



Photo of the Week:
Snow Sculptures

Although our snowfall so far this year is behind the average, the students' enthusiasm for it is not! Recess times are not just lots of physical activity, but are full of opportunities for creative effort, collaborative play, and social learning. Students make "forts" or "houses" which become the center of imaginative games. Here, students packed snow to make blocks, then sculpted them!



Thank You for Your Help!

A new year brought some familiar volunteer faces Chris Callender and Kevin Kager made their regular appearances to help out. Thanks to you both! Thanks, too, go to Dave Mills for chaperoning the Bear Cubs visit to the skating rink and to this week's Food Committee volunteers: Kim Falter, Anna Sorensen, Natalie Sobanja, and Angie Works. We appreciate everyone's efforts to enhance the learning environment at GES! Thank you!

What's Happening at GES:

Swimming Lessons / Pool Time Begins Monday! We will once again be providing swimming lessons to all students in the Bear Cubs, Fawns, and Wolves classrooms, as well as providing recreational pool time for the Otter students beginning next Monday, January 9th and running every day for two weeks. We are planning to use Arrowhead Transportation to shuttle students between the school and pool, and are asking parents to make a contribution of \$35 per student or \$50 per family to help offset the cost of lessons, pool rental, and transportation. **You do not have to contribute in order to have your child participate.** We want all students to have the opportunity! Please call the school if you have any questions or concerns regarding this activity. Thank you!

New Conference Schedule! Based on responses to last fall's survey, we've made some changes to our parent-teacher conference schedule. Still, most things seem to be working for most families and will remain the same. Conferences will be held for 30 minutes, from 3:30 – 6:30 on Thursday, January 12; Tuesday, January 17; and Thursday, January 19. We will be working on a more automated, on-line approach to scheduling in the future; however, in the meantime, please call the school to arrange a time that works best for you and your family.

Board Retreat January 23 Each year, the GES school board takes a day to reflect on the school's mission, accomplishments, and challenges to develop goals and priorities for the year ahead. This year, expansion and finances will play a major role, along with enrollment, student achievement, technology, and environmental goals. If you have thoughts, concerns, or input you would like considered, please see any board member or Peter James.

Mission to Method: Why we do What we do at GES

GES was founded by parents, with the vision of having parents remain the primary educators of their children and work with teachers to provide the best possible learning environment and opportunities. Parent-teacher conferences, then, are an essential part of our fulfilling the vision and mission of the school. Whether things are generally going well or not-so-well with a student, teachers need to connect with parents to share information and plans for student growth. There are few things more important in making the collaboration between home and school work than your participation in these sessions. As a result, there are few things more important in making the GES vision a reality. Please make it a priority to join your child's teacher for every conference opportunity. Of course, if you can't make a regularly scheduled conference, you may call to arrange one at any time. Thank you!

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

Swimming Lessons Begin Monday! Students will be swimming daily for two weeks, from 1/9 – 1/20.

School Board Meeting 1/10: The date has shifted due to conference schedules, but the time is still 4:00.

Conferences 1/12, 1/17, and 1/19: Please call the office to arrange a parent/teacher conference time.

School Board Retreat 1/23: The GES school board will hold its annual retreat from 8:00 – 3:00.

NO SCHOOL 1/23 & 1/24: These are board retreat and staff workshop days. School resumes Wed, 1/25.