



Panther Press

"We Can't Hide Our Prairie Pride"

www.ycs.wednet.edu-Prairie

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From the Principal's Desk ...



Dear Prairie Families,

Naoko Sokolik's journey from Japan to Yelm began her junior year in High School as a foreign exchange student on Mercer Island. This extended to her senior year; and much to her family's dismay undergraduate study at WSU, a MA at Central, and even though she was accepted into the PhD program at UW, she opted for an "Mrs." degree instead and married a local teacher and fellow musician, Joe Sokolik. She began her teaching career eight years ago at Prairie Elementary.

During this time, she has extended herself beyond the general education music classes she teaches by creating an after school choir. She has molded this choir into a top-notch elementary vocal group. These fourth through sixth graders have performed at the Japanese Cherry Blossom Festival in Seattle, the Washington State Sister State Celebration at the Capital in Olympia, the Home and Garden shows in Yelm, Japanese New Year Celebration in Olympia, local nursing homes, YCS Music Festivals, the Yelm School Board. Most recently, they have been invited to Japan in September as Washington State Goodwill ambassadors, along with Governor Jay Inslee, to perform at the Sister State ceremony hosted by the Hyogo Prefecture.

In addition to her grade level productions, Naoko established two significant annual events at Prairie. The Fall Music Festival is a school-wide competition between classes. Each class performs one common song and one original piece. Students are responsible for props, costumes, choreography and any special performance features. The students are judged on a rubric by a guest panel of judges (which have included superintendents, professional musicians and even a Japanese consulate). A few years ago, to fend off the many requests for a school "Talent Show" Naoko cleverly created a "Musical Showcase Night". This night provides an opportunity for individual students to perform polished vocal or instrumental performances. The nominal fee charged helps support choir travel expenses.

Naoko shares her musical talents in many ways. She performs with the Olympia Symphony as a percussionist. She is often asked to accompany performers at local competitions for different studios or competitions by private teachers. She mentors past and present Prairie students to participate in singing and instrumental competitions. This year she wrote an original opera that had it's debut performance at the Japanese Cherry Blossom Festival by our own Prairie choir. She established the first Japanese/American Elementary Sister School relationship with an elementary school in Japan. When she visited them last summer to deliver letters and pictures, she ended up as a guest on a local TV talk show.

Naoko once told me that she has a dream, a big dream to help bridge the cultural gap between Japan and her students in Yelm. Through her tenacity and her non-stop work ethic, she is making her dream a reality.

Congratulations to Naoko Sokolik, Yelm Community Schools' Teacher of the Year!

Happy Friday!

Debbie McLaren



Upcoming Calendar



Monday, June 8

- 9:15 a.m.—Kinders to Olympia Hands on Children's Museum. Return approximately 1:45 p.m.
- 10 a.m.—Sixth grade Bowling Rewards trip. Return by 2 p.m.
- 7 p.m.—Kindergarten evening program. Please have your student arrive by 6:40 p.m.

Tuesday, June 9

- 9 a.m.—Kinder Field Trip to Fort Lewis Fire Department.
- 2 p.m.—P.R.I.D.E. Gold Star Party. *Ask your student if they received their "gold" star if they are in grades 3—6.*
- 6:30 p.m.—Sixth grade Music/Goodbye Program.

Wednesday, June 10

- 10:15 a.m.—Mike McGowan to share information with grades 1-6 on Timberland Library's summer reading program.

Thursday, June 11

- Regular day of school.

Friday, June 12

- 8:45 a.m.—End of the Year Awards Assembly. All are invited to attend.
- Last day of school, students released at 11:35 a.m.



Students of the Week

Second Grade:

Cassidy Krohn, Kaya Roberts, and Sage Rough.

Third Grade:

Johnes Peterson.

Fourth Grade:

Parker Huntingford, Olivia Jackson and Kaiden Mathers.

Fifth Grade:

Coltin Munkirs.



Prairie Elementary

Top 10 Sixth Grade Students

Our Top 10 Sixth grade students were recognized at the School Board End of the Year Awards Ceremony last night. Congratulations to:

Hunter Acosta

Kelan Herness

Kayla Joiner

Brendan Kortjoh

Benjamin Remick

Hailey Germeau

Martha Hill

Joseph Keenan

Taylor Oravsky

Elizabeth Weiser



Summer Office Hours

June 13—June 30:

Our office is open Monday through Friday
7:30 a.m.—3 p.m.

The office is closed for lunch from 12—12:30 p.m.

Our office is closed July 1—August 10, 2015.

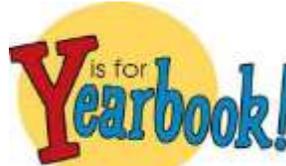
Summer Office Hours Resume:

August 11—21st, Monday through Friday
7:30 a.m.—3 p.m.

Office closed for lunch from 12—12:30 p.m.

Regular Office Hours Resume:

August 24, 2015—June 16, 2016
7:45 a.m.—4 p.m.



Yearbooks will be distributed at the end of the day on Wednesday, June 10th!

Student Registration for 2015-16 ...

We are accepting student registrations for next school year. Do you have new neighbors? Or friends new to the area? Let them know that now is the time to register! We are currently forming classes for next year soon and would love to know their student will be coming.

Incoming kinders must be five years old on or before August 31, 2015. Please bring the following when registering a new student:

- Child's birth certificate
- Proof of residency
- immunization records



Lost and Found

Last call ... lots of items in our Lost and Found! Please stop by to see what belongs to your student. We have tried to get items back to their owners by laying them throughout our hallways and hanging them in our foyer. It is amazing the numbers of items collected on a daily basis. Remaining items will be donated to a local charity if not claimed by Wednesday, June 17th!

Last Day of School
Friday, June 12th

Students released at
11:35 a.m.

