

# The *Polar Bear Express*

January 2018

**“Poly Drives Students  
to Succeed”**



## **Poly Drive Elementary School**

**Kevin Croff, Principal**  
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## **Dear Poly Drive Families,**

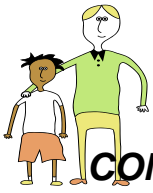
I'm hoping you had a rejuvenating break and are ready for the second half of the school year. We are finishing Winter Benchmark assessments this month, which means every student will take a screening assessment (K-2<sup>nd</sup> – FAST and 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> NWEA MAP) in math and reading that will help us determine growth and needs since Fall assessments. Look for a report in an upcoming Wednesday Watch folder.

We are fortunate to have an incredibly supportive PTA and due to their efforts every child at Poly Drive has a device assigned to them. During the school day these are used for a variety of instructional purposes. Have a discussion with your child at dinner and ask them how they use their device during the school day. You may hear names like ST Math, MobyMax, Khan Academy, Google Classroom, Kahoot or SeeSaw. We use a variety of these and other tools to engage students, collect evidence of learning and extend thinking. Feel free to ask your child's teacher how they use technology in their classroom.

I have Pizza with the Principal scheduled for Thursday, January 18<sup>th</sup> at 1pm. A topic that came up at the last session was school safety. Billings Public Schools has a comprehensive Emergency Crisis Plan that is reviewed each year. We monitor visitors, secure doors, practice safety drills, discuss situations as a staff and take many other precautions. While no organization is completely prepared for every situation we emphasize that staff needs to make quick, accurate decisions and students need to follow adult requests quickly and quietly. If you have questions regarding this or anything else related to Poly Drive, please RSVP at [croffk@billingsschools.org](mailto:croffk@billingsschools.org) to let me know if you are able to make it on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

We are once again hosting a blood drive and are looking for parents willing to be Heroes. The drive will be on Wednesday, January 24<sup>th</sup> - they will start at 2:30 and run until 5:30pm. You can sign up for a time at: <https://www.bloodhero.com> - go to the Donate link and search for Poly Drive. Nearly every one of us has either received blood or know of someone that needed blood. Poly Drive typically has one of the highest participation rates in Yellowstone County and we ask that you please help make sure that tradition continues.

Sincerely,  
Kevin Croff, Principal



## KINDNESS & COMPASSION CLUB

By Mrs. Tatum

The Giving Hands Wreath was a huge success! Every hand was taken from the wreath and the items brought back were enough to create and fill several back packs. These packs were given to Poly Drive students and families that could use them.

Thank you for all of your generosity and support!



## LUNCH NEWS

We are starting off the New Year with a new lunch clerk, her name is Julia.

You can help daily operations run smoothly by:

\* Writing your student's name in the memo line when sending a check for lunch money

\* Pay for school lunches on line at:

[billingsps.sodexomyway.com](http://billingsps.sodexomyway.com)

\* You can also set up email notification when your student is running low on lunch money.



MANNERS ARE A TRUE REFLECTION OF OUR CHARACTER...

## Poly Drive Manners of the Month

### January

- √ Be proud of your accomplishments without bragging
- √ Follow adult instructions
- √ Put -downs to others are not acceptable
- √ Take responsibility for your actions



## SCHOOL CALENDAR

### January

- 3 School Back in Session
- 9 PTA Meeting 6:15
- 15 PIR - NO SCHOOL
- 18 Pizza with the Principal 1:00 - RSVP
- 24 Blood Drive 2:00 Gym
- 26 Spirit Day

### February

- 9-12 NO SCHOOL
- 13 PTA Meeting 3:15
- 23 Coffee with Croff 8:30



## LIBRARY NEWS

By Mrs. Caskey

### News from the library

January is book tasting month! Students will get the opportunity to sample new books to find their next favorite read! This is a fun activity presented to the students as if they are dining out...except the menu contains some great books for students to discover.

### The Hour of Code was a Huge Success

Students at Poly participated in the international event, Hour of Code. Concepts explored were sequencing, problem-solving, creating and computer programming. For a list of tools students used to code,

visit [polydrivelibrary.weebly.com/coding.html](http://polydrivelibrary.weebly.com/coding.html)

### CROSSWALK NEEDED FRIDAY MORNINGS

7:45 – 8:25

PLEASE TALK TO MR. CROFF OR MS. VICKI IF INTERESTED.



**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.

## ***Raising Confident Kids***

*It takes confidence to be a kid. Whether going to a new school or stepping up to bat for the first time, kids face a lot of uncharted territory. Naturally, parents want to instill a can-do attitude in their kids so that they'll bravely take on new challenges and, over time, believe in themselves. While each child is a little different, parents can follow some general guidelines to build kids' confidence. Self-confidence rises out of a sense of competence. In other words, kids develop confidence not because parents tell them they're great, but because of their achievements, big and small. Sure, it's good to hear encouraging words from mom and dad. But words of praise mean more when they refer to a child's specific efforts or new abilities. When kids achieve something, whether it's brushing their own teeth or riding a bike, they get a sense of themselves as able and capable, and tap into that high-octane fuel of confidence. Building self-confidence can begin very early. When babies learn to turn the pages of a book or toddlers learn to walk, they are getting the idea "I can do it!" With each new skill and milestone, kids can develop increasing confidence. Parents can help by giving kids lots of opportunities to practice and master their skills, letting kids make mistakes and being there to boost their spirits so they keep trying. Respond with interest and excitement when kids show off a new skill, and reward them with praise when they achieve a goal or make a good effort. With plentiful opportunities, good instruction, and lots of patience from parents, kids can master basic skills — like tying their shoes and making the bed. Then, when other important challenges present themselves, kids can approach them knowing that they have already been successful in other areas.*

## ***Stay on the Sidelines***

*Of course, supervision is important to ensure that kids stay safe. But to help them really learn a new skill, it's also important not to hover. Give kids the opportunity to try something new, make mistakes, and learn from them. For instance, if your son wants to learn how to make a peanut butter sandwich, demonstrate, set up the ingredients, and let him give it a try. Will he make a bit of a mess? Almost certainly. But don't swoop in the second some jelly hits the countertop. In fact, avoid any criticism that could discourage him from trying again. If you step in to finish the sandwich, your son will think, "Oh well, I guess I can't make sandwiches." But if you have patience for the mess and the time it takes to learn, the payoff will be real. Someday soon he'll be able to say, "I'm hungry for lunch, so I'm going to make my own sandwich." You might even reply, "Great, can you make me one, too?" What a clear sign of your faith in his abilities!*

## ***Offer Encouragement and Praise***

*Sometimes, kids give up when frustrations arise. Help by encouraging persistence in the midst of setbacks. By trying again, kids learn that obstacles can be overcome. Once kids reach a goal, you'll want to praise not only the end result but also their willingness to stick with it. For instance, after your son has mastered making that peanut butter sandwich you might show your confidence by saying, "Next time, want to learn how to crack an egg?" Sandwich-fixing and egg-cracking might not seem like huge achievements, but they're important steps in the right direction — toward your child's independence. Throughout childhood, parents have chances to prepare kids to take care of themselves. Sure, it's great to feel needed, but as kids steadily gain confidence and independence, their relationship with you can be even richer. You can be bonded, not just by dependence, but by love and shared pride in all they've achieved. Eventually, your grown-up kids just might say thanks for how prepared they feel for the road ahead — a road they can take with confidence.*

# AT A GLANCE

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL VACATION DAYS 2017-2018

School begins on  
Thursday  
August 24, 2017

**EVERY WEDNESDAY**  
Kindergarten -3<sup>rd</sup> grade  
dismiss at 1:20  
4<sup>th</sup> grade & 5<sup>th</sup> grade  
dismiss at 2:05

Labor Day Weekend  
September 4

No School  
Teachers' Convention  
October 19  
October 20

K-6 Parent-Teacher  
Conferences  
(12:00 p.m. dismissal)  
November 1  
November 2  
November 3

No School  
Thanksgiving  
November 23  
November 24  
November 25

Winter Break  
December 25  
December 26  
December 27  
December 28  
December 29  
December 30  
December 31  
January 1  
January 2

PIR Day (No School)  
January 15

Vacation Days  
February 9  
February 12

Snow Day  
March 29  
This will be a vacation day  
unless we are required to  
make up a school day lost  
due to poor weather  
earlier in the year.

Vacation Days  
March 30  
April 2

Vacation Day  
May 4

Memorial Day Weekend  
May 28

Last Day of School  
June 1



The last day of school  
is Friday  
June 1, 2018

