



The Polaris Guide



Polaris Expeditionary Learning School
December 2018

K-12 **K-5** **6-12**

12/6*

Elementary Art Gallery
Open All Day
Flex Room

12/7

K – 1st Grade Celebration of
Learning
2:15

12/7*

K – 5 Movie Night
4:00 – 6:00PM

12/7*

Middle School Movie Night
6:30 – 8:30PM

12/12*

Secondary Open House &
Celebration of Learning
Open House: 5:00 – 5:30
COL: 5:30 – 7:30

12/18

2nd & 3rd Grade Celebration
of Learning
6:00 PM

12/20

Last day of Quarter/Semester

1/7

Start of Quarter 3 for
ELEMENTARY ONLY

1/8

Start of Quarter 3 for
SECONDARY STUDENTS

* More information within

Dear Polaris Community,

For those of you who have been a part of our community for a while you may notice some familiarity within this opening December newsletter “blurb.” The reason for the re-boot of this blurb at this time of year is not to rest on any laurels; instead, it is meant to remind us of the unique trends that we witness around the holiday season.

The end of first semester is approaching quickly, and with it brings the holiday season. In many ways, it’s time for family, reflection, and renewed commitments. For many it’s a time to celebrate.

In my twenty-two years of education I have also noticed that the holiday season could be a time when students experience additional stress, exhaustion, and sometimes guilt. The reasons for these “not so pleasant” holiday feelings can be as varied as our entire student population. For some, the end of a grading period can be daunting as is. Add in a holiday performance here and there, coupled with the additional rehearsals or practices, and you’ve now got a child who may be burning the candle at both ends. Exhaustion on a child’s part requires patience on the adult’s part.

Additionally, there may be students feeling the pressure within their families of “hitting a home run” during the holiday season. Displays of gratitude and love through the act of gift-giving may be compromised due to various economic situations families may find themselves in. Although some may want to give the moon, stars and the sun, they may be finding it difficult to do so due to their current resource capabilities.

My intention here is not to be a holiday downer by any means; rather, I would like to relay to you some common patterns of behaviors we see within the school throughout our student body at this time of year. By involving the community in this dialogue, I hope that we can remind our children all that there is much to be thankful for, things that can’t be purchased at Best Buy or be returned with a receipt, things that truly add value to our lives.

Along with reminding our children there is much to be thankful for, I’d also ask that we be more mindful of what a child may be experiencing during these times. Because the stress levels of various students may increase, it’s up to us as the adults to listen intently, to be hard on any given issue but not the person, and to reassure our kids that the best gift of all is to express our appreciation to those who we care about.

I genuinely wish you all a happy holiday season, one that is restful, rewarding, and filled with quality family time.

Sincerely,
Joe Gawronski

SECTION 1: K-12 News/Info

Secondary Celebration of Learning AND Open House December 12th!

To provide our prospective Polaris families the most accurate information possible so that they can make an informed decision, we thought it would be beneficial to merge our Open House with our Celebration of Learning.

The Open House will take place in the gym and go from 5:00 – 5:30. Joe Gawronski will give a broad overview to our prospective families of the Expeditionary Learning Model as well as insights into how Polaris has implemented the model. Please, if you know of families that are interested in our program, let them know that Dec. 12th is an important date if they'd like to learn more about what Polaris has to offer.

Our visiting families will then be invited to join our current Polaris families as students engage our visitors in what learning they have delved into this past semester. We could use your support as parents to encourage your children to help present that evening. Students can help present with one or two different teachers if they'd like. The Open House / Celebration of Learning evening should conclude at 7:30 or so.

Our Celebration of Learning is important within our EL community. We do not have sporting events, concert performances, or theatrical productions; what we do have is a passion for learning, and we hope that this event showcases that passion.

Determining Polaris' Available Space for 2019 Enrollment

If you are considering a different school for your child for the fall of 2019, please let us know of your intentions as soon as possible. We understand that the decision to move schools may not be formalized yet, but if you're certain that a move is imminent, please let us know so we can plan accordingly.

The District process for School of Choice requires schools to identifying the number of seats they'll have available for the 2019 school-year PRIOR to the School of Choice deadlines in January.

Students currently enrolled at Polaris do not have to go through the School of Choice Process at any grade level.

Yoga Volunteer Instructors Needed!

Please [fill out this form](#) if you are interested in being a volunteer Yoga Instructor in Sarah Bayer's Mindfulness Class.

Every Friday students will complete a Yoga Class as a part of our health curriculum. Mindfulness Class Meets 2nd Period from 9:30-10:53. Classes will be held in the Polaris Flex Room. We are looking for instructors to volunteer once during our 3rd quarter (January- March) and once during 4th quarter. A separate email will be sent out with specifics and dates.

Thank you for taking the time to inquire about volunteering!

If you have any questions, please contact Sarah Bayer, sbayer@psdschools.org

Service Learning Project

The second and third graders are facilitating a service learning project to help children in need during the cold winter months. We are teaming up with Scholastic to give to the Pajama Drive organization. If you are able, please donate new, warm, and complete pajama sets to help children in need get a good night sleep. For every pajama we donate, Scholastic will donate a book so that each child can read a book in their cozy pajamas before bed. These pajamas and books will be passed to a local organization to help our own community. Our goal is to give 100 pajamas, so please help us reach it by December 12th! Thank you very much for your generosity.

Lost & Found Pick Up

If you have a moment between now and Dec. 20th to come in and look through the lost and found items that would be greatly appreciated. Any items that are not claimed will be donated to our gear closet or to Goodwill on Dec. 21st.

Polaris Facebook

If you have an interest to keep up with the many exciting things going on during any given day/week here at Polaris we'd encourage you to "like" us on [Facebook](#).

Feel free to "share" with friends once you're there and perusing through all the engaging photos.

Attendance Calls

If your child is absent, please call the attendance line at 488-8261. In doing so, we can keep our live lines open for any emergency calls we may need to field at any given moment.

With regards to attendance we have included in this month's newsletter an attachment reminding families of the guidelines PSD uses to determine if they should keep their child home on any given day.

Box Tops Are for All Penguins

The November 1 submission went out with 1,689 BoxTops. Our school will receive a check for \$276 (\$168.90 + \$107.10 that was submitted in June). Nice job, Penguins!

Please remember that the money from BoxTops benefits students and teachers at all grade levels, K-12. So this is a reminder to ALL families to clip away. There is a collection bin in the elementary hall but secondary families can also hand them to Danise at the front desk. Let's see if we can collect 2,500 for the March 1 submission and reach our goal of \$500 this year.

Have a great holiday season!"

Polaris Movie Night, Dec 7th!

Polaris leadership class is hosting a holiday movie night on December 7th! We will be showing The Polar Express for elementary school from 4:00 – 6:00 and Elf for middle school from 6:30-8:30. Entry is \$5. Refreshments will be for sale. Also, enter for a chance to win some sweet prizes in our sweepstakes! - only 50 cents per entry. Parents and siblings welcome. All profits benefit local charities.

Polari-Palooza Sponsors Needed

Your elementary PTO is planning a rip-roaring Polari-Palooza event on Saturday, March 9 at Wolverine Farm. This fun evening will include socializing and fundraising, with good food and drinks, live music and auctions. Please help us put together a great event. We are currently seeking corporate sponsors if you can help ask local businesses for support. We are also looking for musicians, caterers and silent auction donations. Email us at PTO4polaris@gmail.com if you can help.

SECTION 2: Elementary News/Info

Donate to Polaris

As you are making year-end contributions and donating for Colorado Gives Day, please consider donating to the Polaris PTO. You can bring a check or cash to the office, or donate through your SchoolPay account. As a reminder, so far this year, the PTO has funded:

- iPads for each elementary classroom
- 50 percent of the cost for the grade 4/5 Eco-Week trip
- Classroom books
- New playground toys
- Running club supplies
- Fun Night materials and supplies

Polaris Elementary Art Show

The CSU Art students will be collecting and showcasing the K-5 student work in the Flex Room all day on Dec 6th. Please come and appreciate all the creativity that went into these pieces of work during the first semester.

Winter Weather Recess Policy

We have recently updated our "Weather Policy" for Polaris elementary students. Please review the details below:

- Outdoor recess occurs when the "feels-like" temperature is 10 degrees or above according to the Weather Channel app for Fort Collins
- Indoor recess occurs when the "feels-like" temperature is below 10 degrees, or during inclement weather such as heavy rain or lightning.

Please support your students and our policy by ensuring that they are properly prepared for the weather each day. Unless the circumstances are

extreme, we will require all students to go outside for outdoor recess regardless of their level of preparation.

SECTION 3: Secondary News/Info

Middle School Tutoring!

Middle school study hall is on Mondays after school from 3:20-4:30 in Brenda's room (134). This is a great opportunity for your student to finish work, complete revisions, ask questions, and/or get extra help.

Please contact Brenda for more information, with questions, or to let her know to expect your student. bcisnero@psdschools.org

Parent Action Crew News

The December PAC Meeting will be held Tuesday, December 11th from 7-8 PM at the Purple Cup Cafe. Please come a few minutes early and grab

a warm drink or snack and show your gratitude to The Purple Cup for their continued support of PAC and Polaris! ☺👤

Opportunity for Our Photographers!

The Scholastic photo submissions are due on December 7, 2018. Any students in grades 7-12 can submit jpeg photographs to be considered in the 2018-2019 Scholastic competition. Send jpegs electronically to abol@psdschools.org. Students will be notified if their photo(s) are selected for submission by December 10 and will be asked to fill out an electronic application.