

January 2021

**NEXT PTO MEETING: Tuesday, January 12 at 6:30 pm via [Zoom](#)**

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



## Principal Seidl's Spotlight

### Stronger Together in 2020-21

It is a gallery of Hedgies as we enjoy the beauty that January brings to our neighborhood! The frosty trees and grasses are nothing short of breathtaking. I hope that your winter break included time to enjoy the beauty of nature as well as a tour of hedgies located across our neighborhoods. Thank you to those who have participated in this gallery walk and please know that I am continuing to tour our streets, looking for hedgies throughout January. Feel free to send me yours!



### As we returned to school this week, many events have unfolded.

The unpredictability, violence and injustice we are witnessing may leave some of us stressed and feeling helpless. Please know that now, perhaps more than ever, we are grateful for your partnership with us in coming together as a Van Hise community. We are working to maintain a sense of predictability and consistency that helps everyone - our students, our families and our own selves - cope.

We have and will continue to work on focusing on supporting our students and helping them make sense of all that is taking place. Included in this newsletter are resources for your consideration. **Here is a summary of the advice shared by Neha Chaudhary, MD, child psychiatrist, excellent reminders for everyone:**

- Limit kids' exposure to media
- Provide reassurance and make sure children know they are safe
- Talk about wrong actions over labeling people as bad (the latter is confusing for kids)
- Give them the space to ask questions

We will continue to be a support for our community as we move forward in 2021. Please feel free to reach out to myself or your child's teacher if you have any concerns about your hedgie.

## **In addition to the National events, we have also been working on re-entry planning as we came to the new calendar year.**

Earlier today we learned that Dr. Jenkins announced that **our district is remaining virtual for the start of Quarter 3**. Please know that at Van Hise, a re-entry team was developed prior to winter break with teachers and staff across the school, and our planning has been and will continue to be ongoing. This team uses district resources to guide our school in preparing for students' return. We will continue to meet to support the learning and growth of all of our hedgies - virtual or in-person!

## **Understandably, there are many questions that we all hold about returning to school.**

In today's announcement from MMSD Superintendent Dr. Jenkins, we learned that all grade levels will continue with virtual learning as we start the 3rd quarter. We will continue to work with district and community health experts to inform our re-entry plan when it is deemed safe to return in-person.

The upcoming January PTO meeting on **Tuesday, January 12 at 6:30 PM** ([Join Zoom Meeting](#)) will be devoted to sharing what current information I have and receiving your questions, concerns and feedback. Many of the details are under development but I welcome the opportunity to hear your thoughts as we move forward with our unprecedented 2020-21 school year and all that it brings!

Additionally, MMSD will hold a Facebook Livestream on **January 14, from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.** to answer your questions. Members of their health expert advisory panel will be on hand to share insights and answer questions. To participate in the livestream, you can follow this link: [MMSD 3rd Quarter Facebook Livestream](#).

## **We are quickly approaching the mid-way point of this school year.**

In addition to re-entry planning, this is a time when our **teachers have been working to share feedback with families about their child's learning and progress towards grade level expectations**. In typical years, you would receive a report card with performance indicators to report your child's progress. This year, we are shifting our report card format to share a narrative with you and your child to offer feedback that celebrates their learning and growth. The report card narrative will share celebrations of specific learning and growth in the areas of literacy and math. We believe that during this time of virtual learning it is essential that we take the time to celebrate all that students engage in and the progress they are making!

The **report cards will be mailed to all families on February 8th**. Upon receiving the report card, please take this as an opportunity to celebrate with your child, wherever they are in their learning journey. Read the narrative that teachers have written with your child and acknowledge the effort and growth they are making as a learner this year. They need all of us to be positive and supportive right now.

In an effort to continue our partnership with you, we want you to feel informed and connected to your child's learning experience. Please contact your child's teacher if you would like to schedule a conference to further discuss your child's learning and development this year.

In closing, I would like to thank you for your continued support for myself and our staff in these challenging times. Please know that as the Principal of Van Hise Elementary I am committed to supporting the health and

safety of each and every one of our students, families, staff, and community members as we move forward in 2021. Feel free to reach out at any time.

Respectfully,  
Mary



## Events at a Glance | JANUARY

### ALL YEAR

Please reach out if your family needs assistance.

Rachael Nachtwey, Social Worker  
rlnachtwey@madison.k12.wi.us

### JANUARY 12

PTO MEETING via Zoom

6:30 - 7:30 pm  
Zoom link [HERE](#)

### JANUARY 14

**PARENT EMPOWERMENT GROUP:** Families with children who experience learning challenges

6:30 - 7:30 pm  
Zoom link [HERE](#)

### JANUARY 15

**KINDERGARTEN MATERIALS PICKUP**

11-1:00 pm & 4-6:00 pm  
VHE Parking Lot

### JANUARY 20

**GRADES 1-5 MATERIALS PICKUP**

11-1:00 pm & 4-6:00 pm  
VHE Parking Lot

### JANUARY 21

**PARENT EMPOWERMENT GROUP:** Families with black and/or brown children

6:30 - 7:30 pm  
Zoom link [HERE](#)

## A Word of Thanks

We have two things specifically to thank you for. First, through the help of our PTO reps, teachers received an outpouring of generous gifts from classroom communities at the close of the 2nd Quarter. Thank you to all families who were able to contribute and also to all families who continue to support our teachers and staff through their time and continued support.

We also want to thank all those families who have contributed donated items to our dropbox. The outpouring of donations has been tremendous. A large load of items has already been delivered to families by our Social Worker, Rachael Nachtwey. We

## Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Parents and Educators

Families and school personnel play a critical role in helping to reestablish a sense of normalcy and security for children after an act of violence occurs. Follow these key reminders and visit [www.nasponline.org/children-and-violence](http://www.nasponline.org/children-and-violence) to learn more.



### Reaffirm Safety

Emphasize that schools are very safe. Let children speak about their feelings and validate all reactions to the event. Support the appropriate expression of their feelings and help to put them in perspective.



### Make Time to Talk

Let children's questions guide the information provided. Be patient and look for clues that a child wants to talk. Young children may need concrete activities (e.g., imaginative play) and some older children may prefer writing or playing music.



### Keep Explanations Developmentally Appropriate

#### Early Elementary

Provide simple information balanced by assurance of safety.

#### Upper Elementary & Early Middle

Answer questions and assist in separating reality from fantasy.

#### Upper Middle & High

Emphasize student role in safety & how to access support.



### Review Safety Procedures

Help children identify one adult at school and in the community that they can go to if they feel threatened or at risk. Review procedures and safeguards in school and home settings.



### Observe Children's Emotional State

Some will not express themselves verbally but changes in behavior, appetite, or sleep patterns can indicate anxiety or stress. Seek help from a mental health professional for those with more intense reactions.



### Maintain a Normal Routine

Keep a regular schedule to assure and promote physical and mental health. Encourage maintenance of school work and extracurricular activities but do not push children if they seem overwhelmed. Limit TV exposure.

For additional guidance, visit [www.nasponline.org/safety-and-crisis](http://www.nasponline.org/safety-and-crisis).  
© 2017 National Association of School Psychologists [www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)

### Resources for supporting students:

- **How to Talk to Kids about Violence at Capitol - Denver Post article** Advice above provided by child psychiatrist Neha Chaudhary, MD
- When Bad Things Are Happening - When news breaks of disaster or violence, your students may want to discuss a crisis as it unfolds. **Here's how.** – Teaching Tolerance
- How to talk to children about difficult news from the APA - <https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/talking-to-children>



## Materials Pick Up

WHERE:  
VHE parking lot, 246 Segoe Rd.

Items will be ready for pick up in our parking lot. Note that we have a 11-1:00 slot for pick up as well as a 4-6:00 slot to accommodate more families.

Friday, January 15: Kindergarten  
Wednesday, January 20: Grades 1-5.

11 - 1:00 pm AND 4 - 6:00 pm



## Parent Empowerment Group Meetings

Please join Principal Seidl for this month's parent empowerment groups. This month we will include a discussion on re-entry planning and supporting success for all of our hedgies in the new year!

### FAMILY CONNECTIONS

**Purpose:** To connect VHE families with children who experience learning challenges - students may have an Individual Education Plan and/or diagnosed learning obstacle such as dyslexia/dysgraphia, etc. Bringing families together to discuss successes, challenges, hopes, goals and to exchange ideas. A safe and comfortable place where frank and honest discussions can take place and are encouraged.

**When:** January 14, 2021, 6:30-7:30 ([Join Zoom Meeting](#))

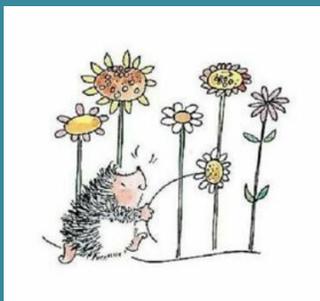
### FAMILY EMPOWERMENT

**Purpose:** To connect VHE families with black and/or brown children to:

- lift voices for historically marginalized students
- foster a sense of belonging and community
- exercise a commitment to racial justice

For our kids...

**When:** January 21, 6:30-7:30 ([Join Zoom Meeting](#))



## LET US KNOW IF WE CAN HELP

We know some families in our community have urgent needs. The PTO has resources to help you. By working through our school Social Worker, family needs are kept private and confidential. Please be in touch with Ms. Nachtwey if your family needs assistance of any kind during these difficult times.

**As a celebration of our vibrant community, we want to celebrate some of the achievements at Van Hise. Enjoy our Van Hise Spotlight!**



**Mr. Olson's Music**

Mr. Olson's music classes have been learning the music, dance, and culture of Hip Hop with Soul Science Lab, folk from Armenia with Zulal, and will

begin learning Colombian Cumbia with Gregorio as we enter into 2021 through the Musical Explorers curriculum from Carnegie Hall. ***Can your child find all three of these artists on our musical map?*** One example for how this music has guided our learning is in the song Tamzara from Armenia, performed by Zulal. The song has a unique time signature; nine beats in each group, with the quarter note getting one beat. Music commonly has four beats in each grouping, so counting to nine can at first feel somewhat different! To explore this idea of how we number beats in sections, students co-created their own time signatures using note values such as quarter, half, and whole notes, and by choosing numbers we know between one and twelve. Our class then brought our newly created time signatures to life as we counted, danced, and clapped the beat. We have also experimented with how a fast, medium, or slow tempo changes not just the speed of the music, but also its emotional affect. One example of this is in our own rendition of "If You're Happy and You Know It" -- we morphed the song into different emotions, actions, and speeds of the student's choice.

Many students have instruments at home and are eager to bring them to music class, but all your child needs for music class is themselves, their growth mindset, and space to move. Do you have questions about your child's musical development? Please contact Mr. Olson at [dbolson@madison.k12.wi.us](mailto:dbolson@madison.k12.wi.us) or by phone at (608)620-3682.



**You've reached the end. We hope to see you Tuesday 1/12 at the PTO meeting! Check [www.vanhisepto.org](http://www.vanhisepto.org) for updates.**

**Van Hise Elementary School**  
Madison, Wisconsin

**VAN HISE** PTO  
ELEMENTARY

**VHE SCHOOL WEBSITE \* VHE PTO WEBSITE**