

November 22, 2016

Happy Thanksgiving AEA STEAM Families! We hope that your short break is a great time to focus on family and everything that you are thankful for. Please know that we are thankful for our students and their families. We know that we can't do our jobs without you. Our staff felt the appreciation from parents through the monthly staff lunch and the EPO thank you bundt cakes everyone got.

We are also extremely thankful for our highly motivated ASB. With help from Mrs. Lara and Mrs. Peretz, Amelia, Aditya, Nina, Danielle, Megan, Emma, Isabella, and Kenzie organized a food drive to help feed local families in need. Today we took a short field trip to drop off the items. The ASB team and our student body should be very proud of their efforts as they brought in almost 800 items. Well done AEA Rockets!

Benchmark assessments have started and will be completed by the end of the first week of December. These assessments use the same system as the end of year standardized testing. The feedback we get from them will help teachers guide their instruction and help our students know what to focus their effort on. In addition, the kids will become more familiar with the testing format so that the real deal is already second nature.

Most of our grade levels finished up with some fun activities before going on break. 6th grade put on a fun day that focused developing rapport with students. Third grade had the biggest lead up to the break. Last week they had a wonderful Literacy Fair, but that wasn't even the biggest part. They also had an overnight field trip to the Aquarium of the Pacific that the kids absolutely loved. Today they had a Thanksgiving Feast during the morning. The left overs were donated to the Food Pantry as part of our canned food drive.

Thank you for completing the teacher survey's last month. Your feedback helps us see where we are doing well and where we need to improve. A follow up survey may be done to make sure that the adjustments we've made are showing through.

Lots of parents ask how they can help out more and the best way is simply by filling in for support roles. In our perfect world with unlimited funds we'd hire more people to assist teachers, work with students on projects, and keep the facility in top condition. Unfortunately, as we build the program and work our way through the startup expenses we cannot financially support all those salaries. When the school was founded we understood that we would have to rely on volunteers in lieu of paid staff for many of the non-credentialed roles. We can't have volunteers teach classes, but we can use volunteer help in place of paying for serving lunch, yard supervision, grounds keeping, and some light custodial work. As our budget improves, we can increase the number of paid staff who can maintain all those things. If you could commit to helping out on a regular basis, even if it's just an hour a week, we can see about scheduling you in.

Finally, the black Friday sales sometimes have amazing deals on things that would be very useful at the school. If you see any of the following items at "too good to pass up" prices, we will happily take them as donations. Our primary needs include sand toys for the kids and tools for the grown-ups. Sturdy sand toys like shovels, buckets, and trucks will make recess even more fun. The tools are for making repairs to the facility. Mr. Cruz and I are always using borrowed tools to get simple jobs done so if you see screw drivers, hammers, pliers, saws, etc. on sale, we'd be appreciative of those items too. By having a complete set of tools on campus we can get things fixed quicker. Thanks for any donations you make to help us reach the goal of building a school that has strong academics with world languages, a STEAM focus and a PBL twist.

Once again, thank you for being a part of AEA and enjoy your short break. See you Monday.

Scott Cusack

Principal - AEA STEAM