MRS. MOLL’S MESSAGE

Dear Spence Families,

Welcome to 2020! I have enjoyed having all our students back and the energy they brought with them for learning. I hope everyone enjoyed the winter break with your friends and families, and that you too are off to a great start in 2020. The students came back ready to learn, and we are ready to engage in great learning experiences with them. I cannot believe we have already gone through the first semester! The year is going fast!

As we enter 2020, we often create resolutions for the new year. Each day our teachers collaborate around student learning, so they can support the specific needs of each child to advance his or her learning. This daily conversation and focus is what gives our children what they need, when they need it. Beyond academics, our staff is working on the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of our students, again so that we can get support to students when they need it. This continuous improvement mindset is what propels our school to make great things even greater!

As we approach our midpoint of the school year, I am often asked by parents how they can best support their children at home. Today, now more than ever, children are busy. Between athletic practices, piano lessons, scouts, and other organized activities, students often leave the busy school day and go right to these other activities. Beyond any homework that comes home, I encourage all parents to continue reading to, and with, your children. Consider designating a time each night in which all members of the family read. It doesn’t matter how old your children are, as the best way to improve their literacy skills is to practice. This also shows our children how much we enjoy reading and writing, which oftentimes motivates them to practice on their own as well. For writing, ask your kids to help write a grocery list, send a card to a friend or relative, or even label items in a cupboard. When kids find purpose in their reading and writing, they will continue to refine their skills, just like we do with a sport, musical instrument, or really any task. Beyond all that, simply ask them about their day, so they can engage in conversation with you about their learning. Give our children another opportunity to talk and share how they are successful. As always, please reach out to your teachers with any specific concerns or questions you have about your child’s learning.

In the past few days and weeks, we had several exciting events for our students. On January 26th we had a “Movie Night” sponsored by our PTO. We are continually grateful for the strong and supportive PTO that we have at Spence. This amazing partnership is part of our equation for success! Thank you so much to all of you who we count on to help out, volunteer, and support in the many ways that you do! This week, we are participating in the Kindness Challenge. This has been a great opportunity for our students and staff to show their Mustang PRIDE!

It is hard to believe that we are heading into the Spring Semester. I am looking forward to the coming months of learning at Spence Elementary! As always, my door is open and I welcome you to stop by, email us, or call anytime that you have questions, comments, or concerns. Take care and stay safe this winter!

In Partnership, Kate R. Moll

If you have a teacher request for the 2020/21 school year, please write a short letter of request, including your rationale. Return it to the Spence office, addressed to Mrs. Moll. Do NOT send via email, as these are often misdirected to a SPAM folder. **Deadline for requests is April 3, 2020.** All requests will be considered, but not guaranteed, as we work hard to create balanced classrooms.
A big Spence welcome to these aspiring teachers who will be with us for a portion or all of 2nd semester!!!

Welcome Ms. Melissa Brant, Spence School Psychologist!

Ms. Brant comes to us from Benton, Wisconsin. She is currently finishing her last semester at UW-La Crosse. She will be at Spence on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

SAFETY PATROL
The 5th grade safety patrol schedule is now posted on our website. You will find a link on the right-hand side of our homepage. lacrosseschools.org/spence

Welcome Aspiring Educators

A big Spence welcome to these aspiring teachers who will be with us for a portion or all of 2nd semester!!!

Brianna Schyvinck, UW-La Crosse
Mrs. Blanton - 4th Grade

Emily Stiemann, UW-La Crosse
Mrs. Powell - 4K

Cami Sternberg, Luther College
Mrs. Love - 1st Grade

Abby Oudinot, UW-La Crosse
Mrs. Buedding - 5th Grade

Peyton Lindmark, Luther College
Mr. Markworth - 4th Grade

Matt Brown, UW-La Crosse
Mr. Markworth - 4th Grade

Thomas Seland, Viterbo
Mrs. Nelson - 5th Grade
The second session of our after-school program began on January 9. This weekly club is designed for 3rd through 5th graders, and our current offerings include: Book Club, Chess, Cribbage, Outdoor Activities, and Technology. This program, with available after-club busing, has become increasingly popular for our students. More information about our third session will be coming soon. Please watch your student’s take-home folder if he/she is interested in signing up for the third session.

Last month, our teachers and staff were given the opportunity to conference with teams in different, unique areas of our school. Our regulation station systems were highlighted, as well as our specials teachers, HPL and LMC programs, SPED, physical and occupational therapy, speech and language, health room information, support staff roles, Title I, and English Language Learners (ELL) practices. This collaboration gave us the opportunity to align our vision and supports for our students. It was a great afternoon!

SPENCE FOLK DANCE
Sue Hulsether, Folk Dance Artist-in-Residence, will return to Spence this month! She will work with our students for four days, February 10 through 13.

Please join us for
FAMILY FOLK DANCE NIGHT
Thursday, February 13
6:00-7:30 pm
in the Spence gym.
Live music provided!
We hope you can attend!

ELECTION DAY PARKING
On Tuesday, February 18, ALL parents/guardians here to drop off or pick up students before or after school will need to park by entrance K (North end of building). There will be NO parking, drop-offs, or pickups in the front of school. This area will be reserved for voter parking only. Because Spence is being used as a polling place, we have taken additional security measures in order to make our building as safe as possible. A Civilian Service Employee (CSE) from the La Crosse Police Department will be present in our entrance area. We are thankful for their support in keeping our school safe. In addition, signage will be posted requiring all voters to enter and exit only through our front doors and proceed immediately to the polling place.

The WI Forward Exam has been designed to gauge how well our students are doing in relation to Wisconsin Academic Standards.

Third, fourth and fifth grade students at Spence will be taking this exam April 15 through 30.

Please do not plan trips or appointments during these dates. Anything missed during this exam will have to be made-up.
The Spence PTO has been busy working on some new family-friendly activities, as well as supporting staff and students in our school! Our PTO recently approved a $1000 donation for the Spence Garden to support an artist who will work with students to create new art for our garden. Additionally, we were able to approve a request for t-shirts for members of the Kindness Club, as well as a book for Kindness Week for each classroom teacher. We will also be purchasing additional Gaga balls, as well as flags for flag football. None of this would be possible without the support of Spence family and friends during our fundraising events!

We have finalized some dates for upcoming fundraisers and events. More information will follow on each of these events, but please mark your calendars!

**Butter Braid Sale:** March 2-16, with delivery on April 6 (fundraiser)
**DQ Night:** Tuesday, May 5, 5-8 p.m. (fundraiser) after music concert(s)
**Family Recess Night:** Thursday, May 14, 4-6 p.m.
**Spence Night at the Loggers:** Wednesday, May 27, 6:35 p.m. (fundraiser)

We have only three group meetings left this year: February 25, April 21, and May 12. All of our meetings are held at 6 p.m., in the Spence LMC, and pizza and water are provided. At our April meeting, we will be accepting nominations for PTO officers. Jocelyn Buxton, our current president, will be stepping down after this year. If you or someone you know is interested in being a Spence PTO officer, please email us at spencepto@gmail.com. If you are interested in one of the positions that is currently filled, that’s okay! We will put together a ballot of all interested parties, and voting for 2020-2021 officers will happen at the meeting on May 12.

It has been great to see so many new faces at our PTO meetings this year, and we look forward to your continued involvement with Spence PTO.

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**SPOTLIGHT ON LMC**

As the students get ready to write their informational/research papers in class, they have been learning useful skills to assist them in the library. The younger students are learning that nonfiction books give facts and information, along with some kid friendly internet sites. The upper grades have been practicing finding information, citing the sources and a variety of technology resources to share their new knowledge with others.

The students in kindergarten through second grade will be given new book bags. **Please help your child to return their books to school in this bag on library day.** It helps to keep the books safe!

“Reading should not be presented to children as a chore or duty. It should be offered to them as a precious gift.” —Kate DiCamillo

Happy Reading!
-Mrs. Dunn

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Jocelyn Buxton - President
Britney Zeimentz - Vice President
Tricia George - Secretary
Lindsey Branson - Treasurer
spencepto@gmail.com
Silver Mustang Pride Awards

Congratulations to our first Silver Mustang Pride Recipient of this school-year, Ben Parmeter!

Congratulations to all of the following Silver Pride Recipients:
Rose Yang, Lily Yang, Isla Larson, Maren Heckman, Dianna Yang, Della Medinger, Emmaus Thao, and Kohen Rupp.

Bronze Mustang Pride Awards

Congratulations to all of the following Bronze Pride Recipients:

Our PBIS team put on an amazing assembly reminding our students about the rules during winter recess and the appropriate winter gear for school. The Anna and Elsa parody was well-received by students and staff and has already proven to help our kiddos to remember the rules!

-The Spence PBIS Team

Positive Behavior Interventions & Support
Congratulations Artists!
The following students are representing Spence Elementary in community art shows:

**PUMP HOUSE**
January 18 - 31, 2020
Summer Puckett
Miley Rupp
Kairi Murphy
Eloise Chritton
Jackson Kenworthy
Stella Jelen
Ben Vang
Terion Grigsby
Lyla Xiong
Breleigh Geary
Ryder Goethe
Eileigh Dahlquist
Kalea Esser
Jerry Thao
Ever Grabhorn
Mya Peterson
Emma Alderman
Liam Sullivan

**REGIONAL YOUTH ART MONTH EXHIBIT** at Valley View Mall
January 18 - February 15, 2020
Reception: February 15, 12 to 3 pm
Ezra Mask
Emma Furuseth
Severyn Lambert
Thomas Howard
Ehan Homewood

Great Job everyone!
Stay tuned for upcoming Spring art shows that feature more of our amazing Spence artists.

-Ms. Metz

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**Spence Elementary**

**Literacy Night**
Thursday, March 19
5 to 7pm

Light dinner included

Storytelling by:
Michael Scott, *parent educator*

All children who attend will receive a free book.
More information to come.
It's never easy to come back from break, but Preschoolers and their 3rd grade buddies welcomed the change by "toasting" the New Year and establishing goals they want to achieve in 2020. Preschoolers learned three new letters B, S, and K this month and explored themes of bears, all things snow, and the great Kindness Challenge. They had purposeful discussions on how everyone was different, but we are all the same and should be treated with kindness. Preschoolers and their families headed to the Eco Park for their January Family Day and explored winter life around the marsh.

Kindergarten had a great field trip to the La Crosse Public Library. We hope you had a chance to talk with your children about it because now they are official Library Sneakers! We also started working in math groups. The kindergartners have been divided up into groups and may go to other kindergarten classrooms for math. These groups allow the kids to get the help on the skills they need and the ability to work to their greatest potential.

Second graders have had a busy month, as they have taken the STAR reading and math assessments, as well as our district math benchmark assessment. Our reading focus continues to be on spelling patterns, prefixes and suffixes. We have been looking for story elements, as well as text features in nonfiction texts. In math, we are moving into subtraction with larger numbers. We are wrapping up our social studies unit on maps and globes and will transition back to science. In writing, we are learning about facts vs. opinions, text features, and research in order to write informational text.

In first grade we have begun to explore the features of informational texts, and students are learning how to research topics. They will be researching animals and then write nonfiction pieces about what they have learned. In math we have been working on place value with tens and ones. Students are drawing stick and circle drawings to represent numbers. We are also working on comparing numbers and adding and subtracting 10 within numbers up to 100.

Students are learning about different biomes on Earth—dessert, polar regions and rainforest. Third graders also took a trip to Myrick Park to learn about different animal habitats and adaptations.

Fourth graders are learning about the regions of Wisconsin. We are all practicing our long division skills. We kicked off our I Survived reading unit by completing a STEM challenge. The challenge included building a "tower" to survive hurricane elements. Our reading unit will connect with our informative writing.

Fifth grade is wrapping up Books in Verse, Westward Expansion, and multiplying and dividing fractions. We are beginning our second round of Science (Living Systems, Sun & Moon and Solutions & Mixtures). We have begun multiplication and division of decimals and informational writing & reading on “Change Makers” – people who have made a difference. Finally, DARE lessons are in full swing with Officer Weaver.
Spotlight on
The Great Kindness Challenge

For the 2nd year, students at Spence celebrated the Great Kindness Challenge. The Great Kindness Challenge is a proactive and positive bullying prevention initiative that improves school climate and increases student engagement. The Great Kindness Challenge is one week (January 27th–31st) devoted to performing as many acts of kindness as possible. Using the provided kindness checklist, students accept the challenge and show the world that KINDNESS MATTERS! We are incredibly grateful to Thrivent and the Spence PTO for funding our Kindness Missions, Teacher Kindness Kits, and Prizes for our students who showed incredibly acts of kindness all week!

Contact Information
Katie Jeseritz
School Counselor
(608) 789-8890
KJeserit@lacrossesd.org

Guidance Topics this Month
K - Friendship Skills
1 - Kindness and Respect
2 - Positive Communication
3 - Types of Conflict
4 - Responding to Conflict and Bullying situations
5 - Healthy Friendships

Kindness Week Photos
EXPLANATION:
This month we’re talking about the beautiful character trait of Kindness. The dictionary defines it as: “the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate.” But it is so much more than that! The definition we are using in class is:

Kindness: the choice to act with words, gifts, or actions to bring appreciation, positivity, and encouragement to others and yourself.

The key part of this definition? Kindness is a choice that we get to make every day to bring good things into our lives and the world. Those good things can look like more than just some kind words; Kindness is given through our actions and our encouragement and our attitude and our gifts. We will spend time thinking about how to be kind to ourselves, to our environment, to animals, and to one another. We will get to experience meaningful words through compliments and feel the joy that comes from showing appreciation to others. We will think about how people like Jackie Chan and Booker T. Washington and Maya Angelou teach us Kindness. It will be a powerful and positive time!

CONVERSATION STARTERS:
- Acknowledge your child for a time they showed Kindness to you. Be specific about what they did and how it made you feel.
- Who in our neighborhood or community might need our Kindness? How will we be able to tell?
- Talk about a time when someone was unkind to you. What do you wish the person would have done differently?

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:
- What does Kindness look like in our home? What does it look like in our neighborhood? What does Kindness look like in our extended family, our faith or spiritual practices, our community centers, our sports teams, etc.?
- Why is it important to show Kindness to people who aren’t kind to you?
- What acts of Kindness have others shown you lately and how did you respond? How did it make you feel? How does random acts of Kindness help you grow?

APPLICATION:
Books:
- *What Does It Mean to Be Kind?* by Rana DiOrio
- *Ready, Freddy! Kindness Counts!* by Abby Klein
- *I Walk with Vanessa: A Story About a Simple Act of Kindness* by Kerascoet
- *Be Kind* by Pat Zietlow Miller
- *The Invisible Boy* by Trudy Ludwig
- *Kindness Is Cooler, Mrs. Ruler* by Marjorie Cuyler
- *Because Amelia Smiled* by David Ezra Stein
- *Try a Little Kindness* by Henry Cole

FOR YOUR READING:
- *Are you raising nice kids?* by Amy Joyce
- *Six ways to teach kindness* by Natasha Daniels
ACTIVITY:
Work as a family to assemble a few Kindness Kits to keep in your car to give out when you see a person struggling with homelessness. Let your children help decide what you’ll put in them. Some suggestions include a bottle of water, a pair of socks, a pack of gum or some mints, lip balm, a toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, soap, and/or deodorant.

PURPOSEFULL PURSUITS:
Need Some Help?
Over dinner tonight, brainstorm ways that you can show Kindness to your neighbors. Maybe you’ve noticed that your neighbor hasn’t walked his dog in a while. Perhaps there are some leaves that need to be raked or flower gardens that need to be weeded. Are there trash cans that could be brought in off of the curb? Or might there be a car that you’d be willing to wash? Discuss which service you might want to offer, then knock on a door and ask, “Need some help?”

Kindness Bingo
Have each member of the family fill out a bingo board with different ways you like others to show Kindness to you. Place each bingo board somewhere accessible for the whole family such as the refrigerator. Then, when someone commits an act on your board, color it in! Be sure to celebrate when the family has collaborated to get bingo! Some ideas may include:

- Help with a household chore
- Spend quality time together with no distractions (tv, phone, etc.)
- Play a game together
- Give a hug
- Write a card or letter saying what you love about someone

Toughness: 2
Time: 3
Type: Group

Cooking Up Kindness
Dust off your favorite recipe, grab your budding chefs, and get cooking. In this challenge, you’ll make something to share with a neighbor, colleague, or friend. Nothing says, “YOU are loved” quite as tastily as some homemade Kindness from your kitchen.

Work with your child to write a note and/or write out the recipe so you can spread the love a little further and perhaps inspire your recipient to pass it on!

Toughness: 3
Time: 3
Type: Group

A Kind Face
Ask your child about a friend or family member that they feel like they haven’t talked to in a while. Brainstorm 2-3 kind things that they feel about that person and then call them up and let them know! Better yet, video call them if you have access so they can see your smiling faces while you share.

Challenge yourself to reach out to one adult in your life and do the same. Call your cousin or your aunt or your friend that you haven’t reached out to in awhile and give them the kind gift of time.

Toughness: 1
Time: 2
Type: Individual
UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS
Regular meetings of the Board of Education will be held at the Hogan Administrative Center at 6:00 p.m. on the first (1st) and third (3rd) Monday of each month unless otherwise specified at another time and/or place by the Board president. February meetings are scheduled for the 3rd and 17th. More detailed information is available on the school district website – lacrosseschools.org

NATIONAL SCHOOL BREAKFAST WEEK
March 2 – 6, 2020
Spence Nutrition will celebrate “one small step for school breakfast, one giant leap for healthy children - not just during this week, but all year.”
Spence Elementary School would like to invite grandparents to our 2020 Grandparents Day celebration. This year, we will provide cookies and a classroom visit for our guests.

DATE: Thursday, February 13, 2020
TIME: 2:00 – 2:35 pm
WHERE: Your Student’s Classroom

THINGS TO REMEMBER:
• Please make sure guests know the name of student’s teacher.
• If grandparent(s) have more than one student to visit, they will be responsible for dividing their time between classrooms.
• This event replaces last year’s Grandparents/VIP Day.

Please fill out bottom portion of this sheet and return to classroom teacher.

Student Name:
Teacher Name:
Should your student ride home with grandparent(s) after school on this day?

___Yes
___No-student should use normal after-school bus or pick-up plan.

Number of Guests Attending:______________
February Potatoes

Pick:
• Choose firm, smooth-skinned potatoes, free of wrinkles and sprouts.
• Discard potatoes with soft or rotten spots as the flavor will be affected.

Store:
• Depending on variety, potatoes can be stored for up to a couple months in a cool, ventilated area.
• Do not store whole potatoes in the fridge.

Prepare:
• Wash and scrub the potatoes before use.
• For quick cooking, simply pierce a washed potato with a fork & place in the microwave for 3-5 minutes, or bake at 375 degrees.

Nutrition Info
One medium potato has 150 calories and provides vitamin C, potassium and fiber.

Fun Facts
Of the more than 5,000 varieties of potatoes in the world, the most common is the red potato.

The Irish called the potato a “spud” after the spade that was used to dig them, called a “spudder”!

Many people believe potatoes to be the root of the plant, but they are actually a tuber – an underground stem.

Uses
The entire potato is edible! Wash well, but keep the skin on for added fiber.

Instead of using butter, sour cream and cheese, try spicing up potatoes with olive oil and seasonings such as black pepper, rosemary, garlic, or basil.

Family Friendly Activities
Check out the following books at your local library:
One Potato, Two Potato by Cynthia DeFelice
Pigs Love Potatoes by Anika Denise
Potatoes, Potatoes by Anita Lobel

Farm2School Update: Served at School Served at Home!
Try Fifth Season Cooperative’s Potato Fusion Blend. A colorful blend of Wisconsin red, white and gold potatoes with skins on for a rustic and high contrast look. The blend is diced, blanched and frozen, ready to toss with seasoning and roast to finish or add to recipes for a color and nutrition boost.

This kid-friendly, local, frozen veggie blend is used in school cafeterias and is now available at retail locations (Festival Foods and the People’s Food Co-Op)! Look for it in the natural foods frozen section.
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<td>Homemade Cheese Pizza</td>
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**CHOICE 3 DAILY – assorted yogurt (4 oz) & cheese stick.**

Also available daily: veggie bar, fresh fruit, assorted canned fruit, chocolate fat-free milk, and lowfat white milk.