



WILDCAT NEWS

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 6

FEBRUARY 2012

PRINCIPAL CORNER—SMILE!

~By Mrs. Kucharski

February is often viewed as the “doldrums” time of the year- our holiday gifts are just more “old stuff” now, Spring Break is off in the future, tax season is upon us, the weather tends to be gray and dreary day after day (with too much snow), etc. If you are feeling crabby or blue at this time, you may want or need to share a smile...



Smiling is infectious,
you catch it like the flu.
When someone smiled at me today,
I started smiling too.
I passed around the corner,
and someone saw my grin.
When he smiled I realized,
I had passed it on to him.
I thought about that smile,
then realized its worth.
A single smile just like mine,
could travel ‘round the earth.
So, if you feel a smile begin,
don’t leave it undetected.
Let’s start an epidemic quick,
and get the whole world infected!
-Author Unknown

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KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Germantown School District 2012-2013 Kindergarten Registration will be held February 28, 2012 from 9:00am to 3:00pm and February 29, 2012 from 9:00am to 3:00pm and 5:00pm to 7:00pm at all public elementary schools. Families are welcome to register at any site. Kindergarten registration packets will be mailed out in early February to those families on the school census. If you do not receive a registration packet by February 9th, please call Doris Adrian in Curriculum and Instruction at (262) 253-3907.

Any child who will be five years of age on or before September 1, 2012 is eligible for admission to kindergarten according to state law. Parents are requested to present a birth certificate. Additional information needed at the time of registration includes: 2 forms proving residency, registration form, census/bus routing form, health exam/immunization record, and home language survey. If you have any questions, contact Amy Belle Elementary School at (262) 253-3470 or Doris Adrian at (262) 253-3907 for additional information or registration materials.


No School
Monday, February 20th
Snow Make Up

School Hours
8:50 a.m. to 3:44 p.m.

Office Hours
7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Teacher Hours
8:35 a.m. to 3:59 p.m.

FEBRUARY 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
BLT = Building Leadership Team			1	2 School Store, Dinner with the Arts 5 to 8 pm	3 Bellefest, Kung Fu Panda 2 Movie Night 7 to 9 pm Amy Belle Gym	4
5	6	7 5th to 1st Stage	8 DI Valentine Express	9 DI Valentine Express, Market Day Pick Up 5 to 6 pm, Conferences	10 DI Valentine Express, DI Parent Night Out 5:30 to 9:00 pm	11
12	13	14 BLT 7:30 am	15	16 School Store, 5th to KMS Music Presentation, PTA Mtg 6:30 pm	17	18
19	20 No School, Snow MakeUp Day?	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28 Kindergarten Registration 9:00 to 3:00	29 Kindergarten Registration 9:00 to 3:00 and 5:00 to 7:00			

REMINDERS & UPDATES

Check the Lost & Found

The *Lost & Found* container is overflowing with hats, mittens, and various other interesting things. When you are at school for conferences, please check for items missing from your house.

Lost & Found is located in the Gym Hallway.

Help Needed: If any parent, guardian, or Wildcat friend has any background in FEMA or Emergency Response Planning and would like to help Amy Belle School, please contact Mrs. Kucharski, mkucharski@germantown.k12.wi.us.

Remember, if school is closed due to weather, the **lunch menu** for that day will be served the day school resumes.

Amy Belle School is *in need of 30 bookcases*. If you have any connections, woodworking skills, or thoughts on how to help with this need, your suggestions would be very much appreciated. Contact Mrs. Kucharski at mkucharski@germantown.k12.wi.us or the school office at 262/253-3470.

No School Friday, May 4, 2012
for Kindergarten Students Only!

Please watch for an **All-School Community Survey** coming to your home soon! Your participation in this survey is very important and appreciated. Responses can be done online by using the code on the front of the survey that you receive OR completed by hand and mailed to school. The survey window will open February 3rd—19th. Thank you.

TIME TO “PAWS” FOR WILDCAT PRAISE

Please feel free to jot Mrs. Kucharski a note or an email message (mkucharski@germantown.k12.wi.us) of brief, positive comments you hear or read about a member of our school community (students, staff, parents) for possible submissions in this news article. We reserve the right to edit as necessary for anonymity and length.

From a parent to a staff member:

“I have toured many different schools the last few weeks. We are very impressed. There is such a nice feeling when you walk through.”

From a student to a staff member:

“Today is my best day! I am student of the week and we have art.”

Library Update by Mrs Duenk

Kindergarten students have been having fun with the alphabet. I have shared some unique alphabet books we have in our library and we sang some new alphabet songs.

First & Second graders have been learning how the fiction section is organized (ABC order by the author’s last name). After using the SMART Board to practice putting books back on the shelf in the correct order, I took the second grade class to a website I found for more practice. To access “Order in the Library” please begin by going to your school’s main website home page. Then look for the library page (Amy Belle Library, County Line Library, MacArthur Library, and Rockfield Library) and click on that tab located on the left side of the screen. This is a site I created for the library. Now look for “Online Resources” also located on the left side of the screen and click on it. A symbaloo page will appear and you will see a green “order in the library” button on the left-hand side. I believe it is located in the third row. Let the fun begin!

*This site requires flash and will not work on an iPad.

Third & Fourth graders are learning about the reference section in the library. We have explored the books located in this section and will also be taking a look at online reference resources.

BLT UPDATE

The BLT (Building Leadership Team) met on January 10, 2012. Below is a brief description of the items that were discussed:

- Mission, Vision, and Belief Work
- Map Page on Website
- Class Placement Process
- Open House/PIN Nights 2012-2013
- Future Agendas
- BLT Concerns

The purpose of the BLT is to develop strategies for addressing current educational systems or practices in order to produce an improved learning environment. You may contact your parent representatives: Mike Alburg at 414/331-8678 or malburg@dyensol.com or mlalburg@ameritech.net or Tom Becker at 414/640-6589 tom@beckertechnology.com. Our next meeting is Tuesday, February 14th at 7:30 a.m.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher Conference time is coming soon. If you or the teacher requested a meeting, here are some helpful hints to ensure a successful conference:

Before the Conference

- Talk with your child– is there anything you want me to ask or tell your teacher?
- Make a list of information you wish to share or questions to ask.

During the Conference

- Please be on time.
- Relax and think positively- remember that both you and the teacher are trying to do what is best for your child.
- Be an active, reflective listener- get to know your child through the teacher’s eyes.
- If your questions have not been answered, ask them.
- Use the time for the task at hand (your child’s progress), not discussions about next year’s teacher, other students’ problems, etc.

After the Conference

- Tell your child about the conference, emphasizing the positive, and being direct about any improvements needed.
- Develop a written plan with your child, if necessary, to implement any suggestions from the teacher.

Parents and teachers working together enrich your child’s educational experience. We appreciate this time with you to share your child’s progress!

WHAT'S HAPPENING at the BELLE?

Guidance—Mrs. Wolff & Mrs. Nettlesheim

The Germantown School District School Counseling Program is adding a new component to the services offered to students. In addition to regular guidance and counseling activities, we will be conducting parent-student-counselor conferences to focus on each student's educational and career development, talents, interests, and plans for his/her future. These conferences will be called G-Talks, and will take place in 5th grade and at specific grade levels in middle and high school. These conferences will occur during February and March.

5th Grade Parents: Please look for a reminder slip in your child's take home materials regarding the date/time you signed up for your G-Talk. We are looking forward to meeting with you and your child! Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns regarding problems that might be affecting your student's learning. Mrs. Wolff is at Amy Belle on Tuesdays and Mrs. Nettlesheim is at Amy Bell on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays.

Music Notes—Mrs. Grosse

In Kindergarten music, we continue to practice our steady beat with games and instruments. Ask your kindergarten student to sing "Bye Low Baby-O" for you. *In 1st grade*, we just completed our unit on "Peter and the Wolf." This story is told through music; each character is represented by an instrument. *In 2nd grade*, we have reviewed sound effects through performing a sound story with instruments. We have also been reviewing and learning some new rhythms with singing and instruments. Ask your 2nd grader to sing "In the Barnyard." *In 3rd grade*, we have been working on reading music by identifying steps, leaps and repeats on the music staff. We have also been doing rhythm practice by playing the xylophones. *The 4th graders* are sounding fantastic on their recorders. We have learned 7 different notes on the recorder now. Many students are moving right through the "Recorder Karate" belt levels; check with your 4th grader to see what belt they are currently working on. *The 5th grade* students completed a composition project where they worked with a partner to create a Boomwhacker song. They had to write their song on the staff and then perform it for the class.

Concert Reminders:

Thurs, March 29 – **3rd Grade Concert** as part of "Germantown Schools Celebrate Singing" All-District Vocal Concert at 7:00pm at Kennedy Middle School (Blue Gym)

Tues, April 3 – **Kindergarten & 1st Grade Combined Concert** at 6:15pm in the Amy Belle Elementary Gym

Tues, April 3 – **4th Grade Concert** at 7:30pm in the Amy Belle Elementary Gym

Phy Ed—Mr. Osieczanek & Mrs. Redies

In the month of February, the students of Amy Belle will be working on Volleyball, Parachute, Fitness and Fitnessgram in gym class.

Art—Mrs. Cheung

Once again we have the amazing opportunity to have a traveling art exhibit come to our school! Last year all students were able to see life size works of the famous artist Vincent Van Gogh. This year we will be learning all about Pablo Picasso! Students have been busy creating paintings and drawings showing Picasso's famous Cubism. Come by during Dinner with the Arts to see this great exhibit featuring Picasso's paint-



ings. Student work will be up on display showcasing not only cubism, but other styles of painting and drawing that made Picasso a world famous artist.



REMINDER FROM THE AMY BELLE OFFICE

Please remember that it is very important to sign *in at the office* whenever you enter the building during school hours (8:50am -3:44pm). From volunteering, to having lunch with your child, to just dropping off boots or snowpants, please remember to sign in at all times.

If you have more than two (2) *extra students riding the bus home* with your child, it is very important to contact Go Rite-way to let them know (262-677-3282). Some of our buses are very full and they need to be aware of the extra students.

It is very important that you contact school to report *your child absent*. The office is equipped with an office answering machine so you are able to call at any time and leave a message at 262/253-3470. Classroom teachers take attendance every morning. The attendance is then verified by the office against the call log. If your child is not on the call log, we now have a missing child concern. Attempts will be made by the office staff to contact parents/guardians until we receive an explanation of where the child is. If a reason is not received, your child will be marked unexcused and these absences will be reported. It is very helpful if we could avoid all this worry and concern by just receiving a phone call from you, the parent. Your help is very much appreciated.

DISTRICT PARENT CALENDAR SURVEY FEEDBACK

Thank you to all of our parents who participated in the calendar survey and provided us with excellent feedback. The number of people participating in the survey was phenomenal and your feedback was exceptionally useful in developing the first draft of the calendar presented to the Calendar Committee of the School Board on January 3, 2012. Now, the committee is working with your ideas and thoughts, as well as the legal parameters for the calendar and area comparables, in order to develop the calendar for 2012-13. It is our hope that the published, final calendar will be on the website and distributed through schools in March of 2012.

With any survey, we find there is an ongoing opportunity to share information. Here's a quick Q & A to help both parents and staff understand some of the parameters of creating a calendar:

When can school start? By law, school must start on or after September 1 each year. This is a state statute that all public schools in Wisconsin must follow.

Is it possible to start on September 1 (as required by law) and complete the school year before the Memorial Day weekend? Yes. It is possible. However, in order to meet the 180 days and hours of instruction, we would need to eliminate or move the professional development days and dramatically shorten the holiday breaks to account for around fifteen days. This was not the preference of parents as indicated in the survey.

When can school end? By law, students must have 180 days of school and at each level (elementary, middle and high school) there are a required number of hours. There are some exceptions to this. However, the exceptions are unique and rare, due to extraordinary circumstances or for specific, documented and measured professional development. So, there is no specific end date, but we must meet BOTH the number of days and total hours per school year.

When students are not in school, are teachers off? Generally, the teacher schedule follows the student schedule for major holidays. However, the school calendar also includes a number of days where teachers are at school learning, analyzing data, and collaborating to provide quality instruction. These are times when students are not at school.

Can these professional development days happen before the school year and after the school year? Like any professional organization, we focus on continuous improvement for staff, students, and programs. If a plan is developed at the beginning of the year and only revisited at year end, the opportunity to analyze and adjust the plan for students doesn't happen. We need the opportunity to adjust the plan periodically in order to ensure that we are providing the best opportunities for student learning. Examination along the way to check student progress shows us where our plans are working and where the plan can be improved for students. So, no, our organization cannot simply plan at the beginning and evaluate at the end. Further, new mandates from the state level are requiring the implementation of many new pieces of our puzzle such as reading initiatives, new student information systems, new state tests, or new teacher effectiveness models. These mandated, state-imposed time lines are often set beyond the control of the District.

Can the time for this be after school? Yes and much of it is currently done in the after school hours through committee work such as curriculum coordination, technology teams, staff meetings, etc. However, when we need the entire staff to learn a new skill or collaborate across buildings and grade levels having staff participate in a data retreat or learning opportunity would be an added cost as employees are working well beyond the eight hour day. Further, staff members who coach or advise co-curriculars would have difficulty attending, creating a need for replication of the learning at additional times and

Additionally, the following is a summary of the parent survey data:

- Parents predominantly prefer early release over the late start we tried earlier in the year.
- Late start allows for longer blocks of building collaboration on a schools individual improvement plan. Early release allows for collaboration across and among buildings and student grade levels.
- Eighty-two percent of parents prefer to continue fall parent teacher conferences and the preference for the timing was slightly greater for nine weeks into the year.
- The format for parent-teacher conferences responses revealed a preference for teacher-led conferences with a wide margin. Student-led conferences were the next favored format for parent-teacher conferences. Video chats and Skype as well as e-mail and phone ranked lower.
- Parents also responded to their preferred time of day for parent-teacher conferences.
- Ninety-nine percent of parents prefer a parent-teacher conference after 4:00 p.m.
- Twenty-four percent of parents prefer a parent-teacher conference between noon and 4:00 p.m.
- Fourteen percent of parents prefer an AM time (8-12 noon).
- When asked about the October long weekend, parents preferred both Thursday and Friday off. However, this is contradictory of the thought of ending school earlier in the year. Thus, this may not be possible to do both.
- Parents prefer to have Spring Break change with Easter each year. However, again, this is contradictory with the desire to have the break set with other districts, university calendars, and less expensive travel times.
- When asked about the best way to provide for staff professional development, parents prefer to have students off for a full day while teachers are learning. The second choice was early release.
- Parents predominantly would like the full day or early release to extend a holiday or weekend.
- Back to School, Open House, and other orientation nights are preferred to be offered the week of August 27 with the first week of school as the second favorite. Please know that the decision on scheduling these nights is made by each building.

Again, thank you for your comments related to the development of the calendar. Your feedback is helpful as the School Board Calendar Committee develops the final draft to move forward to the full School Board for approval.

~Dr. Borden



COMMUNITY FORUM FOR SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

Germantown District Residents,

I am writing this email to inform you of a Community Forum I will be coordinating on **Wednesday, March 14, 2012** at 6:30 pm at the Germantown Community Library. This forum is intended to provide community members of the Germantown School District with an opportunity to hear the opinions of their school board candidates.

As part of the structure of the forum, I am soliciting questions from many segments of the community. The PTA's in each Germantown School are one of those segments. Amy Belle's PTA, as well as any other member of the community will be coordinating the submission of question(s).

For your information, I anticipate the format of the forum will be as follows:

1. Each School Board candidate that attends will not know the questions in advance.
2. School Board Candidate names will be placed "in a hat". For each question a candidate's name will be pulled. That candidate will answer the question first. All other candidates will also answer in order as they are seated (seats will not be assigned in advance).

3. Questions from various segments of the community will also be placed "in a hat." (That is if multiple questions have been submitted.) The candidate whose name was pulled in step #2 will pull the next question which will be read by the moderator (myself).

4. Each Candidate will have a certain amount of time (TBD) to answer the question. Answers will be timed with no exceptions allowed for additional time to answer.

In addition to providing questions for the forum from the PTA's, I would like to encourage parents of the pupils at your schools to attend. I will be asking that no one brings signs into the forum expressing personal opinions regarding the political climate we now find ourselves in. This forum is intended to provide information so that community members can best express their opinions at the polls on April 3rd, 2012.

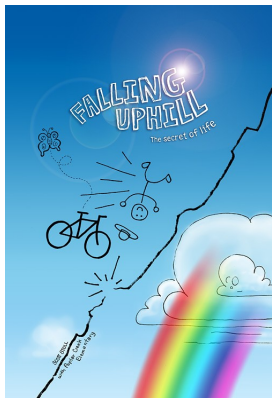
Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,
Catherine Plank, Community Member

OPEN ENROLLMENT APPLICATION

The Open Enrollment program is a statewide school choice program that allows students in grades K-12 to attend a public school in a district other than the one in which they reside, if space is available. Applications to attend the Germantown School District are available on the district website, www.germantownschoools.org. Parents/guardians must submit an application to the non-resident school district of their choice during the three-week *period of February 6th - 24th 2012*, to be eligible for consideration. Late applications can NOT be considered.

AUTHOR IN RESIDENCE—SCOTT STOLL



During the upcoming month, all Amy Belle Students will be working with our Author in Residence, Scott Stoll. An Author in Residence works in our classrooms to help students to create books that are meaningful in their lives. Scott Stoll asked himself a questions: "If I could do anything, what would I do?" His answer resulted in a quest for happiness and the meaning of life around the world on a bicycle (25,742 miles, 4 years, 50 countries, 6 continents & 4 moments of enlightenment). His adventures are chronicled in his entertaining book "Falling Uphill" a tale described as having moments from pure survival to pure enlightenment. After returning home and seeing the sparkle of wonder and the fruits of inspiration in so many people, Scott hopes to create a life filled full of entertaining and inspiring tales about his adventures of self-discovery and the magic and mysteries of life. He was recently honored to be the Cultural Ambassador to Argentina with the US Dept. of State. After Scott works with our students, the book created will be available for sale. Here's a link to some children's books Scott has published and about the project we will be doing at Amy Belle. <http://www.theargonauts.com/school-book-project/index.shtml>



AMY BELLE SCHOOL

3294 Willow Creek Road
Colgate WI 53017
Phone: 262/253-3470
Fax: 262/253-3490

E-mail: aboffice@germantown.k12.wi.us

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

[HTTP://
WWW.GERMANTOWNSCHOOLS.ORG](http://WWW.GERMANTOWNSCHOOLS.ORG)



PTA SCRIP

To make ordering easier, orders will be due in the office by 10:00 on the 1st and 15th of each month. Below is the ordering calendar for the rest of the school year which reflects any dates different than the 1st or 15th due to weekends, holidays, or in-service dates.

FEBRUARY	Wednesday	February 1, 2012
FEBRUARY	Wednesday	February 15, 2012
MARCH	Thursday	March 1, 2012
MARCH	Thursday	March 15, 2012
APRIL	Monday	April 2, 2012
APRIL	Monday	April 15, 2012
MAY	Tuesday	May 1, 2012
MAY	Tuesday	May 15, 2012
JUNE	Friday	June 1, 2012

~Thank you for your support! *De Anna Ayer*

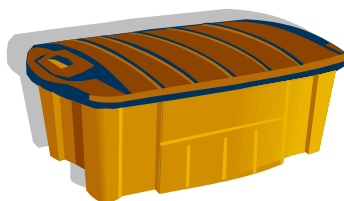
DI PARENT NIGHT OUT

Valentine's Day is right around the corner so give yourself the evening off! Go shopping, out to dinner, whatever suits you! The Destination Imagination teams of Amy Belle will entertain your children from 5:30pm-9:00pm. We'll have the basketball courts open, movies, games, arts and crafts. Lots to keep your children busy! And, we'll feed them dinner, too! Watch for a sign-up sheet to come home with more detailed information.



PTA SECRET SANTA SHOPPE—STORAGE

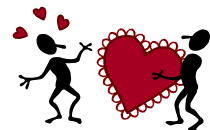
Do you own a business that has available storage space? Do you have a home with a big extra shed that is empty? If you do, the Secret Santa Shoppe could use your help. Our past storage space is no longer available - so for the short term, storage space was rented with the hopes of finding someone that would be willing to donate some space. We have about 50, large storage containers. If you are able to help, please contact Melissa Timmerman and 262-628-3690.



February PTA Meeting
Thursday, February 16th
6:30 p.m.
Childcare Available

VALENTINE EXPRESS STORE

What better way to tell a friend you enjoy their company, let a teacher know how much you appreciate them, or express your love to a sibling, than to send a Valentine to them?



The Destination Imagination Teams will be setting up a Valentine Express Store February 8th, 9th and 10th during the lunch hours—11:30 to 1:00 p.m.

You will be able to purchase Valentines for .25¢ each during the lunch hours and have them sent to anyone in the school: friends, siblings, teachers, staff, custodians, and Mrs. Kucharski.



Give books to your school with We Give Books during *Read for My School*

Please join We Give Books, and readers across the country, as together we read digital books and donate printed ones to our schools and school libraries.

Starting February 14, 2012, when you read online at www.wegivebooks.org, you'll have the chance to read great children's books for free and send a new book directly to a school you choose.

We Give Books' *Read for My School* is your chance to highlight the importance of supporting our schools and the essential role that reading and school libraries play in the lives of our children. Together, we'll read from We Give Books' digital library of classic children's books and donate over 150,000 books to elementary schools across the country, including yours.

Read for My School kicks off on **February 14, 2012**, but get ready now. Readers across the country will be joining in to give to their schools – and we're going to give 150,000 books fast. You can read online year round with We Give Books, but *Read for My School* is your one chance to give to your own school!

Get started now!

1. Visit We Give Books. When you do, you'll have the chance to let us know you'll be reading for your school. You'll also find all the tools you need to get everyone in your community involved, including engaging activities and other resources.
2. Read today at We Give Books. As you get ready for February 14, you can help to donate books to children in need around the world.
3. Start reading on February 14 and give books to schools you choose. Every school has the chance to earn a complete library of children's books.

Find out more.

We Give Books combines the joy of reading with the power of helping others, connecting young people, parents, and teachers with some of the world's best and most inspiring literacy organizations, and sharing books with the young people these organizations support. Please visit www.wegivebooks.org

