will help students focus on a Culture of Kindness that we want to support and strengthen at Pettigrew. Your children may very shortly be talking about some of these initiatives and what is changing in their physical environment to embrace this initiative!!

Valentine’s Day Activities – February 12, 2021 --Students will bring their own snack to eat at the party. No sharing of treats will be allowed during the party. Students will receive a paper sack that their class will label or decorate. Students can bring Valentines to share with the students in their homeroom class, including any small treats that are possibly attached, if the treats are purchased and sealed. We will not open the cards or the possible treats in class but send them home. Families can decide what their child will do with the cards and treats.

I hope that the end of the month of February bring more pleasant temperatures than this first full weekend of the month is giving us! Enjoy the Super Bowl and may the best team in red win!!



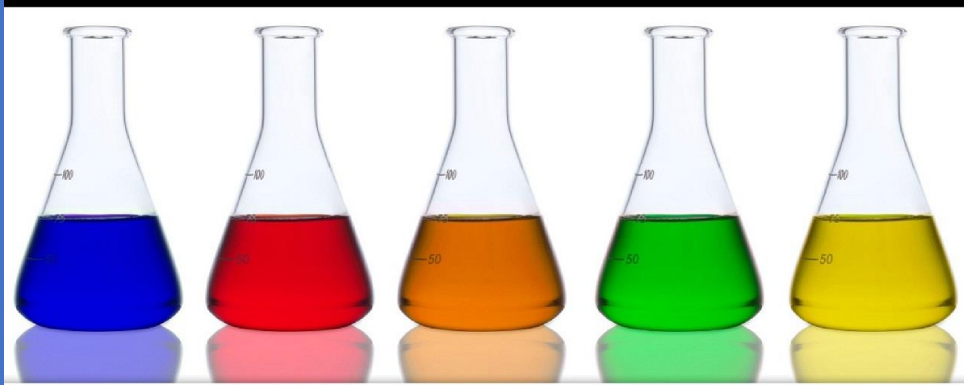


# R.F. PETTIGREW ELEMENTARY SCIENCE FAIR

MARCH 15-19, 2021

## PRIZES AWARDED!

REGISTER ONLINE: [RFPETTIGREW.ORG](http://RFPETTIGREW.ORG) BY FEB 26



## DETAILS WHO

- All Pettigrew students in Kindergarten through 5th grade.
- No teams, only individual participants (students in the same family may enter a joint project; the project will be judged by the highest grade level participant).
- Projects will be judged by grade level.
- Prizes will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in each grade.

## HOW

- Choose a STEM topic or science project that interests you.
- Design and perform an experiment related to that topic.
- Create a display board and take a picture OR create a digital display of your results (.jpeg or PDF submissions acceptable).
- Submit the display by **March 10, 2021**.
- See [rfpettigrew.org/sciencefair2021](http://rfpettigrew.org/sciencefair2021) for additional details and submission instructions.

## WHEN

- Register the project by **February 26**.
- Submit projects by **March 10**.
- Projects will be viewable on [rfpettigrew.org/sciencefair2021](http://rfpettigrew.org/sciencefair2021) from **March 15-19**.
- Projects will be judged during this period and prizes will be awarded the following week.

## WHERE

- Projects will be completed by students in their own homes.
- There will be NO in-person fair this year; the presentation is completely virtual.
- Prizes will be distributed via classrooms after the completion of the Science Fair.

## QUESTIONS?

- Visit [rfpettigrew.org/sciencefair2021](http://rfpettigrew.org/sciencefair2021) for additional details!

# The Truth About Tests

by Dr. Jane Stavem, Superintendent



At the start of the 2020-21 school year, no one knew exactly what learning would look like. Could students stay focused enough to learn or would they be distracted by masks? How could instructional groups be formed to meet the needs of learners with social distancing in place? How much learning was lost from going remote last spring?

Now, solidly in the middle of third quarter and with vaccinations becoming more readily available in our community, there is a strong possibility that, with continued hard work and diligence, we will make it through the entire year with students in our classrooms. As we navigate some of the challenges that may still come this year, our focus is now shifting to the needs that may linger long past the pandemic into the future. What are the lasting effects we need to plan for as we look ahead to next year and beyond?

For many months now, educational leaders across the nation have been talking about how the pandemic's ripple will be felt in the future. Our own staff also recognize those realities, along with the "regular" challenges of any school year. It almost feels like we are now on a train track instead of a highway – the regular school year and the COVID track that runs parallel to it.

The academic benchmarks our students and schools strived to achieve not long ago are now viewed through the lens of a pandemic, and the gaps that exist will need to be filled over time. We can take some comfort in knowing this is not just a Sioux Falls problem or a South Dakota problem, but rather a world-wide problem. The good news is that Sioux Falls Public Schools has persevered through the pandemic and continues to stand ready to provide the support our students need.

Teachers use many tools to assess student learning. Conversations, daily work, journal entries, and exams help us determine success. This year, those tools are more important than ever. In March and April, Sioux Falls students in grades 3 through 8 and 11 will complete the South Dakota Assessments. Teachers use the information to make decisions about the individual support or acceleration needed for each student. They refine and refocus instruction so targeted supports can be used when working one-on-one or in a small group with your child.

As a District, we look at the results through multiple lenses – district, level, school, and grade levels, analyzing trends, allocating our resources to match the needs, and determining the effectiveness of our programs.

While few people really love taking tests, it is important to understand the connection between results that drive instruction and the ability to help students achieve more. Teachers can be more effective, our District is more successful, and our community ultimately benefits when our future workforce has the skills needed to conquer any challenge that comes their way.





*The 2021*

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