

# Mountain Way Elementary

## Tiger Tales Spring 2009

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Special points of interest:

- Full budget information and the Board's plan are posted on our website: [www.gfalls.wednet.edu](http://www.gfalls.wednet.edu)
- The WASL will be replaced in 2010 by two new tests: MSP, Measurement of Student Progress and HSPE, High School Proficiency Exams
- Granite Falls School District must cut 1.3 million - possibly more - from its budget
- Monitor and limit children's use of computers at home

### BUDGET IMPACT ON MOUNTAIN WAY

We are busy responding to the many challenges imposed by the current financial challenge. The Granite Falls School District must cut 1.3 million—and possibly more—from its budget due to a decline in enrollment coupled with huge state funding cuts to education. How does this impact Mountain Way? Here are a few examples of the reductions that will occur due to funding limitations:

**Teachers:** Next school year we will have 22 instead of 23 classroom teachers. Consequently, class sizes may

run a bit higher at some grade levels. We also may lose six of our newer teachers because they are lower on seniority than their peers. Some of these teachers will be replaced by teachers from other schools.

**Counselors:** At both elementary schools, counselors have regrettably been eliminated. The principal, Dean of Student (who serves half time at both schools), and School Psychologist will assist families *in crisis* and link them up with community services.

**Library Services:** Our librarian, Mrs. Hanby, will become librarian of both elementary schools. Unfortunately, this means Mrs. Hanby will be at Mountain Way only half-time so services will need to be pared down.

To learn more about the school district's funding cuts, please note the website link in the article titled Budget Update.

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### BUDGET UPDATE

Most of you know by now that the state has adopted its budget and school districts across the state implemented plans to reduce staff and make changes to programs and services. Our pre-planning with staff meetings and community forums was very helpful in making our final decisions. The Board approved our

reduced educational plan at its meeting May 6<sup>th</sup> that unfortunately includes laying off as many as 24 teaching positions. Full budget information and the Board's plan are posted on our website at [www.gfalls.wednet.edu](http://www.gfalls.wednet.edu). We will continue to maintain student programs and services as best as we can and

hope to bring back staff members as our enrollment increases or state funding is restored. Thank you all for your involvement, suggestions, and support over the past several months. We will get through these lean times ahead.

Karen Koschak,  
Superintendent



## USING TECHNOLOGY AT HOME by Mr. Dockery, Tech Support Teacher

The increasing amount of time children are spending on computers at home and school has raised questions about how the use of computer technology may make a difference in their lives—from helping with homework to causing depression to encouraging violent behavior. Initial research suggests, for example, that access to computers increases the total amount of time children spend in front of a television or computer screen at the expense of other activities, thereby putting them at risk for obesity. At the same time, cognitive research suggests that playing computer games can be an important building block to computer literacy because it enhances children's ability to read and visualize images in three-dimensional space and track multiple images simultaneously. The limited evidence available also indicates that home computer use is linked to slightly better academic performance.

The research findings are more mixed, however, regarding the effects on children's social development. Although little evidence indicates that the *moderate use* of computers to play games has a negative impact on children's friendships and family relationships, recent survey data show that increased use of the Internet may be linked to increases in loneliness and

depression. Of most concern are the findings that playing violent computer games may increase aggressiveness and desensitize a child to suffering, and that the use of computers may blur a child's ability to distinguish real life from simulation." {Source: **The Impact of Home Computer Use on Children's Activities and Development** by Subrahmanyam, Kraut, Greenfield & Gross}

The lessons we can take away from this is to **monitor and limit children's use of computers at home**. Computers should be placed in a family room or other area where the screen can be easily viewed by parents. Time limits should be set on *screen time* (TV, video games, and computers). Software to control internet use is also advised - just checking the history on your web browser is an easy way to see where users have gone on the net (an erased history is a red flag that a tech savvy user has tried to clear tracks they don't want seen).

While the internet is an invaluable resource for research and information we all should be very skeptical of

sources – the old adage "you can't believe everything you read" goes triple. When students do find good information and include it in their own work it should be quoted and referenced to avoid plagiarism.

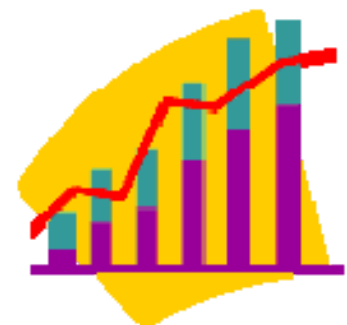
Parents should set strict rules limiting personal information shared on the internet, and good etiquette in e-mail, chat rooms and bulletin boards - if you wouldn't say it to a person's face you shouldn't type it. You never know who strangers you are chatting with really are, or what their intentions are. Posting on the internet is pretty much impossible to take back and can return to haunt you later. Another problem that can affect the whole family is downloading pirated software or music. Not only is it illegal, and can lead to fines and legal trouble, but it can also carry computer malware which can take over your machine, slow it to a crawl, steal personal information, and cause many problems. Lessons learned? Closely monitor your child's computer use and teach them to use technology safely and responsibly.

Monitor and limit children's use of computers at home.

## WASHINGTON STATE TESTING NEWS

The WASL will be replaced in 2010 by two new tests: the Measurements of Student Progress (MSP) in grades 3-8 and the High School Proficiency Exams (HSPE). Those tests are in development and will be unveiled in spring 2010. For those parents with eighth-grade students this year, your child will likely not be allowed to take the new HSPE as a ninth-grader. Ninth-grade testing is vol-

untary and the state was recently forced to eliminate that option because of a lack of funding.



## SUMMER READING TIPS by Mrs. Johnson, Reading Specialist

**Question:** How do you keep active children reading during the summer?

**Bad news** - many parents will not have an expectation in their home for their child to read or provide an environment to nurture reading. Unfortunately, many children will not visit a library. After a year of hard work, teachers hate to see their students 'slip back' in their reading skills. Those that don't have reading support or don't read – will regress!

**Good news** – there is a gift you can give your child this summer!

**\*High expectations:** Your child should read 5-7 days a week. Decide with your

child the best time each day to read independently and a time for you to read with/to your child. Express the importance of reading and have a very positive attitude.



**\*Goals:** Help your child make a goal to read for so many minutes each day or so many days a week (avoid the goal to read a certain *number* of books because they vary in size).

**\*Library visits:** Schedule weekly visits to the library. Pick books that you can read to/with your child AND books your child can read independently. Sign up for the library summer reading incentive program. FREE and FUN!

**\*Celebrations:** Schedule celebrations each week for reaching reading goals. As your child is setting their reading goal, talk to them about ways to celebrate. Make a list with your child so they have a celebration to look forward to. This is a time to be REALLY PROUD of your child's accomplishment! If the goal was not met, talk about why and perhaps make an adjustment for the following week.

Create an atmosphere in your home that values reading. Express great pride when your child is working towards an important goal. **Make this your gift to your child this summer.**

## HELPING KIDS HANDLE ECONOMIC STRESS

Many adults are feeling stress about the economy and wondering how they're going to make ends meet. But adults aren't the only ones feeling the pressure. More and more children are exhibiting signs of stress. When a family experiences a financial crisis the children may manifest some of the same "symptoms" as the adults, because they "pick up on" the adults' worries. Children may have trouble focusing or may become highly sensitive, depressed, anxious, agitated, or emotional.

Each family has different feelings about how to talk to children about the family's financial situation or whether to talk to them about it at all. If you feel it is appropriate here are some tips:

First, keep your discussion developmentally appropriate and honest. For younger children, keep the information

brief and concrete. Tell them in simple terms what you are doing to fix the problem. "Mom is looking for a new job. Until she finds one, we will have less money than before, so we need to spend it carefully." Middle school kids can be given more details. They may wish to be a part of the problem-solving process, such as helping find ways to cut costs around the house, or babysitting or doing yard work for neighbors to earn some extra money.

Taking action can help reduce middle schoolers' anxiety, as long as parents make sure that they aren't allowing kids to take on too much of the responsibility for solving the problem.

Second, let your kids know that they're safe and you're working to find a solution. Wallace emphasizes, "What cannot be overstated is the critical role of parents in communicating that they have a plan in place to deal with what-

ever a sour economy throws their way, and that the underpinnings of familial support, love, and longevity are strong and sound."

Source: Adapted from Emotional Smarts: Key to Navigating Life's Challenges (Deerin & Weissberg, 2009) and The Elephant in the Room: Talking to Kids About the Economy (Wallace, 2009).



## Mountain Way Elementary

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WEB: [www.gfalls.wednet.edu](http://www.gfalls.wednet.edu)



Mountain Way Climbing Higher!



We are on the web! [www.gfalls.wednet.edu](http://www.gfalls.wednet.edu)

## Science Fun for Your Kids

There is no school subject quite as ripe for family fun as science. And it's an area where children need extra enrichment now, more than ever, because the national No Child Left Behind initiative is causing schools to focus more intently on math and reading and spend less classroom time on science. That's where you can make a big difference in your child's learning, and have a great time doing it. Check out these terrific resources.

- [www.sciencenewsforkids.org](http://www.sciencenewsforkids.org)
- [www.exploratorium.edu](http://www.exploratorium.edu)
- <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/Games>
- [www.centroefhcell.org/centre/?page\\_id=301](http://www.centroefhcell.org/centre/?page_id=301)
- <http://pbskids.org/zoom/activities/sci>
- [www.questacon.edu.au/activities](http://www.questacon.edu.au/activities)
- [www.sandiegozoo.org/education/science\\_experiments.html](http://www.sandiegozoo.org/education/science_experiments.html)
- [www.windows.ucar.edu/tour/link=/games/games.html](http://www.windows.ucar.edu/tour/link=/games/games.html)
- [www.funology.com/laboratory](http://www.funology.com/laboratory)



Build bonds with your children by exploring some of these sites online. Go to the library to pick up back issues of magazines or copies of science books, and set some time aside to help your children discover the wonders of the scientific world. Learning has never been so much fun!

## Teachers for 2009-2010 School Year at Mountain Way

### Kindergarten

Monday & Thursday or Tuesday & Friday B8  
with Every Other Wednesday.

A1 Mrs. Ingram

A3 Mrs. Litz

### First Grade

A5 Mrs. Skurski AKA Nicholson

A6 Mrs. Ross AKA Loucks

A7 Mrs. Allred AKA Slegers

A8 Ms. Moen

### Second Grade

B1 Mrs. Liebetau

B2 Ms. Wright

B3 Ms. Alexander

### Second/Third Grade

Mrs. Miller

### Third Grade

B5 Mrs. Caldwell

B6 Mrs. Dinwiddie

B7 Mrs. Watson

### Fourth Grade

C1 Ms. Simmons

C2 Pending

C4 Mrs. J. Anderson

### Fifth Grade

C5 Mrs. Conner

C6 Mrs. V. Anderson

C7 Ms. Land

C8 Mrs. Brown

### Hi Cap

C3 Mrs. Rossnagle 2nd & 3rd

B4 Mr. Moen 4th & 5th

