

The Hedgehog Herald

Van Hise Elementary Monthly Newsletter

December 2023

NEXT PTO MEETING: Tuesday, December 12th at 6:30 pm. IN PERSON @ VHE in the library with Zoom option. Link [HERE](#).

This is a long email! Make sure to expand your email to view the whole message. You'll see a singing hedgehog at the end!



www.VanHisePTO.org



Thank You Families A Message from Principal Stein

Over the next weeks, we often reflect on our thanksgivings in life. I am incredibly thankful to all of you for the past 5 months and the kindness you have shown to me and my family. Being able to work with your children whether it is in a classroom or at recess has been some of my highlights! Hearing their stories of what they are most eager to tell through dramatic storytelling or in their writing, hearing the ongoing "Hi Ms. Stein" in the morning, and the hugs throughout the day truly makes this the best profession! What a wonderful life! Thank you!

-Love, Ms. Stein

Van Hise School Improvement Plan 2023-24

Over the summer and over the past months, VHE's staff have been continuously working at getting better at getting better. This includes setting specific goals that measure our success along with specific strategies and actionable steps. My school building leadership team's main purpose is to lift the work that we do daily to ensure that our focus stays our focus, and lead our colleagues to continue to strive for excellence. The members of my fabulous team who work to improve our systems include Jessy Gamez (Instructional Coach), Jennifer Follett (Library Specialist), Kirsten Gyorkos (Learning Specialist/CC Teacher), Becka Robbins (5K), Sana Khaja (1st), Dixie Lane (2nd), Andrea Nelson (3rd), Sally Lugwig (4th), Katie Mahr (5th), Chanel Thomas (Behavioral & Special Education Assistant), Lauri Ysen (School Nurse), and Tara Salzwedel (School Psychologist).



This year we have 3 main goal areas that align to MMSD's Improvement Efforts across all schools:

- 1) Increase student proficiency in literacy and mathematics for all students.
- 2) Increase student achievement of our Black/African-American students in literacy and mathematics.
- 3) Improve our attendance rates.

In addition to these main areas of improvement, VHE elected to add another goal for staff:

- 4) Improve the climate and culture of our school.

Through a collaborative process looking at data and setting high expectations for both students and staff, our team developed our plan together with our VHE staff. Our goals are rigorous, and we look monthly at the progress monitoring data to determine if our strategies are working. We had our quarterly review this past month and overall we are on track to meet our goals. Please see more of our specific goals and strategies on our webpage at <https://vanhise.madison.k12.wi.us/about-us/school-improvement-plan-sip>



New Building Schedule for All Grade Levels

When we look to make our school environment more supportive of our children to thrive, it is important that our times for lunch reflect our core beliefs and commitments as well. With sharing a cafeteria that was not designed to hold both Middle School and Elementary students, it was evident that we needed to make some drastic changes.

Over the last months I have worked with Tamara Mouw, Hamilton Middle School's Principal, along with several others on options to make our time for lunches safer and a place where students can calmly eat while socializing. This has led me to recreate our VHE's Master Building Schedule; it is never too late to make changes that are better for our students and staff. As one of the many positive changes this schedule brings, I have identified specific times that only our elementary students will be in the cafeteria (not shared with middle school levels), and two grade levels will eat at each designated time. You will be receiving a new schedule from your classroom teacher that will indicate what each child's day will look like while at school. This schedule will take effect once we return to school from our winter break supporting an already established break in our routine.



PrinciPALs with Mr. Lynch

Mr. Lynch also serves as one of our Positive Behavior Specialists within our Van Hise School. One of his roles this year is leading our 5th grade Hedgie Wheelers subgroup with PrinciPALs. The Hedgie Wheelers are responsible for this recognition system that includes building wide goals and celebrations!

Here's how it works: When students are seen demonstrating kindness or outstanding character, their name will be added to the Hedgie Wheel. As the wheel fills up with the names of these remarkable individuals, the entire school moves one step closer to a spectacular all-school recognition. The Hedgie Wheel is not just a recognition system; it's a collective journey toward a shared goal of fostering a positive and supportive school community. We believe that by acknowledging and celebrating acts of kindness, we can create a ripple effect that enriches the experiences of everyone at Van Hise.

Get ready to spin the wheel of kindness and let the spirit of generosity and good character flourish at Van Hise! Together, we can achieve amazing things!

Events at a Glance | DECEMBER

DEC 12

PTO MEETING
6:30 in the VHE Library
Zoom Link [HERE](#)

DEC 20 - JAN 2

WINTER BREAK



THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who has contributed this school year. Whether you've given your time, made goodies or gathered donations, shared kind words, or helped support our Hedgies at home or school, we appreciate you!

We want to express gratitude, also, to all those who were able to donate to this year's Direct Appeal. The donations

the PTO received will make many special programs possible.

Thank you to classroom representatives who are busy coordinating additional ways of showing our thanks to staff before we leave for winter break.



We Welcome YOU!

Our monthly PTO Meeting is coming up on Tuesday, December 12th.

We will continue our process of having updates from the PTO and Principal Stein in the first 30 minutes, with a Zoom option. We will then move to in-person only discussion and work on upcoming events and coordination needs (including Spring events like the Carnival).

- Please send any questions by Sunday, 12/10.
- Let us know by 12/10 if you may need child care at the meeting (PTO provides free of charge to families).

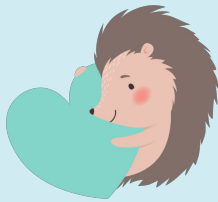
As always, check out our website at www.vanhisepto.org for up to date news.



Van Hise Community Food Drive

December 4th - December 15th

Kindergarten is EXCITED to sponsor our annual food drive benefiting The River Food Pantry. Bring factory-sealed items to school from December 4th-December 15th to earn points for your classroom. All food items earn your classroom one point per package and hygiene items are two points per package. The classroom who earns the most points through their donations wins a class popcorn party! We can't wait to see how many families we will help with our food drive!



Wellness and Supporting our Children When Not Feeling Well

Message from Nurse [Lauri Ysen](#)

Is Your Child Well Enough To Go To School? It is not always easy to decide if your child is sick enough to stay home or well enough to be in school. Children who come to school are expected, with few exceptions, to participate fully in school activities.

Here are some guidelines that might help in a parent's decision-making:

Fever:

A fever of 100.4 degrees or more signals an illness that is probably going to make a student uncomfortable and unable to function well in class. Your child should stay home until his or her temperature is less than 100.4 degrees for 24 hours without fever reducing medication and he/she is feeling better.

Vomiting or Diarrhea:

These are symptoms that require a student to remain at home until they have not vomited or had diarrhea for 24 hours.

Infectious Diseases: Students that test positive for Covid 19 are required to isolate at home for 5 days. Diseases such as impetigo and strep throat may require a health care provider's visits and prescription for medication. Please reach out to the health

office if these situations arise and you have questions.

Injuries: Injuries that interfere with class participation need a medical evaluation. If participation in physical education class is not recommended, a health care provider's excuse is required.

Medications: If your child needs any type of medication during the school day, it needs to be given in the health office. MMSD policy also requires parent and physician written permission in order to give medication at school. This includes all over the counter medications (Tylenol), even cough drops!

Please feel free to stop in or call us whenever you have a health question or concern. The number for the health office is 204-4632 or 204-4631.

Lauri Ysen RN, School Nurse laysen@madison.k12.wi.us
Dawn Lawler, Nursing Assistant dalawler@madison.k12.wi.us

The staff at Van Hise Elementary School are excited to welcome our children daily! We plan for daily learning opportunities that allow each and every child to be engaged and grow!

Getting into the habit of daily attendance is more important than ever. It helps to:

- reduce stress
- make it easier to connect with friends and teachers
- support learning
- allows for predictability and planning

We are working to make our school environment a place where everyone can be safe, healthy and learning. We will do our best to listen and partner with you so that our children have a successful year. Please make sure we have your correct email and the best phone numbers where we can reach you. Do not hesitate to reach out to me with questions or concerns. 608.204.4800

Donation Requests

Our school social worker, Ms. McNett, has asked for donations of the following to have on hand for Hedge families:



Gift Card Donations:

- Grocery (Walmart, Target, Kroger, etc.)
- Gas (such as Kwik Trip)
- These can be dropped off in the office c/o Molly McNett

Higher Protein Snacks

- Such as beef sticks, cheese sticks, hummus
- These can be dropped off in the office c/o Molly McNett

Winter Gear

- Mittens
- Hats
- There is a bin just inside the main doors (#6) for donated items.

Health Office - Underwear

- Sizes for 1st-5th graders. (They do not need kindergarten sizes.)



After School Classes

It is busy in the PTO After School Program! Fall Session ends on December 19th.

Winter and Spring registration opens soon, so mark you

calendars. There are lots of great class options. You can see a list on our website now - with more details on our registration platform, Popsicle, available when registration opens. Head to the After School page for details, FAQ, and a link to Popsicle.

Registration 12/11 @ noon - 12/18 @ 9:00 pm
<https://www.vanhisepto.org/after-school-classes>



Make Sure to Check Lost & Found!

Has your child lost any personal items at school? Make sure you or your child check the Lost and Found before break. Over the school break, all remaining items will be washed and donated. Thanks, and we hope you find all your things!

Hedgie Store

Our Hedgie store is open now through December 13th! It will close on the 13th to ensure that orders can be delivered by the end of the year. Head to our website (www.vanhisepto.org) to find it in the menu, or head there Directly. There are lots of great items to choose from - for your child or family member or friend who wants to show their VHE spirit!



Hedgie Store



Playground and Lunch Volunteers

The PTO helps out with extra eyes and hands on the playground and in the lunch room. Consider volunteering for a 30 minute time slot. Volunteers check in at the office and receive a vest. Remember: to volunteer, you must have completed the MMSD steps to become an "Approved Volunteer" ([see the MMSD volunteer page for information](#)).

Head to the Volunteering page on our website to find the sign up links! January sign-up links for the cafeteria and playground will be posted soon!

**PTO Volunteer
Page**



Sign Up to Help with the Spring Carnival

The VHE Carnival is BACK! We are so excited to have this much loved event taking place. The 2024 Carnival will be Friday, April 26 from 4:30pm - 7:30pm. This is such a fun and wonderful event, but it takes a lot of volunteers to make it happen.

We are currently looking volunteers to lead our various carnival committees. Food, Prizes, Games, Facility Maintenance/Floaters, Raffle

Carnival Committee Sign Up

Interested in Substitute Teaching?



Consider working as a substitute for the District.

You can choose to only be available for assignments at Van Hise Elementary. More information about substitute teaching is available [HERE](#).

Coming Up..

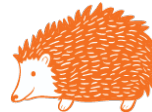
Just to get you ready, here are some important things coming in January and beyond. We will send details as we get closer to the events.

- Shake Shack Fundraiser: January 16; code TBD
- Just Coffee Fundraiser: January 8 – 18 order period
- Carnival: April 26



You've reached the end. We hope to see you Tuesday, 12/12 at the PTO meeting! Check www.vanhisepto.org for updates.

VAN HISE PTO
ELEMENTARY



Van Hise Elementary | 246 South Segoe Road, Madison, WI 53705

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