

December 2022/January 2023

Based on Principal

Inclement Weather



I'll start this month's letter with a note about the last weather-related event, along with a reminder of what to expect in terms of communication in future weather-related events. You will likely recall that on November 29th we had a snow event that began in the early morning hours which made driving safely a bit of a challenge. Typically I would get notified by the district immediately after they make the decision as to changing the status of a school day—simply meaning deciding to cancel school or call for a late start or early dismissal. All of those decisions are made based on safety. If the superintendent of Stillwater Schools decides that traveling to and from school is unsafe or will predictably be unsafe, he or she will make the decision to delay the start of school, cancel school, or dismiss the students early enough to still get them home safely and at a reasonable time. The November 29th event was treated somewhat differently by the district for some reason, of which I am still unaware of. Many of you got notified that district schools were going to close through some form of district notification earlier than I was notified; which should not happen. Historically, I would get a phone call from a district official about their decision and then my reaction would be to post our status change in various places, and then I would notify all of our families about the status change. I am still working to make sure that the district returns to the proper order of events which would mean contacting me before releasing the notifications to the general public in order to prevent the confusion that occurred on November 29th. Hopefully it will be less chaotic next time around.

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IMPORTANT DATES

- Dec. 13—School Board Meeting 4pm
- Winter Break December 22 - January 4
- Jan. 5 — School Resumes
- Jan. 16—No School- MLK Jr. Day
- Jan. 27—End of Quarter 2/ Semester 1
- Jan. 30—No School Grading day

So, in the future, here is what I expect to happen if weather is going to impact our school day at New Heights. Moving forward, the status of New Heights is going to remain as “open” until I make a formal announcement about a status change. If any of our families get a district notification about a change of district school status, that doesn't necessarily mean that the status of New Heights is going to change. Our families should remain patient and watch for an announcement in the following places— *first, we will post our status change on the 4 local television networks Wcco 4; KSTP 5; Fox 9; KARE 11.* Next, we will post the status change on the school's website, Facebook page, JMC, and we will send a text to



Based on Principal Continued



the parent who is listed as “Primary Parent” in our system. In the event that school may be “closed” for the day, it will likely do you no good to call the school to ask because there is a good chance that none of us will make the trip into school that

day due to the safety challenges the weather event is likely causing. So, once we are given the district’s decision, we will follow suit by choosing the most appropriate option, if we have any, and we will notify our families within minutes of making the decision. You should only react to an official notice from New Heights School in order to minimize any confusion about the status change. Seeing or receiving a notification from Stillwater District can be used as a tool to predict that you will likely get notice from New Heights soon, but you should not automatically believe that the options available to New Heights are the exact same as those available to the district—they are not exactly the same.

Finally, you may be wondering what you should do as a parent if you have concerns about safety. New Heights has always maintained the position that parents should always make the decision that seems best or most appropriate for your family in weather-related situations. All families do not have the same distances to travel to and from school, have the same type of vehicles, have the same flexibility to miss work, or, there may be other things to consider when wondering whether or not to send your children to school. To put more clearly, if you are concerned about safety when it comes to sending your children to school, driving them to school, allowing them to walk to school, or allowing them to drive themselves to school, you should probably consider keeping them home. Students who stay home due to legitimate weather-related safety reasons are not given any attendance-related consequences whatsoever. We will understand why you chose to keep your children home and we will not question it. Simply call the school and leave a message on the answering service if you are not able to speak with someone directly to let them know about your decision. In the end, we prefer for our students to be

safe. Missing a day of school in the name of safety makes the most sense of all of the other alternatives. Hopefully this section will be read by all of our parents and we further hope that you will find this information somewhat helpful.

Official School Hours

As a reminder, the official hours of operation for New Heights on school days are 8 am to 4 pm. We do not have a before school or after school program or daycare, so we ask that students not arrive at school until 8:45, and in cases where parents pick their children up after school we ask that they are responsible to get them by 4pm. In the event



that a parent runs into difficulty and they know they are going to be late, kindly call the school and notify them that you will be late along with your ETA and we will ensure that your children will be able to wait in a safe and supervised area. With regard to early arrival in the mornings, staff generally report to school at 8am, but teachers have very little time to prepare for the upcoming day. The hour prior to school is reserved for teachers to prepare for the day and also for meeting with one another as a staff, which means the teachers are generally not available to supervise children until 8:45. Of course, in isolated circumstances, we will work with you and allow for an occasional early drop-off due to an unusual circumstance, but families should not routinely drop children off ahead of 8:45 unless special arrangements have been made.

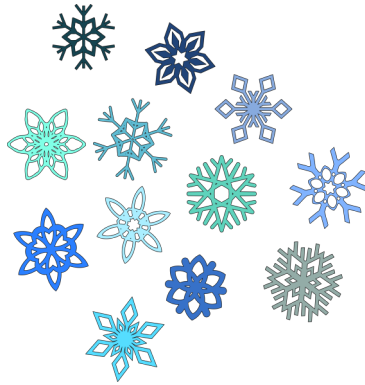
Casual Early Release and Tardy to School

Parents are reminded that children are required by law to attend school until 18 years of age. One of the reasons the school calendar looks like it does is to ensure that schools offer the required number of hours that students are expected to be in school. When students aren’t in school at the minimum prescribed rate, the government

Check out New Heights Academic Honors on Page 4!

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expects school leaders to work with families to fix the issue or submit a truancy report and get the local county involved. So, school is not intended to be a casual experience. It is more accurate to consider the school experience as a responsibility or requirement. Therefore, I want to remind families that students enrolled at New Heights are expected to maintain a level of 90% or higher rate of attendance in all classes they are scheduled for. It is not a good practice to routinely drop off late or pick students up early unless there is an appointment, illness, important family matter, or other critical business to attend to. Late drop offs or early dismissal for convenience sake will not be considered as an excused absence and unexcused absences can have a negative impact on learning and grades. Please remember that school is the training center for the world of work and attendance is one of areas that employers deem as being high on the list of importance. Students are building important habits now and they will do better to think of school as important and necessary, and attending school day on time and staying at school for the entire scheduled day is among the core values in place at New Heights. Feel free to call if you have questions about this topic, or any topic in this month's newsletter.



End of Semester 1 and Quarter 2

The school year is divided into sections; 4 quarters and 2 semesters. Students in grades K-5 receive progress reports or report cards at the end of each quarter. Students in grades 6-12 will also receive quarterly reports, but the official grade is based on a semester or half a school year. Quarter 1 and 2 combine into one semester grade and for students in grades 9-12, they will receive semester credit needed to graduate from high school with a diploma. The end of quarter 2 and semester 1 will be January 27th. That is important to know because that means that students will have 3 weeks after winter break to make sure to complete enough work in each class in order to pass their classes in grades 6-12. Attendance at our fall conference day was low this year, so hopefully parents are checking the JMC Family Access portal to monitor your child's grades and make the necessary arrangements in time to ensure that your child can and will pass his or her classes. You can also email individual teachers if you have questions.

Tom Kearney—Principal



BREAKFAST REMINDER:

Breakfast items will be available from **8:45am—9:00am** in the school cafeteria.

In the case of late buses, exceptions will be made to allow students to eat.



LUNCH REMINDER:

Lunch is ordered during Homeroom each day (from 9:05am to 9:25am) each morning. **If your student will be arriving after 9:05am, please call to inform the office of BOTH the late arrival and your child's lunch order for the day.**

Academic Honors for 1st Quarter



PRINCIPAL'S AWARD

Students with an A in all 6 classes are recognized as Principal's Award Students.



Alaina Aldrich (7th Grade)	Derek Kirby (9th Grade)	Camden Briggs (12th Grade)
Dan VanDyke (7th Grade)	Gus Campbell (10th Grade)	Kyle Brown (12th Grade)
Evelyn Axelrod (8th Grade)	Mariam Campbell (10th Grade)	Emily Busta (12th Grade)
Ellen Gruba (8th Grade)	Emily Mai (10th Grade)	Sierra Haskins (12th Grade)
Cody Siewert (8th Grade)	Jocelyn Schmidt (10th Grade)	Kolby Warrington (12th Grade)
Maria Costilla (9th Grade)	Abbie Bell (11th Grade)	Brady Wegge (12th Grade)
Elizabeth Granlund (9th Grade)	Andre Maruska (11th Grade)	

HONOR ROLL

Students with a Grade Point Average of 3.5 or above are recognized as students on the Honor Roll.

Katrina Collette (6th Grade)	Alisa Collette (8th Grade)	Brooke Hatch (9th Grade)
Bentley Radinzel (6th Grade)	Cora Harding (8th Grade)	Jillian Briggs (11th Grade)
Landon Stilwagon (6th Grade)	Desirae Larson (8th Grade)	Amanda Augustine (12th Grade)
Tyler Mathias (7th Grade)	Gavin Braun (9th Grade)	Kyle Brown (12th Grade)
Max Mogel (7th Grade)	Eloise Campbell (9th Grade)	Zander Harper (12th Grade)



HONORABLE MENTION

Students with a Grade Point Average of between 3.0 and 3.49 and did not receive any D's or F's will be recognized as an Honorable Mention.

Donnie Blackwell (6th Grade)	Brian Standfest (9th Grade)	Vannessa Koeckeritz (11th Grade)
Abrianna Bell (7th Grade)	Paxton Olson-Carlson (10th Grade)	Josh Murphy (11th Grade)
Darianna Lange (7th Grade)	Donovan Perez (10th Grade)	Haley Collmar (12th Grade)
Isayah Foley (8th Grade)	James Schuster (10th Grade)	Madison Drum (12th Grade)
Alexander LeTourneau (8th Grade)	Mathew Granlund (11th Grade)	Johnathan Olafson (12th Grade)
Hannah Bruno (9th Grade)		Cassidy Plank (12th Grade)



New Teacher Feature:

MRS. LARSON

Secondary Social Studies Teacher

1. What inspired you to become a teacher?

Ever since I was young, I loved reading and learning. I especially enjoyed learning all I could about history. As a student, I had many amazing social studies teachers, such as Mr. Tviet for 6th grade Minnesota history, who also taught my dad! These teachers made me want to help teach and inspire students just like they did.

2. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

I would say the two things I enjoy the most about teaching are building positive relationships and seeing students really engage with the content.

3. What is the most exciting thing you've ever done?

The most exciting thing I've done was traveling to Ireland, Wales, Britain, and France on a school trip the summer after I graduated high school in 2017. A few highlights of that trip were visiting the Sherlock Holmes Museum, Shakespeare's birthplace, and staying in a supposedly haunted hotel room in Wales!

4. What is something people would be surprised to know about you?

I was hospitalized with a large blood clot in my left leg when I was only 21. This led to me discovering that I have a genetic blood clotting disorder called Factor V Leiden. It is a very common disorder, and many people can live their whole lives without it causing any issues, which is why they may not know they have it.

5. What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

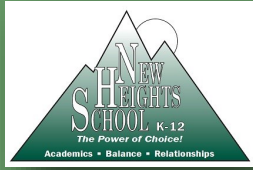
When I have free time, I enjoy reading, listening to podcasts, singing, going on walks, spending time with family and friends, and hanging out at home with my husband and our two cats.









The ACT is a standardized test that measures a student's skills in five core areas: English, math, reading, science, and writing (optional). Students in grades 11 and 12 take the ACT so that they can submit their scores to colleges as part of the college application process. If your student is interested in taking the ACT this spring, please reach out to Mrs. Massmann at: Amassmann@newheightsschool.org to register.

The test will cost \$64.

(If you are enrolled in the Free/Reduced Lunch Program there are options for reimbursement.)



December Monthly Planner

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 	12	13 Board of Directors Meeting 4 pm	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24 
25 	26	27	28	29	30	31 

Winter Break
~ No School

Winter Break~ No School Dec. 22– Jan. 4



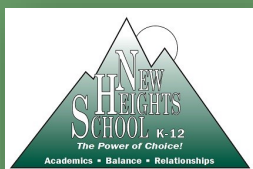
School resumes: Thursday January 5th!

No School: Monday, January 16th—MLK Jr. day

End of Quarter 2/Semester 1: January 27th

No School: Monday, January 30th—Grading Day





January Monthly Planner

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 	2 	3	4	5 School Resumes!	6	7
8	9	10 Elementary FAST Test <i>Math</i>	11 Elementary FAST Test <i>Reading</i>	12 Elementary FAST Test <i>Make-up Day</i>	13	14
15 	16 No School MLK Jr. Day	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 Grades 6-12 FAST Test <i>Math</i>	25 Grades 6-12 FAST Test <i>Reading</i>	26 Grades 6-12 FAST Test <i>Make-up Day</i>	27 End of Quarter 2/ Semester 1	28
29 	30 No School Grading Day	31				



Upcoming Events:

February 17th—No School (Staff Day)

February 20th—No School (President's Day)

