

The ***Polar Bear Express***

December 2014

**“Poly Drives Students
to Succeed”**



Poly Drive Elementary School

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Dear Poly Drive Families,

I am starting this month's newsletter with a plea for help. I have called 17 possible applicants to assist with the morning crosswalk guard position at Poly Drive and Arvin and have only had one response – I am out of options. In January we will need to staff Tuesday & Thursday mornings from approximately 7:45am to 8:30am. If you or someone you know would be interested in taking either day or both days, please contact the office for more details. At this point I am willing to resort to bribery, if necessary.....

At the last PTA meeting there was some discussion about the number of opportunities parents have to access information and academics online. Some of the programs that you want to be aware of include PowerSchool for grades, Lead 21 for reading, MobyMax for math and reading skills practice, Enchanted Learning for resources and Worldbook & Ebsco databases for research. All of these online resources require logins but if you contact your child's teacher or the office we will be happy to provide you with the access information you need.

MyVoice survey info:

The My Voice Parent Survey measures parent perceptions of your experience and your child's experience at Poly Drive. We want to learn how you view the teaching and learning that occurs at our school, and how those views align with our mission and vision. As a staff we review this data and use it to help improve the way we do business at Poly. This survey is completely anonymous and takes less than 10 minutes to complete. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey and give us some feedback. Thank you in advance for your participation.

To take the survey, parents simply need:

- **Survey website:** <http://myvoicesurvey.org>
- **Survey Participation Code:** 59eba7

You may participate anytime during the two-week survey window:

- **Start Date:** December 02, 2014
- **End Date:** December 16, 2014

This always seems to be the busiest month of the year for me. No soccer for my girls but there is shopping, basketball, concerts, parties and, of course, more shopping. In spite of the rushing around I usually end up in a good mood and look forward to the time spent with family. I hope you take time this month to truly enjoy some quality time with family and friends.

Sincerely - Kevin Croff



MY VOICE PARENT SURVEY

The My Voice Parent Survey is a tool Billings Public Schools uses to help measure your perceptions of your experience and your child's experience at Poly Drive. We want to learn how you view the teaching and learning that occurs at our school, and how those views align with our mission and vision.

This survey is completely anonymous and takes less than 10 minutes to complete.

Go to:

www.myvoicesurvey.org

Enter code: 59eba7

More information about My Voice is available at myvoice.pearsonfoundation.org.

The survey will be open from December 2nd - 16th. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Mr. Croff at 281-6217 or croffk@billingschools.org



HOLIDAY MUSIC PROGRAM DECEMBER 4TH

Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd graders will be doing a Holiday Program this year on Thursday, December 4th! The times of the programs will be 8:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. It will be the same program performed twice. 1st and 2nd graders will be performing the musical "The Littlest Christmas Tree" and the Kindergarten students will be singing holiday songs!!!

The 3rd and 4th graders will be performing a musical this spring. 5th, 6th graders and Select Choir will also perform various programs in the spring.



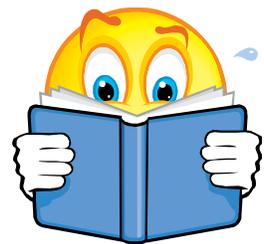
KINDNESS & COMPASSION CLUB

The KC Club has put together a "Giving Hands" wreath to collect items to give to Poly Drive children and families for Christmas.

You can take a hand from the wreath that is hung by the main office. The hands each have an item listed on them that is to be purchased and then returned to Poly Drive by Friday, December 12th.

The items range from specific girl/boy items to general health care items. You may choose to wrap the more specific items if you wish, attaching the Giving Hand to it so it can be identified.

Thank you for all of your generosity and support!



READ – A – THON NEWS



The Read a Thon is on it's way and it going to be a "Super" one this year!

The "kick off" assembly will be on Friday, January 16. Your child will bring home their pledge envelopes to begin collecting their pledges, starting on the 24th they will begin recording all their reading minutes (rack em up kiddos), and the following week will be collection week. All money will be due February 6th.

More information to come...we are just getting started! Thanks so much for all the attention the Read a Thon gets! Let's make it great!

LIBRARY NEWS

Visit the Poly Drive Library and take our audio tour

The Poly Drive 6th graders have created an audio tour! Bring your smart device with a QR code scanner and tour the library. Each stop has an audio recording that students created to help you learn about it. Each section of the library is described and you can learn about the benefits of that area. You won't be able to hear the tour unless you have a device with a QR code scanner so be sure to bring something (smartphone or tablet with a camera). If you don't have a device, you can borrow one from the library.



Parent Internet Safety Tip - Cell Phone Parental Controls

Did you know you have the ability to set controls on your childrens' phone? Almost all carriers have built in parental controls that allow you to:

- block picture messaging
- block unknown phone numbers
- limit what time your kids can text or call
- filter web browsing, and
- use GPS tracking to keep tabs on their physical location

Poly Drive is working with Verizon to have a parent information night to inform and show parents how to monitor their child's cell phone activity. Keep an eye out for more information on this subject.



SCHOOL CALENDAR

December

- 2 Skate Night 5-8pm SkateWorld
- 4 Holiday Music Program K-2
8:30 & 10, same performance
- 5 Butter Braid Orders Due
- 11 5th & 6th Orchestra Concert
2:25 in gym
- 16 5th & 6th Band Concert
2:10 in gym
- 18 Butter Braid delivery
1:00 in the gym
- Dec. 24- Jan 2 NO SCHOOL

January

- 5 School back in session
- 13 PTA meeting, 6:30 library
- 14 Pizza with the Principal
12:00, RSVP
- 16 End of Quarter
- 19 NO SCHOOL for students
- 21 Report Cards go home
- 21 Geography Bee 1:30
- 29 Technology Planning mtg
3:15 in the library

TALENT SHOW



The Poly DriveTalent Show will be Thursday evening, February 26th at **Senior High**. Dinner will be at 5:00 in the cafeteria and just down the hall in the auditorium the Talent Show starts at 6:30! Lewis & Clark School is renovating their auditorium so we can't be there this year.

Audition forms will be available in January. Now is a great time to start practicing your talent so it is well rehearsed for try-outs! Watch for more information to come.



By Mrs. Reas

PEAK fitness club has proven to be a huge hit with the Poly Drive students! PEAK will continue for grades 4th – 6th on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 3:00 – 3:45. Coming soon...PEAK for grades 1st – 3rd on Fridays. Details coming in January!

The upcoming PEAK sport starting on Dec. 5th is cooperative dodgeball! There will be a dodgeball tournament on Dec. 19th at Granite Health and Fitness.



WALK & BIKE TO SCHOOL WEEK NETS 318 MILES!

This October, **68 students participated and walked or biked 552 trips for 318 miles** during Poly Drive's participation in the national Walk to Schools week event. Students are encouraged to walk or bike to and from school during the week. They collected sponsors and raised money to support Safe Routes to Schools.

During the week, eight helmets and a bike were given to Poly Drive students. Special thanks to Tori Koch, Jeni Robinson, and Lissa Egan for their assistance with this event, and the Grubbs family for the bike donation.

The top classes for participation were Mrs. Egan's class (primary grades) and Ms. Brown's class (intermediate grades). Top overall participants were Jack Rentz of Mrs. Saur's class and Meredith Rentz of Mrs. Egan's class.

The Winter Challenge for Walk and Bike to Schools will run in January, February and March, with prizes awarded in April. Thank you to all the students and volunteers that worked to make this event a success!



"Tis the season: Box Tops & Labels for Education

The holiday season is upon us, and many of us use products that contain BOX TOPS and Labels for Education.

Please remember to clip the logos and send them to school. The more we collect, the more funding Poly Drive will receive. The class that collects the most box tops over the year will win a popsicle party! This passive fundraising effort brought in \$1,225 for Poly Drive last year. Thank you for your support of Poly Drive School.



Barnes & Noble Book Fair

Thank you to all who came out to join in the fun and support our school in raising funds for the library and 6th grade fund. The 6th Graders did a great job running all of the events and entertaining guests. Sales were above \$3500, of which Poly Drive will receive 20% back! Also \$200 was made from the craft sales! Thanks to all involved!

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BPS School Counselors



BULLYING: Bully behavior occurs when there is deliberate intent to harm, dominate, inflict pain, exclude or otherwise cause distress to the person being targeted. The person who bullies purposefully misuses his/her power (size, age, popularity, confidence, verbal ability), usually repeatedly. The balance of power between the bully and target is NOT EQUAL.

10 Tips for Helping Your Child Cope with Holiday Stress

For most children, the holidays are happy, fun and exciting times. There's a break from school and a chance to see friends and relatives. There may also be special food, music and family traditions. However, for some children, the holidays can also be stressful and confusing. Family plans and celebrations may be complicated by divorce, separation or remarriage. The holidays can also be a difficult time for children who have lost a parent, sibling or close relative. This year, many children are also separated from parents due to ongoing military service or even incarceration.

The holidays often remind children of what's changed and what's now different. For example, a child from a divorced family may feel sad on some level because he misses the "intact" family he used to have. A child whose parent is on active military duty may feel it's particularly unfair that her daddy or mommy needs to be away over the holidays.

There are a number of things parents can do to help children cope with holiday stress. These include:

1. Discuss holiday plans well in advance, and let kids participate in decisions to the extent possible. Kids need some degree of predictability. Prolonged uncertainty, constantly changing plans or last-minute decisions can all increase stress.
2. If you're traveling, leave plenty of extra time and bring child-friendly snacks, books, games and/or music.
3. Don't overschedule. You may not be able to do everything or see everyone. Kids can easily get "burned out," overtired and cranky during the holidays.
4. Give kids some "downtime." Don't expect them to be "on" all the time. Leave room for some quiet activities, like listening to music, taking a walk or reading a book.
5. Make sure kids get plenty of sleep. While it may be exciting to stay up late, lack of sleep often leads to increased irritability.
6. Let kids be honest about their feelings. Don't force them to act happy and excited if they're feeling quiet or down.
7. Don't promise things you can't produce. For example, don't promise that a parent will be home in time for the holidays if the decision is really out of your control. Don't promise that someone will call if they're in an area with limited phone service.
8. Uphold and maintain family traditions even if a parent is absent. Kids count on certain traditions, which can have an important grounding effect by letting kids know that even though some things have changed, other things have remained the same.
9. Don't try and compensate for an absent parent with extra gifts or toys. It won't work. What most kids really want is time, attention and reassurance.
10. Take care of yourself. Try and avoid getting overloaded with obligations. If you feel stressed, it increases the pressure and tension on your children.

Most kids, even those dealing with loss or family transitions, can and do enjoy the holidays. However, preparation, patience and honesty can help prevent conflict, reduce stress and enhance the holiday season for the whole family. By Dr. David Fassler M.D.