



Photo of the Week GES School Board

Members of the GES School Board met last Friday for their annual strategic planning retreat. These day-long sessions allow the board to assess our current situation, review progress in reaching our goals, and set new goals and plans for the future. Members include (clockwise from top left) Andrew Ashcroft, Jon Hedstrom, Sara Hingos, Amy Henrikson, Suzy Schweig, Jeff Kern, and Susan Miller. Not shown, Baiers Heeren and Peter James.



Thank You for Your Help!

We have really enjoyed the contributions of active volunteers recently! Thanks to Megan Peterson, Hartley Acero, and Roxanne Berglund for helping out with skating, Jerry Starr for snowblowing, Jana Berka for coordinating our "small fundraising", and Chris Callender, Lyle Gerard, and Walt McCarthy for their on-going efforts. Of course, we enjoyed Great Lunches, thanks to Hartley Acero, Roxanne Berglund, Jana Berka, Kate Fitzgerald, Kathy Peterson, Megan Peterson, and Mike Schelmeske. Thank you!

Automated Calling System Debuting Soon! We have been working to include GES in the automated calling system used at I.S.D. 166 to provide notification of school closings and other information. Unfortunately, system limitations will not allow that to happen. Fortunately, we have found a cost-effective alternative and will be testing it soon. Please contact the office if you would like to ensure we make calls or send emails to the locations you prefer. With any luck, we'll have everything in place before the next cancellation!

Swimming Lessons Start Monday! Please ensure your student brings a swim suit, towel, and plastic bag (for wet gear) each day. We are intending that all students in kindergarten through 5th grade participate, so please contact us if there is a reason for excluding your child. We are asking families to make a contribution of \$30 per student or \$50 per family to help offset the cost of lessons and transportation. Please make checks out to GES. As with all our requests for payment, if this presents a hardship for your family, please let us know and we can make other arrangements. Thank you!

Time to Plan for Next Fall! With our classroom plans taking shape (see below), we are about to begin our annual application/enrollment cycle. One of the first steps is to learn the intentions of our existing families. As a result, we have attached a form for you to complete and return to the office, indicating your plans for your child. Please complete and return this form as soon as possible, but not later than March 4th, so we can open up any available spots to new families. If you have any questions about this, please contact school Director Peter James.

Facebook for Parents! Superintendent (and closet techie) Beth Schwarz will be leading a class from 6 – 8 on Feb 17th to help parents understand "social media" and its impacts. Call Community Ed at 387-2000 for more info.

Girl Scout Father/Daughter Dance Feb 12th at NHFS! Contact Laura @475-2390 for details.

Board Sets Enrollment/Classroom Strategy at Annual Retreat

Of the many issues addressed at this year's retreat, the one most timely had to do with GES's plans for enrollment and the related classroom groupings. The Enrollment Working Group provided the board with input gathered from parents, teachers, and staff. The board reviewed and discussed alternatives before setting the following direction:

- For the 2011-2012 school year (next year), have 4 classroom groupings, set as K-1, 2-3, 4-5, and 6-8
- For school years after 2012, have 5 classrooms, set as a stand-alone K, 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, and 7-8.
- Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, have enrollment caps set at no more than 10 students/grade.
- Review and set specific annual enrollment caps each spring based on input from parents, teachers, & staff.

The board expressed thanks to the Enrollment Working Group for their efforts, and invites continued parent involvement through the Facility and Finance Working Groups now forming to determine the best ways to move forward. If you would like to participate in the exploration and refining of options for GES's future, you are invited!

Important Calendar Reminders (please call the school with any questions):

Swimming Lessons 1/31 – 2/11: Students in kindergarten through 5th grade will need suits and towels!

Board Meeting February 15th: Community input welcome beginning at 3:30. Meeting begins at 4:00.

NO SCHOOL 2/21 – 2/25: Mid-winter break. School resumes on Monday, February 28th.

Office Phone: 218-387-9322

Email: learn@GreatExpectationsSchool.com

Check us out online at www.GreatExpectationsSchool.com