



# Oakland News

## December 2010

Oakland Elementary School  
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### A Few of My Favorite Things

The Scharf family has a tradition of playing table games, mostly in the winter months. Although my children are grown, I get excited this time of year to check out the new games available for holiday gift-giving. We each have favorites, but my personal favorites usually involve letters and word play or puzzles. Since most of our favorites can be played by "children of all ages," I thought I would make some recommendations from our family to yours.

#### My Favorites:

**Blokus** - A strategy game that requires the placement of geometric shapes on a game board in an effort to block other players while attempting to place all pieces. (\$15.99)

**Scrabble Flash** - New this year, an "addictive" game to play solitaire or with others that involves manipulating cubes with 5 different letters. As 3-5 letter words are spelled by placing the cubes together, Scrabble Flash electronically scores each word. At the end of a minute, players are given the total words scored and the number of words possible before resetting for new letters and continued fun! (\$19.99)

**SET** - A brain-building card game that involves identifying sets of various attributes. (\$12.00)

#### Scharf Family Favorites:

**Catch Phrase and Catch Phrase Jr.** - All family members can play at the same time! The electronic version is somewhat like "hot potato," but the holder must give clues to get team mates to say the given word before it can be passed! (\$22.00-\$27.00)

**Scattergories and Scattergories Jr.** - My son's favorite game involves brainstorming words in given categories, but all beginning with a rolled letter...of course with a timer ticking! (\$24.00)

**Apples to Apples and Apples to Apples Jr.** - This multiple award winner involves anonymously matching noun cards with adjective cards to create the funniest or most interesting combination. Voted the Party Game of the Year and Mensa Select Game, and Danielle's favorite, this game is enjoyed by adults and children. (\$21.99)

**Bananagrams** - Letter tiles are distributed to players to begin a personal crossword. Any time a player plays his or her last tile, "peel" is yelled and everyone must select another letter from the pot. This continues until all tiles are played. Alex enjoys that a single game can be played in 10 minutes or an entire evening can be filled with competitive spelling! (\$12.99)

May your holiday season and winter vacation be filled with game-playing or other family traditions, good health, and of course...good books!  
~Mary Kay Scharf

### Have We Got Your Number?

We need to be able to contact parents or guardians for many reasons, including a student's sudden illness at school. If you have a new home, cell phone, or work number please contact the office at 662-4302 and let us know. We will update your child's file to make sure we can reach you in the event of an illness, accident, or emergency. It is also helpful if your child has 2-3 in-town emergency contact people included in his or her school records. Please let us know when their numbers change also.



### Upcoming Dates to Remember

December	2	6:30 PTO Meeting
December	21	2:30 Holiday Parties
December	22	Last Full Day of Attendance Before Winter Break
December	22	End of 2nd Grading Period
December	23	Winter Break Begins
January	5	Last day of Winter Break
January	6	School Resumes
January	17	NO SCHOOL Dr. Martin Luther King's Birthday
January	18	NO SCHOOL School Improvement Day
January	27	Health Fair

# Attendance Matters!

- A high attendance rate is one indicator of an effective school. (Roby, 2004)
- The link between attendance days and individual student achievement is positive and statistically significant. (Godfried, 2010)

Through Wednesday, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 188 student instructional days were lost at Oakland School due to students being out of town or on vacation. When other unexcused absences are added to this, the number climbs to 274 days.

Oakland Vacation Absences		
Quarter 1	8/19-10/16	62 days
Quarter 2	10/16-11/24	126 days
<b>Total</b>		<b>188 days</b>

We hope you will consider the school calendar when making future vacation plans and avoid these absences for your child. It is imperative students attend during the weeks of ISAT testing and that appointments be completely avoided during the school day. Your child will be more comfortable and prepared if he or she is able to take tests at the scheduled time, in the class in which instruction has occurred, and with the classmates with whom he or she has prepared! Making up tests in alternative settings at alternative times interferes with optimal performance, and students are often distracted by what they are missing when making up the tests! **The dates for ISAT are February 28-March 11.** Please mark your calendars!

*"The future depends on what we do in the present."*

*Mahatma Gandhi*

***The 4th Annual Oakland School Health Fair will be held Thursday, January 27th.***

***We need parents/relatives/friends in health related careers or with health related skills/knowledge to help with this special event.***

***Commitment of time: 1-2 meetings or phone calls, 1.5 hour event!***

***Please complete this form and send it back to school.***

**HEALTH FAIR** Volunteers Sign up here.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I will help with general support.

I have a specific activity/information to provide.

Please briefly describe:

## Nurse's Notes

- ◆ Students who have a fever of 100 degrees or above, diarrhea, a contagious rash or illness, or vomiting should not attend school. They should be free of the illness or condition for 24 hours before returning to school.
- ◆ Any medications (even Tylenol, Tums, cough drops, and throat lozenges) a child takes during the day at school must be ordered by a physician. Forms are available at school or online. Parents may come to school at any time to administer medication without a doctor's order.
- ◆ Accidents sometimes happen at school! If your child has been in need of a change of clothes this year while at school, it may be helpful if you send an extra set of clothing to have on hand. Students may keep these clothes in their backpack or cubby, depending on the classroom. If your child has an accident while at school and wears home "borrowed" clothes from the school, we would appreciate it if you would launder them and return them to the office.
- ◆ Encourage your children to wash their hands often, especially before eating, after going to the bathroom, and any time they cough or sneeze into their hands.

As always, Nurse Colleen Spaniol is available for your questions at any time. You may reach her by calling the school at (309) 662-4302.

# Nutrition Matters

## Offer vs. Serve

By Julie Fehrenbacher MS, RD, LDN School Nutrition Director

District 87 uses an **offer vs. serve system** in our cafeterias. What this means is that we provide students with the option of choosing all 5 meal components (milk, fruit, vegetable, bread/grain, meat/meat alternate) daily, and they must choose 3 of the 5 to complete a meal. With this said, we cannot *make* a student choose fruits or vegetables, but can gently encourage.

**So**, please help by encouraging your child to choose **fruits and vegetables** at lunch! Fresh and/or canned fruits and vegetables are available everyday in our cafeterias. Rich in vitamins, minerals, and fiber, you can't beat them as a great addition to lunch!



## HOOT at Home

As you know, this year we started a school-wide management system called HOOT - How Oakland Operates Together. Last month, you were provided the behavioral expectations of our school which have been overtly taught, practiced, and reinforced through the year. Each month, a committee looks closely at discipline data related to these expectations. We are thrilled to share that discipline referrals decreased by about 50% in October! While we celebrate this improvement, we are committed to further reduction of problem behaviors. Behaviors targeted for this month are keeping hands to self and reducing physical aggression. Here are some tips parents can try at home to support our efforts to decrease these behaviors!

### Teach children to keep hands to themselves:

- Discuss personal space. Use a hula hoop or a carpet square as a visual.
- Role play situations where children may be tempted to use their hands instead of their words. Let your child act out a more appropriate way of interacting with others.
- Model and talk about appropriate ways to interact with other children and adults.

### Help reduce physical aggression:

- Encourage your children to talk about feelings.
- Can they recognize and calm down strong feelings? Encourage children to:
  - take several deep breaths when frustrated or angry.
  - count to five before acting.
  - seek help and talk to someone trusted like parents, friends, or teachers when strong feelings occur.
- Help children develop problem-solving skills by teaching these steps:
  - Ask yourself, what is the problem?
  - Come up with several solutions (even silly ones!)
  - Think about the best solution and act on it.

### **HOOT at Home Bonus!!!**

Return a completed HOOT at Home Bonus Ticket and your child will be entered in a drawing for free Smoothie King coupons.

## HOOT at Home Bonus Ticket

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

List one way you taught your child to calm down strong feelings.



# Ways You Can Make a Difference

## Consider Donating Your Used Eyeglasses

Oakland's Girl Scout Troop 1365 will be partnering with the Normal Lion's Club "Recycle for Sight" program. During the Bloomington-Normal Jaycees Christmas Parade on December 4th, the girls will be collecting used eyeglasses. If you have used eyeglasses you no longer need, you can now donate them to this cause. Lions accept prescription and reading glasses, sunglasses, and plastic and metal frames. Children's glasses are especially needed. The troop of eight 2nd grade girls from Oakland School appreciates your support of their community service project.

## Two Dollars From Each Oakland Family Can Go a Long Way (Scrip=gift cards you buy for yourself for routine purchases=\$ for Oakland!)

It has been great seeing so many new names on our Scrip order lists so far this school year! We continue to encourage every Oakland family to make a Scrip purchase each month. If each family purchased enough to earn Oakland PTO \$2.00 in profit each month, our total would be over \$800.00 in earnings. Add that up through the entire school year and it's more than \$7,200.00!!! The money we earn is used for programs and supplies for our school. Here are a couple of examples of how you can help:

- A \$100.00 Wal-Mart card earns Oakland PTO \$2.00.
- A \$50.00 Jewel card earns Oakland PTO \$2.00.
- Eating out with your family once and using a Scrip card would in most cases earn \$2.00 or more for the school. Applebee's, Bob Evans, Cracker Barrel, Arby's, Steak & Shake, Domino's, Noodles and many more restaurants have Scrip cards available.

If you haven't already tried Scrip, this would be the perfect month to start! Consider purchasing a card to give as a gift; it's easy, convenient and beneficial! Please watch for our December flyer and return your order to school by December 9th. You can also go to [www.shopwithscrip.com](http://www.shopwithscrip.com) and order online to see all choices of Scrip cards!

## Box Tops for Education

From clipping Box Tops to shopping online to bonuses, there are easy ways to earn cash for your school every day. The best way to learn about the many ways you can help is to visit [www.boxtops4education.com](http://www.boxtops4education.com). The time you spend to educate yourself on the many ways you can help could be extremely beneficial to Oakland PTO. Their goal is to earn \$1,500.00 this year.

Thank you to all who participated in the Halloween collection sheet drive. Be sure to watch backpacks for our winter break collection sheet.

## More Ways to Help!

- Shopping with your Target Take Charge of Education Red Card or Target Visa Card.
- Turning in your old cell phones and used ink jet printer cartridges for recycling by our media center.
- Collecting Campbell's Labels for Education.

**Thank you for supporting Oakland School!**

# HELP Wanted!

## Seeking Funding for Special Opportunity!

Most of you have experienced the excitement of the interactive SMART™ Boards in our classrooms. Teachers and children use this engaging tool throughout the day to complete interactive activities, view curriculum-enhancing video clips, and complete routine tasks such as attendance and lunch selection. Now, interactivity can be further increased with students individually responding to items on the board. Can you see it? No more wait time or turn taking! Can you hear it? All students participating at one time!



SMART™ response units provide a remote clicker for each student in the classroom. As teachers project questions, visual options, or play video-based quizzes, students discreetly respond using the hand-held clickers. Immediate feedback gives teachers a true reflection of student understanding, providing data to support instructional decision-making. This can include immediate re-teaching of a single concept, a repeat lesson, or a celebration before moving to new instruction! Teachers will also use the data for planning targeted instruction for the precise needs of a wide range of students.

We are hoping to benefit from a special promotion the SMART™ company is offering to schools with certified SMART™ instructors. If our school purchases 2 classroom sets, we receive an additional 2 sets. It is our goal to purchase 4 sets and to receive 4 sets. To accomplish this, our fundraising goal is \$8000. While this may be beyond possible, we won't know unless we try!

We are pursuing multiple funding sources, but are hopeful parents, grandparents, or others may share our enthusiasm for this tool and value its role in the instructional process.

Please consider making a tax-deductible contribution to Oakland School for the "Clicker Fund". Donations of any size will be welcome! We will provide a receipt, an opportunity to try out the clickers, and be very grateful for your assistance!

Should you need additional information, please contact Dr. Scharf.

**Thank you for giving our students cutting-edge opportunities!**

**Tax Deductible Contribution  
for  
Oakland School SMART Response Systems**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Amount Enclosed:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Cash**

**Check**



ISAT Testing Dates are February 28-March 11. Please do not make appointments for your child during these 2 weeks.

# December 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 <p>Students go outside for recess everyday when the wind chill is 20 degrees or above. Rain, heavy snow, or an uncleared blacktop are the only exceptions to this rule. Please help your child be prepared for outdoor recess by making sure he or she wears a hat, coat, and mittens on cold days.</p>			1 8:15 Student Council Meeting  Kindergarten Field Trip to BCPA	2 6:30 PTO Meeting	3 2nd Grade Field Trip to The Nutcracker	4 
5  	6 Student Council is collecting gift and/or donations for young people in need, ages 12-18.	7	8	9 Scrip Order Deadline  <i>Do you need a last-minute gift? Why not try a Scrip gift card?</i>	10 Last day to send gifts and/or monetary donations.	11
12	13  	14 Pizza Hut PTO Fundraiser <i>Watch for more information to come home with your child</i>	15 8:15 Student Council Meeting	16 School Special Sausage Pizza  	17	18
19	20	21 2:30 Winter Parties	22 Last Full Day of Attendance Before Winter Break Begins	23 NO SCHOOL <i>Winter Break</i>	24 NO SCHOOL <i>Winter Break</i>	25  
26	27	28	29	30	31	