



Polar Express

The Northstar Newsletter

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www.ecasd.us

November 2023

I enjoy music. All kinds. Even the “stuff these kids are listening to these days.” This was a hobby passed down from my dad who enjoyed and could appreciate music from all different styles, influences, and genres. As the weather changes and we look to the indoors for more entertainment, I make my way back to music. While I enjoy listening to music on my short commute to work or at the gym, listening to music while not engaging in another task is different. As the weather becomes cooler and the nights become longer, this hobby returns. The enjoyment of music also means a time to dust off vinyl, warm up the tubes on my amplifier, and enjoy the spinning of records.

November at Northstar Middle School has similar parallels to listening to music through a turntable. What stands out to me is “the groove.” Like the needle (or cartridge) on a turn table finds the groove as the record spins and creates sound (ala music), our school is like the relationship between the needle and the record. After eight weeks of routines, expectations, schedules, and school maps, we have found our collective groove here at school. The needle and the record are in sync, and we are “playing music.”

The routines and rigors of school take time to forage. As students return after summer break, they deserve the opportunity to learn and practice what school looks like and sounds like. Most believe it takes students about six weeks to master school expectations, which coincides with the average number of times we need to repeat a task before we do it correctly, or have it mastered. Now that we have hit our groove, we focus as a school community on what our students need to find success here at school academically and socially.

At Northstar, we want all students to move forward in their learning, especially when they face setbacks. Our staff are here to partner with you to help students complete assignments, stay organized, and provide extra guidance and support. If your student feels as if their educational “groove” is not in place, and the distance between the needle and the record is getting bigger and bigger, please consider the following supports:

- 1) Join Polar Club— Northstar’s Polar Club is our after-school study club that meets each Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 2:55-4:00 pm. Students have access to our computer lab, library materials, and help from Northstar staff. It even includes a complimentary snack for each student. Permission slips can be picked up and returned to the Student Services office.
- 2) Access Skyward Family Access— If you have not already set up a Skyward Account, please visit our school district’s website at www.ecasd.us and click on “Skyward” at the top of the homepage to create an account. Skyward allows families to access their child’s grades and receive messages from teachers regarding upcoming assignments and class events. This also helps guide your ongoing “How was school today?” conversations at home.
- 3) Backpack Check(s)- Middle school is the first time our students carry materials between classes. Organization is a precious skill that leads to success and confidence, help your student organize their backpack at home and ask to see their planner each day. This will help decrease the number of lost or missing assignments and lead to their success.

On behalf of the Northstar staff, thank you for supporting our children and our school. Please give me a call at 715-852-5110 or send an email to akeeton@ecasd.us whenever you have a question or suggestion. I look forward to partnering with your family throughout the 2023-24 school year.

Adam Keeton
Principal



STUDENT SERVICES



*Quarter 2
Updates!*

Ms. Jennifer Schilling
Student Services Secretary

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Ms. Jenni Berg
School Counselor (Last Names A-J)

715-852-5119
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Ms. Lisa Sproul
School Counselor (Last Names K-Z)

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Ms. Kristen Cowell
School Psychologist

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Ms. Jana Schilmoeller
School Social Worker

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6th Grade Meet & Greet Conferences—As mentioned in the back-to-school newsletter, individual meet and greet conferences are now taking place with all 6th grade students. The focus of the conference is based on the Wisconsin School Counseling Standards, which include the following topics: Academics, Personal/Social, and Career Development. Students will also have an opportunity to ask questions, as well as learn about resources and activities available at Northstar.

ATTENTION 8TH GRADE FAMILIES

JA in a Day Permission Forms are due November 3— All 8th grade students will be attending fun and exciting career exploration experiences within our school and community on November 13 and November 14. Your student should have received a permission form for this FREE event. Please contact Jenni Berg at 715-852-5119 or jberg@ecasd.us with questions.

Preparing for High School— 8th grade families, please watch for a Skyward email the week of December 4 that will include important information which will help your child prepare for high school registration.

Upward Bound—Upward Bound helps students prepare for educational and career training opportunities after high school and provides access to post-secondary opportunities free of charge to students. All 8th grade students were shown a video during Resource on Tuesday, October 17 about Upward Bound. Students then signed up for an informational session on Tuesday, October 24 during Resource with Upward Bound staff. If your student was unable to attend but is still interested in learning more about Upward Bound, please reach out to Jenni Berg at 715-852-5119 or jberg@ecasd.us

ACADEMIC & CAREER PLANNING FOR ALL GRADES

Registration—Looking ahead... January 2024 will mark the start of next year's registration process. More details to come in December.

XELLO—Xello is an online career-planning tool which is FREE and accessible to all ECASD students anywhere they have internet. The program includes career assessments, in-depth career information from the 16 career clusters, details regarding post-secondary colleges, as well as military and workforce opportunities.

WEOP—Wisconsin Educational Opportunity Program (WEOP) is a free pre-college program through the WI Dept of Public Instruction starting in 6th grade. Services provided include success workshops, cultural and social events, college campus field trips, 1:1 tutoring and mentoring, summer programming, financial aid help and much more! Please contact Lisa Sproul at 715-852-5118 or lsproul@ecasd.us with questions.

❄️ Polar Partnership Update ❄️

Northstar is truly a special place! It is filled with students and adults who care and support one another in a way that is second to none! From teachers and education assistants who develop meaningful connections with students; to office administrators and staff who graciously navigate constant challenges in day to day learning; from custodians who tirelessly clean to ensure our school is safe; to food and nutrition staff who diligently prepare healthy meals; from parents who give of their time by volunteering, attending conferences, and serving on committees; to students who show GREAT resiliency by “showing up” with positive attitudes, ready to work and ready to learn. Northstar students, staff, and families continue to impress. **#Polar Pride!**

We Need Your Help!

Volunteering benefits the students, school, and you! Have some fun, meet new friends, and support our students! We are still looking for volunteers for committee positions on the Northstar PTSA. These committees involve minimal time commitment but help our school and students in a BIG way.

- Staff Appreciation: **Thank our staff by helping to organize a couple of events**
- Concession Sales: **Sell pre-packaged concessions after school, a few times a semester**

Interested? Questions? Email northstarptsa@gmail.com

THANK YOU to all volunteers who helped with fall activities: Schedule Pick Up, Back to School Night, Staff Luncheon, Fall Mile Run, Fall Polar Party, attended PTSA Meetings, Concession Sales, and more!

We appreciate YOU!

UPCOMING RESTURANT FUNDRAISERS!

What better way to support Northstar than by eating food from local restaurants! Coming alongside of our school *and* local businesses is a win-win!

Dairy Queen: Tuesday, November 7, December 5, and January 2
4:00-9:00 pm at the Pinehurst location



Panera: Thursday, December 14
4:00-8:00 pm
Use the code **FUND4U** during checkout!

Fazoli's: November 1-30
Must show flyer (available on Northstar's website)



Winter & Holiday Help

This is the season for thanks and celebration in many homes. It is also the season of increased heating and clothing expenses. Coming soon on Northstar's website, there will be a “Holiday Help!” icon for more information on helpful programs in Eau Claire County.

Every organization has limited resources, so please make note of the sign-up dates and bring any necessary information to complete the application process.



Join us for our Fourth Annual

Drive-Thru, Drop Off, Donut, and Donate Event

Tuesday, Dec 12 7:00 – 7:25 am

As a part of our **Season of Giving** program and to say **THANK YOU** to our Northstar families for all your support, we invite you to drop off your student at school in the morning and enjoy a donut. If you'd like to donate, grab some loose change—all proceeds will be given to the **ECASD Homeless Program**.

Items needed for the Kitchen Cupboard!



Are you interested in donating to Northstar's Kitchen Cupboard? Please see the list below of needed items!

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Tuna | • Cheese Crackers |
| • Refried Beans | • Pop Tarts |
| • Peanut Butter | • Laundry Detergent |
| • Canned Fruit/Applesauce | • Liquid Dish Soap |
| • Soup | • Body Wash |
| • Spaghetti O's, Ravioli | • Shampoo/Conditioner |
| • Mac & Cheese | • Feminine Hygiene Products |
| • Peanut Butter Crackers | • Kleenex/Paper Towel/Toilet Paper |

Families Helping Families Kicks off November 13!

For the 24th year Northstar will reach out to make this season of giving a little brighter for many. The Season of Giving begins **Monday, Nov 13 and runs through Tuesday, Dec 12**. This year our efforts will focus on helping ECASD families in need through support of the **ECASD Homeless Program**. There will be a packet arriving in the mail with more details. We look forward to your support as we work together to make a difference for families within our school community!

QUARTER 2 DATES TO REMEMBER



November 3 End of Quarter 1
November 7 4:00-9:00 pm PTSA Dairy Queen Fundraiser (Pinehurst)
November 14 JA in a Day Field Trip—Grade 8
November 20-24 No School—Thanksgiving Break

December 5 4:00-9:00 pm PTSA Dairy Queen Fundraiser (Pinehurst)
December 6 Guthrie Field Trip—Grade 8
December 8 2:50-4:15 pm Polar Party
December 14 4:00-8:00 pm PTSA Panera Fundraiser
December 14 6:00/7:00 pm Band 7/8 Concert
December 18 7:00 pm Orchestra 7/8 Concert at North High School
December 19 6:00 pm Choir 7/8 Concert
December 23-31 No School—Winter Break

January 1-2 No School— Winter Break
January 2 4:00-9:00 pm PTSA Dairy Queen Fundraiser (Pinehurst)
January 9 6:30 pm PTSA Executive Board Meeting
January 15 No School
January 18 7:00 pm Orchestra 6 Concert @ North High School
January 19 End of Quarter 2
January 22-23 No School — Staff Workday and PL/IP Day
January 25 6:30 pm Band 6 Concert
January 29 6:00 pm Choir 6 Concert

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 1557
Eau Claire, WI 54701

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