

Valerius Eagle News - February 2016

Dates to Remember in February

2/2 - 2/4	Iowa Assessment Tests
2/8	Gift Card Orders due to the Office
2/10	Late Start - Valerius starts at 10am
2/12	Friendship Parties at 2:45pm
2/15	No School - Presidents' Day
2/18	2016-2017 Kindergarten Pre-Enrollment Meeting 6:30-7:30pm
2/20	Family Fun Night 5-8pm
2/24	Late Start - Valerius starts at 10am
2/25	4th & 5th grade Spring Music Concert 7-8pm at the PAC

Online Calendar

1. Click the web address

https://www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=urbandaleschools.com_3k6635dg11vt3b74his743b6n8%40group.calendar.google.com&ctz=America/Chicago

2. Once the calendar pops up, go to the bottom right of the screen and you'll see +Google Calendar. Click on the + sign.

3. The calendar will pop up and a message will say, "Do you want to add this calendar?"

4. Click yes.

Message from Mrs. Mauro

Assessments in UCSD: Balance between assessment **FOR** learning and assessment **OF** learning

As we reach the midpoint of our learning journey this year, I want to share assessment information with Valerius parents. There are different types of assessment and each type has a valid and important role in our program design. Assessment of learning is summative and its main purpose is to evaluate end outcome of a learning cycle. Assessment for learning is formative, which means it is used to support and assist teachers and students during learning cycles. Balanced assessment (using assessment of and for learning) is an integrated approach to ensuring that our school uses the best data to inform our decision-making. On the next page, you'll find a table with different types of assessments used in Urbandale. Overall, using a balanced assessment approach allows us to know your children and their academic needs better than ever.

Assessment	Description
Classroom Formative Assessments (administered K-5)	<u>Assessment FOR learning:</u> Formative assessments are informal assessments used to inform instructional decision-making. "Formative assessment is a planned process in which assessment-elicited evidence of a student's status is used by teachers to adjust their ongoing instructional practices or by students to adjust their current learning tactics" (Popham, 2008)
FAST Assessment (administered K-5)	<u>Assessment FOR learning:</u> FAST stands for Formative Assessment Systems for Teachers. The FAST assessment tests skills that are necessary for learning to read. FAST is made up of short individual tests, called subtests. Each FAST subtest focuses on a different skill and takes about 1 minute to do. Children in grades 2 and up take only those subtests measuring accuracy (how accurately children read words) and fluency (how many words children read in a period of time). Each subtest is an indicator of how well a child is doing in learning a particular reading skill. A child's score on a subtest tells us whether the child is on track for learning to read, or whether that child may need some help in learning important reading skills.
Benchmarking Assessments (administered K-5)	<u>Assessment FOR Learning:</u> A benchmark assessment system is a series of texts that are used to identify a student's current reading level and progress along a gradient of text levels over time. Alphabetic principle (words are composed of letters that represent sounds), fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (how well students understand what they read) are measured using benchmarks. Benchmarking is a valuable use of time because the teacher can determine student instructional needs, select appropriate texts at independent (student can read on their own), instructional (student can read with support of teacher), and challenge levels (text with high degree of academic rigor needing extensive scaffolding) to personalize instruction.
District Unit Assessments (administered K-5)	<u>Assessment OF/FOR learning:</u> Unit assessments function as a means of determining core competency on Core curriculum standards of learning for our students. These assessments are aligned to instruction and are typically administered at the end of a unit or learning cycle. They allow teachers an opportunity to understand the degree to which they are helping students to master skills and also to make instructional adjustments. Instructional adjustments can be made with pacing, content, duration, or intensity to meet learner needs.
Iowa Assessments (administered 3-5)	<u>Assessment OF learning:</u> The Iowa Assessments, (formerly ITBS) will be administered the first week of February in Urbandale. Iowa Assessments provide information about students in the areas of Reading, Math, Science, and Social Studies. This summative assessment helps determine how students in Urbandale are performing compared with students in other districts. It also measures students' growth when the test is compared with previous years data. Overall, the Iowa Assessment indicates the health of our academic system, provides teachers with the opportunity to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement, and enables schools to make informed strategic decisions to ensure continuous systemic improvement.

News from the Health Office

It is cold and flu season, please remind your students about good hand washing.

Washing hands is the best way to prevent the spread of illness!

If your child is ill with a fever (temp above 101° F), vomiting or diarrhea in the past 24 hours they will need to stay home from school. Students may return to school once they are symptom free for at least 24 hours.

Counseling Corner

Hello Valerius Families! Our next unit in guidance classes will be Ethical Behavior which focuses on bullying prevention. There is a lot of important information for students to learn in this unit!

We will be spending time in all grade levels learning about the definition of bullying. This will also include how to identify it, prevent it and stop it. The trickiest part of this unit is helping students distinguish the difference between what is bullying and what is mean behavior. There is a difference and after we begin talking about bullying students will be more familiar with the word and may start referring to lots of mean behavior as bullying. Most behavior that happens at school does not fit the definition of bullying.

Bullying, as defined by the State of Iowa, must include four components. These are: 1. It must be mean behavior that hurts someone physically or mentally or damages their things. 2. It must be repeated over time. 3. The behavior must be on purpose. 4. The behavior must represent a power imbalance. This last component might be explained as a way that people doing the bullying behavior gain power over their target. Students who are being bullied might be scared to come to school, might avoid certain situations and may use other excuses to avoid coming in contact with the person who is bullying them.

In addition, we spend time talking about people involved in a bullying situation. The “bullying triangle” includes the bully, the target and the bystander. We also help students learn tools they can use to solve their problems peacefully and assertively. Students are encouraged to be “upstanders” and stand up in support of a student that is being targeted.

You can help at home by encouraging kids to be both confident in themselves and assertive when someone is bothering them. Role play with your students things they can say to someone who is being mean or treating them in a way that is upsetting to them.

We have a lot of great resources and books that go along with this unit so the students always enjoy it! Please feel free to let me know if you have questions or concerns about this topic.

PTO Corner

Box Tops and Labels

Our next Box Tops and Labels collection contest ends on Friday, February 5. The class that turns in the **most Box Tops and Campbell's Labels** will win a popcorn and movie party! So keep those Box Tops and Labels coming!

Family Fun Night - 2/20 from 5-8pm

The Fun Night Committee is busy planning a carnival-style night of fun for you and your family! **New this year...dunk your teacher, balloon art and face painting!** We've also lowered the cost to help make fun night a great family experience. You won't want to miss it, so save the date today!

Please grab a friend and sign up for a game shift! We can't do it without you! Shifts are split into 1 hour intervals so you can have time with your family. High School students are welcome to sign up for Silver Cord hours!

Schedule

Friday 2/19

Sign Up Here: <http://valeriuselementarypto.bringit.bz/public/a9ccd2>

4-6pm Game Set Up

6-7pm Orientation

7-8pm Food Set Up

Saturday 2/20

Sign Up Here: <http://valeriuselementarypto.bringit.bz/public/93c2b9>

5-7pm Games/Food/Dunk Tank/Balloon Art/Face Painting

7:15pm Hankie Heads or Tails (Two Chances to Win!)

7:30pm Raffle/Auction

8pm Payments (cash, check and credit)

Book Fair

Our spring Book Fair is coming March 1st – March 4th! Some Book Fair fun facts:

- **The Book Fair is more than just a place to get some great books - it is also a fundraiser for our library**
- At least 50% of what you spend on books at the fair, our library gets as a profit to buy more books for our kids and teachers to use. Last fall we raised **over \$2400** for our library from our Book Fair – for books that our kids and teachers benefit from.
- The Book Fair is run entirely by volunteers. We need people to help set up and tear down the fair, and to help run the fair registers during conferences and the Book Fair family lunch (the registers are easy to use, and we give you instructions on what to do). Both daytime and evening volunteer opportunities are available. If you would be willing to volunteer your time to help with activities for the spring fair (February 26-March 4), please go to:

<http://valeriuselementarypto.bringit.bz/public/c5bd67>

More information about Book Fair dates and times will be coming soon!

NEXT MEETING: The next PTO meeting is Thursday, April 7th, 2016 at 7pm in the Valerius Library. Free childcare will be provided in the art room.

The PTO Officers will meet in place of the regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, February 4th at 5:30pm at Panera.

(There will not be a March meeting due to conferences and spring break.)