

From the Principal and Associate Principal – April, 2006

Dear Elm Place Community:

We have been busy working on many projects and programs to ensure that your children receive the best education possible. Elm Place is proud of Daniel Kestin's geographic knowledge and success, Elm Place is also proud of the 7th grade students' work on the Project Citizen civic projects in Mrs. Levi and Mrs. Jaffe's classrooms, and Elm Place is also proud of the Problem Solver groups work with Mrs. Greenwald, the Eyes of the Storm humanitarian education programming, as well as the advancement to the International Future Problem Solving Bowl!

There are so many additional projects about which we also take great pride: the daily educational advancement and growth of all children due to the dedication of all teachers and staff members! We at Elm Place have wonderful students, parents, teachers, staff members, and community partnerships - thank you so much for continuing the traditions of excellence in education.

The 5th grade students are getting ready to become 6th grade students, the 6th and 7th grade students are preparing for next year at Elm Place, and the 8th grade students are preparing for their annual play, "Wish You Were Here" on April 27 and 28 at 7:00pm. The 8th grade students are also getting ready for graduation and beyond. At Elm Place, we are committed to maintaining the traditions of excellence and we are constantly reviewing research on best practices to make changes as necessary that best meet the needs of children.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION: 5TH GRADE TRANSITION

The 5th grade to 6th grade transition process is off to a great start. The Elm Place faculty, staff and administration will meet with students, staff, parents from Indian Trail, Sherwood, the Red Oak 5th grade Dual Language class in May. There will be meetings, tours, question and answer sessions and informational discussions. Elm Place eagerly awaits the arrival of the class of 2009. The 5th grade parents and students will meet their new principal, Mr. Eric Olson, and their new associate principal, Mrs. Monica Schroeder, at the parent meeting on May 15, 2006 at 7:00pm at Elm Place. Please visit the Elm Place web site for transition information – we will have this information translated into Spanish thanks to the efforts of Senor Colome and students in the Advanced Spanish classes. Go to [Http://www.nssd112.org/elmplace](http://www.nssd112.org/elmplace) and then select Transitions from the menu on the left side of the page.

ADVISORY is also known as "Home Base"

As a result of district-wide school improvement planning the Advisory program at all three middle schools (Edgewood, Elm Place and Northwood) has been known as Home Base for the past several years. Students meet daily for a 9 minute Home Base and in the upcoming 2006-2007 school year, they will benefit from fourteen extended Home Base experiences for 41 minutes each (this is an increase of two from this current school year).

Students will stay together with their Home Base advisor and the students for three years, this practice is called looping.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Consistent with the Board of Education Strategic Objectives and consistent with research about effective schools, Elm Place Middle School continues to take steps to create organizational structures in line with the recommendations from the National Middle School Association. During the 2006-2007 school year all students in 6th – 8th grade will learn English and literature in a two period block of time. All students will benefit from flexible block instruction on Wednesday and Thursday with 82 minute periods and half of their classes meeting on each day. In addition, students in 7th and 8th grade will be able to select combinations of course offerings for their two exploratory/elective periods. Course selection takes place each April with current 6th and 7th grade students. As you may know, band and orchestra classes take place during the school day, and the elective/exploratory options are built around a mixed day type of schedule (Don't worry parents – the students figure all of this out rather quickly!). Students coming into Elm Place from the K-5 Dual Language Program will continue with the advanced Spanish course offerings: in 6th grade students will take one period a day of advanced Spanish during their exploratory period, 7th & 8th grade students will take one period a day of advanced Spanish out of their foreign language/elective period. Some students will also receive additional support in math and reading per the School Improvement (SIP) initiatives that are also tied to the No Child Left Behind Act. Teachers will also continue to work in teams and the team leaders will provide coordination and guidance in educational programming as well

8TH GRADE GRADUATION

Please mark your calendars, the 8th grade graduation will occur on Monday, June 12, 2006 at 8:00 P.M. in the Smith Auditorium at Elm Place Middle School. Each 8th grade student will receive 4 tickets. The parent graduation committee meeting took place on April 6, 2006. Parents by May 26 please call Wendy in the school office if your child has a parent or grandparent who also attended Elm Place so Dr. Lubefeld can mention this during his graduation remarks.

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT MIX IT UP PARTY/EVENT

Please help support the first ever and possibly first annual middle school mix it up event for all middle school students in North Shore School District 112. On Friday, May 5, 2006, from 7:00pm-9:00pm the 112 Education Foundation is sponsoring a fundraiser and party at the Recreation Center of Highland Park. Administrators, faculty/staff, and parent volunteers will help chaperone. If you are a parent interested in volunteering as a chaperone please call one of the Elm Place PTO co-presidents or the school office.

CLASS PLACEMENT

Shortly after Spring Break each year the Elm Place staff begins work on a very difficult, but important process. We begin to create class lists for the next school year. It is a long process that has many stages. It is not fully completed until the lists are posted at school in August. Because the placing of students in Home Base and classrooms for next year is

such an important decision, we use a very specific and detailed process for all children. We consider six criteria in making our decisions, with no one being more important than another. The following criteria are considered together as a whole before placements are made:

- A) The total number of children in all grade level classes needs to be equal.
- B) The ratio of girls and boys should be balanced in all grades
- C) Ability levels of students need to be balanced in each grade.
- D) Leadership skills and other affective characteristics need to be balanced.
- E) Student learning styles should be matched appropriately with teachers' instructional styles.
- F) Some combinations should be split up for social and academic reasons.

Because of the nature and complexity of this task, we cannot reduce the process to simply accepting requests for specific teachers. When parents have specific data that might affect their child's placement, we welcome such information in writing. Such information will be considered as one component of our process, but the final decision about class assignments/advisories rests with the teaching staff and administrative team. Any written communication must be submitted to the principal by May 15 in order to be given consideration. We appreciate your understanding and support in this matter.

I would like to highlight a number of other items:

- The 2005 Eclipse Magazine was awarded the honor of an Excellent rating from the National Council of Teachers of English. Special thanks go to Mrs. Foughner and her students who have put together another wonderful literary arts magazine. Their work is impressive year after year.
- Special thanks go to Mrs. Levi for coordinating the Elm Place School's participation in the National Youth Service Days program in April. More than 100 Elm Place students sign up for community service activities throughout Highland Park.

Coming up:

- Thurs. April 20, Character Counts Awards at the Highland Park Country Club 7:00pm
- Wed., April 26 Spring Picture Day
- Thurs. April 27, 8th Grade Play 7:00pm
- Fri., April 28, 8th Grade Play 7:00pm
- Mon., May 1, PTO 7:00pm
- Friday, May 5, at 9:00 a.m. Spring Music Assembly
- Fri., May 5, District 112 Education Foundation Middle School "Mixer" at the Recreation Center of Highland Park
- Thurs., May 11, Elm Place Administration Visits Indian Trail, Sherwood (Red Oak)
- Fri., May 12, incoming 6th Grade students to visit Elm Place
- Mon., May 15, 7:00PM Parent/Student 5th to 6th grade transition meeting at Elm Place

Thurs., May 18, Spring Band Concert 7pm
Tues., May 23, Spring Chorus Concert 7pm
Thurs. May 25, Spring Orchestra Concert
Fri., May 26, PTO staff luncheon
Tues., June 6, PTO 8:45am
Thurs., June 8, 8th Grade Great America Trip
Mon., June 12, 8th Grade Graduation 8PM
Thurs., June 15, Flag Day Ceremony - last day (if no emergency days are used) -
dismissal at 9:15am

Sincerely, Dr. Lubefeld, Principal and Ms. Hendricks, Associate Principal

IMPORTANT PARKING REMINDERS

NEVER drop off students on Sheridan Road – it is illegal and it is dangerous.

Do not pick up your children in front of school, on Elm Place, between 2:30 P.M. and 3:00 P.M.

DO NOT park in the bus lanes on Elm Place from 7:30AM-8:00AM or 2:30PM- 3:00PM

Do not block the east driveway off of Elm Place.