

December 1, 2023

VOLUME 18, ISSUE 3

# GIRDWOOD NEWS

GIRDWOOD K-8 SCHOOL

P.O. BOX 189 GIRDWOOD, AK 99587

(907)742-5300

## Note from the Principal

Dear Girdwood PK-8 School Families,

Happy Holidays! It is hard to believe we are in the final month of 2023, and we are almost done with the second quarter of the school year! We hope you all join us for our PTA Holiday Bazaar next Saturday, December 9th, from 12-4 pm, and our Primary Holiday Concert on December 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm. Both events are sure to bring you some holiday cheer! Our community is amazing and gives so much during this time of year! We have many programs that reflect Girdwood's caring community culture. Our students will soon be gathering canned food for our annual canned food drive that helps support local families. We will also continue our Angel Tree and hope you will reach out to brighten the holiday season for local families.

During the month of December, we are completing our winter MAP Benchmark Assessment in math and English language arts for grades 3-6 next week and mClass testing for students in grades K-3 Wednesday, 12/13. These are assessments that help us determine if students are making adequate progress. These tests are given three times a year to see how students are progressing. A large part of students making adequate growth is through good attendance in school. Please make sure that your children are in school unless they are ill. The goal for each student is to be in school 90% of the school year. That means students can only miss approximately 17 days of the entire year to reach this goal. A high attendance rate is important because students are more likely to succeed in academic and social skills when they attend school consistently. It is difficult for their teacher and the class to build their skills and progress if a large number of students are frequently absent.

Our staff is continuing to gain knowledge on the Professional Learning Community (PLC) structure and the benefits of our collaboration to our students' learning. Thank you for being flexible with our one hour late start on Mondays, which allows our teaching staff to meet each week. We have developed the following during our PLC time:

ASD and Girdwood School Mission: Educating all students for success in life.

Girdwood School Vision: Girdwood PK-8 is a school of engaged learners committed to academic excellence, who act with integrity, and are inspired by nature while rooted in community.

Collective Commitments for our Girdwood School Staff:

1. Use data to inform and ensure all students are on a path for success and create data informed support for student needs.
2. Utilize a variety of instructional strategies to engage and meet individual learning needs that promote growth and challenge all students.
3. Communicate with team members and colleagues to monitor and support success strategies.
4. Develop and implement a writing continuum through the grade levels.
5. Review and respond to our school's Peer Climate and Connectedness surveys annually and then use research to inform instructional strategies that promote positive peer relationships.
6. Collaborate with staff and families to identify and support students with SEL needs.
7. Develop and implement an effective SEL model that encourages empathy and peer respect at every grade level and across curriculums and classrooms.
8. Empower students to be involved in a meaningful way to promote student voice through authentic leadership opportunities at each grade level.
9. Help students learn by doing in the greater Girdwood Community and our natural spaces through programs such as school ski days, days of service, intensives, middle school electives, wow trips, pie social, harvest potluck, travel opportunities, school garden, guest presenters, parent nights, class field trips, and supporting our Four Valleys Community School and School PTA who provide funds and opportunities for these activities.
10. Provide parents with resources, strategies, and information to help students succeed.

Just a few reminders for all:

- Keep up with your child's grades and assignments through accessing Q Parent Connect at any time. Do you know how to login to Q? If not, give our front office a call at 742-5300 to get your login and password.
- Winter is here, or at least it feels like it. Please send your student to school with appropriate gear and clothing. We go outside everyday rain or shine unless the temperatures are below negative 10 degrees.

Students begin winter break on December 22<sup>nd</sup> and return to school on January 8th. I hope you all have an excellent holiday season and winter break!

All The Best,

Kari Anderson, Principal

## Upcoming Events

- 11/30 School Play, "Shrek", at 7 pm
- 12/1 School Play, "Shrek", at 7 pm
- 12/1 Community Christmas Tree Lighting, 6 pm
- 12/4 Middle School Girl's Volleyball Game @ Begich MS 5:30pm
- 12/5 6-8 Grade Math MAP Winter Benchmark Assessment
- 12/6 3-5 Grade Math MAP Winter Benchmark Assessment
- 12/7 3-5 Grade ELA MAP Winter Benchmark Assessment
- 12/9 Middle School Girl's Volleyball Jamboree @ Clark MS 9-3pm
- 12/9 PTA Holiday Bazaar 12-4pm
- 12/12 6-8 Grade ELA MAP Winter Benchmark Assessment
- 12/13 K-3 mClass ELA Winter Benchmark Assessment
- 12/19 PTA Meeting @ GBC 6-8pm
- 12/20 Primary Holiday Show 6:30pm
- 12/21 Staff vs. Students Capture the Ball 2:30pm
- 12/22 End of the Second Quarter—No School for Students—State Released Grading Day
- 12/22-1/7 Winter Break



Girdwood K-8 and the Girdwood PTA are on Facebook. Please check our pages out and **"LIKE"** us! We will be posting frequently and our pages will have the latest school information.



### TEXT MESSAGES

Sign Up and receive text messages from ASD regarding school closures and late busses. You must opt in. They are not automatic. Visit ASD's website to learn more about receiving text messages:  
<http://www.asdk12.org/textupdates>.



We would like to shout out a big THANK YOU to Subway and the Ice Cream Shop, Girdwood K-8's school business partners! If you know of anyone else who would like to be our partner, please let us know.



Girdwood, Alaska [theicecreamshop.com](http://theicecreamshop.com)

### Anchorage School Board

**Margo Bellamy**, president  
**Carl Jacobs**, vice president  
**Kelly Lessens**, treasurer  
**Dora Wilson**, clerk  
**Dave Donley**  
**Andy Holleman**  
**Pat Higgins**

### ASD Superintendent

**Dr. Jharrett Bryan**

### PTA Board Members

**Andrea Anderson**, president  
**Emily Marengo**, vice president  
**Melissa Randich**, secretary  
**Anna Russell**, treasurer  
**Julie Pierre Leclerc**, member at large  
**Nico Honnegger**, member representative  
**Jennifer Derks, Shannon Derks**, teacher representatives



THANK YOU, HEART HEROES!

Dear Families,  
We had a great time during **Kids Heart Challenge** and are so proud of our students and our school! THANK YOU for your incredible generosity and support in making our community heart healthy while helping others. [Click here for a BIG Thank You from a Heart Heroes across the US!](#)

***YOU made a difference! 20 students joined our team, 10 families learned Hands-Only CPR, 2 students completed Finn's Mission, and we raised \$980 for the American Heart Association to help those with special hearts! THANK YOU!***

We know how important it is to take care of our hearts year-round, so for additional tips and resources, visit the [Parent Corner](#) to keep your family healthy. And if you haven't completed Finn's Mission yet, you can still log in at [www.heart.org/schools](http://www.heart.org/schools) or by downloading the FREE **AHA Schools App** for [Apple](#) or [Android](#) to learn Hands-Only CPR, the warning signs of a stroke, and more! Thank you again for your support!

**Thank you for helping kids with special hearts everywhere!**



### Have a Wonderful Winter Break: Full of Laughter!

We hope you have a wonderful winter break creating memories with your families and friends. Hopefully your days will include lots of laughter! Did you know how good for you laughter is? Generally, it is believed that laughter reduces stress, reduces pain, and improves healing. We know that while you are laughing your heart rate, respiratory rate and blood pressure decrease. After laughing your heart rate, respiratory rate and blood pressure decrease. Exactly how laughter effects stress hormones like cortisol or immune function are not known but we do know that when laughter is incorporated, health outcomes are improved. Just like you should eat your fruits and veggies, get enough sleep and exercise, be sure that you laugh every day too!

Warm Wishes,  
Nurse Summer



# Thanksgiving Pie Social



Our Thanksgiving Pie Social was a lot of fun for our whole community! 7th and 8th grade students made and served almost 50 apple pies to our students, staff, parents, and community members.

The Ice Cream Shop generously donated ice cream for the event.  
Lots of smiles all around!



### **mClass Winter Benchmark ELA Assessment Family Information**

As part of The Alaska Reads Act, the State of Alaska requires that districts administer an early literacy screening tool three times a year to students in grades K-3 to identify potential reading difficulties in order to improve reading outcomes for students. Families can read more about this comprehensive K-3 reading policy at The Alaska Reads Act website: [education.alaska.gov/akreads](https://education.alaska.gov/akreads). mClass with DIBELS 8th Edition Assessments is the State of Alaska Department of Education's and ASD's Early Literacy benchmark screening and progress monitoring tool for students in grades K-3 in reading. mClass utilizes curriculum-based measures and is used by schools as part of the ASD Comprehensive Assessment System to support informed instructional decisions. The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development explains the decision to adopt mClass as the statewide literacy screener at the following website: <https://education.alaska.gov/Alaska-Reading-Resources/Statewide-Early-Literacy-Screener>. mClass screening assessments will be administered in-person at Girdwood School to our K-3 students on 12/13/23. Results for K-3 students that were assessed during a benchmark window, will be available in Parent Connect by January 5, 2024. [ParentConnection Login Information and Reference Guide](#) can be found at [parentconnect.asdk12.org](https://parentconnect.asdk12.org). mClass Winter Benchmark ELA Assessment Family Information

## **Sign up for FVCS Classes!**

Four Valleys Community Schools has classes going on now for community members of all ages and they are constantly rolling out new ones. If you feel unable to take any of our classes due to class costs, please contact FVCS at [www.fourvalleys.org](https://www.fourvalleys.org) or by phone at 907.742.5317. We have financial aid, scholarships, and payment plans available.



### Greetings Girdwood Families,

With snowdays, holidays, and winter months here, there is no better time to curl up with a good book and read!

You are welcome to visit our library anytime during school hours and please encourage your students to utilize our school and public libraries as much as possible. However, going to the library isn't always practical.

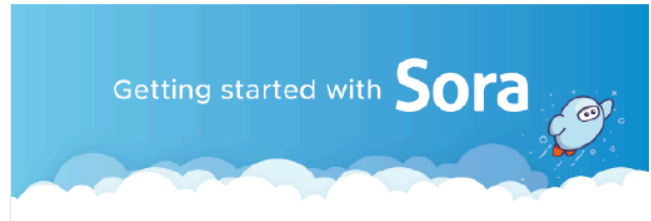
As your family spends time at home or traveling or if you wish to access books at times when the libraries are closed, utilizing our E-library catalog can be a huge benefit. Our ebook and audiobook collections contain read-alouds, popular ebooks, battle books, and so much more. Checking out these FREE eBooks and audiobooks has never been easier.

Students of the Anchorage School District can now access books via the **SORA** app at no cost using their school ID on any device. The instructions for accessing the **SORA** reading app are made available for you here. Your student will know how to access these books as their login is the same one they use for their Google Apps at school. We have also practiced this in library class.

I would like to see Girdwood increase our use of this excellent resource! Please take some time to login and explore SORA with your family today.

Thank you!

Meghan Nedwick



With SORA, you can get free ebooks and audiobooks from your school.

- 1 Access Sora from student ASD Clever accounts or install the Sora app from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store and select Anchorage School District and set it as MY SCHOOL or go to <https://soraapp.com/library/anchorageak> in your browser.
- 2 Log in using your ASD Google Log On. STUDENTS: [last.first@asdk12.org](mailto:last.first@asdk12.org) and the Password is the same as their Google Log On. It may prompt you to use (.net instead of .org)
- 3 Browse the EXPLORE Tab to find an ebook or audiobook to check out. You can close the book and go to the SHELF Tab to see all the books you have checked out.
- 4 Tap on an ebook or audiobook to start reading.... Tap Options to renew or return the book, get to your notes and highlights, and more. Books automatically return after the set check-out time so there is no need to return it manually.



Girdwood School Parents:

Glacier Valley Transit is providing an after school activities service at The Girdwood School. The GVT bus will stop at the Girdwood School Mondays through Fridays, at 4:35pm heading toward Alyeska Resort and looping back toward the Seward Highway.

**There is no charge for this service.** For more information about Glacier Valley Transit and for current bus stops and schedules please visit [www.glaciervalleytransit.com](http://www.glaciervalleytransit.com) or contact Operations Manager, at 907-382-9908.



## It's time for our Holiday Food Drive!

December 4th- December 20th

**All donations for the food drive should be non-perishable and not expired.**

*The class that brings in the most items gets an ice-cream sandwich party!*

The most needed items requested by our food bank:

- crackers
- tuna
- top ramen
- canned fruit
- canned vegetables
- peanut butter
- pasta
- snacks (granola bars, etc.)

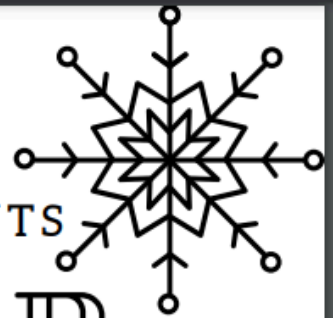






### **Dogs on the Playground**

Just a reminder to keep your dogs leashed while on the playground here at school for the safety of our students and to ensure our playground remains free of dog poop.



GIRDWOOD K-8 PTA PRESENTS

# GIRDWOOD HOLIDAY BAZAAR

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Saturday, December 9  
12:00-4:00 pm

Girdwood School @ 680 Hightower Road

Questions??? Email [pta.girdwood@gmail.com](mailto:pta.girdwood@gmail.com)





Dear Caregivers,

**Boost Reading** provides your child with the opportunity to learn and practice literacy skills within an engaging story world that adapts to each student as they move through the program. This means that you do not need to assist students with their learning. Once your child can log in, they're ready to start using the program.

Your child can learn with Boost Reading during school hours and independently at home.

- Log in to [clever.asdk12.org](https://clever.asdk12.org)
- Log in with the credentials from your teacher

#### **Tips and Tricks**

- Practice logging in with your child consistently until they can log in independently.
- Keep your child's login information in a single place so they know where to go if they forget it.
- Provide your child with headphones or a quiet place to play.
- *Website:*

**Boost**Reading





Here at Girdwood PK-8 School, we would like to acknowledge with gratitude the Dena'ina people, past and present, who have lived on these lands since long before Anchorage and Girdwood were here. May we all be good stewards of these lands. Chin'an. (/CHIN-nan/ {Meaning - Thank you})



## Student Government News

Student government would like to thank everyone for donating gear to our **Socktober donation collection**. It is wonderful to come together and help others. Some of the donations went to local families in Girdwood. Others went to 6 elementary schools in Anchorage that needed winter items for their students. Most of the donations will be going to homeless shelters in Anchorage. We would like to congratulate **3rd grade** for bringing in the **most amount** of donations for Socktober. They will be rewarded with a **pizza party** sponsored by Coast Pizza.

The Holiday Food Drive starts December 4th. Lions Club will create care packages for local families. All donations should be **non-perishable** and **not expired**.

These are the most needed items requested by our food bank:

- crackers
- tuna
- top ramen
- canned fruit
- canned vegetables
- peanut butter
- pasta
- snacks (granola bars, etc.)



# Join Girdwood PTA

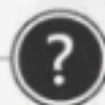


Why join PTA? Our focus is supporting programs that help students be successful in their learning. Last year PTA funded over \$20,000 in programs and supplies for our students and school, including:

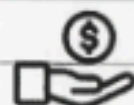
School Garden, Classroom Safety Kits, Halloween Carnival, Classroom Grants, Holiday Bazaar, Running Club, Drama and Music Programs, Field Trip Transportation, Field Trip Scholarships, Teacher Appreciation Week, Battle of the Books, Field Day, and Fall Intensives. For 2022-2023, new Classroom Display Technology and so much more!

Questions? Email us at [pta.girdwood@gmail.com](mailto:pta.girdwood@gmail.com)

## Supporting Member



Who should be a supporting member? Parents, family members, friends, and community members who want to support our school and students



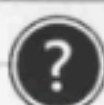
All \$10 goes to support Girdwood School PTA programs



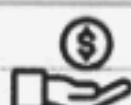
Scan to become a supporting member



## Voting Member



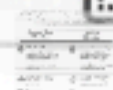
Who should be a voting member? Parents, teachers, and PTA board members who want to regularly attend PTA meetings and vote on our budget and bylaws.



\$625 goes to National & State PTA and \$3.75 goes to Girdwood School PTA



Scan to become a voting member





# GRIZZLY GEAR



## order online

Support Girdwood School PTA!  
We are trying something new  
this year, please check out our  
online fundraising platform!







# *Girdwood Turnagain Arm Lions Club*



*Presents*



*Annual Christmas Tree Lighting*

*Girdwood Town Square*

*Friday, December 1st at 6PM*

*Join us for as we welcome in the holiday season with Christmas  
lights, hot chocolate, and fire pits to stay warm!*

