

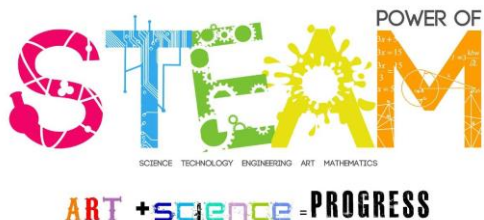
Chad Gerity  
Principal



Ponderosa Elementary School  
S.T.E.M. School  
Home of the Panthers

Bridget Contreras  
Assistant Principal

## Home of the Panthers!



### Dates to Remember...

April 5 - 14 CMAS Testing  
3<sup>rd</sup> Grade - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

April 7 - Steam Night  
6:00 - 7:30

### Ponderosa's Clothing Closet is now OPEN!

*Pre Loved at Ponderosa*

Location: The mobile across from the cafeteria playground  
When: Every Thursday after school, from 2:45-3:00 or by appointment  
What: Really nice clothes for kids! Some are new, with tags! All are in good condition. We are overflowing with donations so please come find something for your children!!

### From Mr. Gerity and Mrs. Contreras

Greetings Ponderosa Parents and Family Members.

The warmer weather sure is a welcome change. How is it possible that spring is already here? Change is in the air as we enter the final segment of our school year. The time coming back from spring break is an interesting time, with many fluctuations in the weather and a sense from students, staff and parents that the end is fast approaching. It's always at this point in the school year I like to remind everyone that we have eight weeks left of school and eight weeks is a pretty significant amount of time. Much can be accomplished over the course of eight weeks and we all have much yet to accomplish.

While the change of season is more apparent and obvious every day, the topic of change is one that leads this next paragraph. We are currently going through a significant transition in the front office at school. Back in November, long time administrative assistant, Lori Stewart, stepped into retirement and away from her duties at Ponderosa. While we have missed Lori tremendously, we have also struggled to find someone new to assume the responsibilities of the role. That all changed a couple of weeks ago. With great enthusiasm and excitement, I would like to introduce Venessa Rodriguez to the Ponderosa community. She is the new administrative assistant. Venessa comes to Ponderosa with a diverse professional background and life experience. All of which will contribute to her success in this new role. Please come by to say hello and meet Venessa. We are thrilled to have her join our team.

In addition to the administrative assistant position, there will be change at the office manager position. Gabby Marroquin, our current office manager, will be leaving Ponderosa to enter the field of real estate. We thank Gabby for her service to our school and wish her the very best in her new endeavors. The experience finding a new office manager was much easier than the administrative assistant position and we are elated to announce that Angie Thorpe will start as the new office manager on Monday, April 4. Angie spent the most recent years of her career at Indian Ridge (another CCSD elementary school), as an assistant supporting students with adaptive needs. In combination, Angie comes to Ponderosa with an extensive professional background prior to entering the education field. Be sure to give her a warm Ponderosa welcome.

The month of April brings warmer weather, blooming flowers, budding trees and greener grass. While April often serves as a reminder of summer yet to come, in education it is the month of state assessment. Yes, it is true, the state exam CMAS is here and all 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will be taking the CMAS exam during the first two weeks of April. The schedule is indicated below:

Date and Test	Grade
April 5 – ELA (English Language Arts)	3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup>
April 5 – Math	3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup>
April 6 – ELA	3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup>
April 6 – Math	4 <sup>th</sup>
April 7 – ELA	3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup>
April 7 – Math	3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup>

April 7 – ELA	3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup>
April 7 – Math	3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup>
April 8 – ELA	5 <sup>th</sup>
April 8 – Math	3 <sup>rd</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup>
April 13 – Science	5 <sup>th</sup>
April 14 – Science	5 <sup>th</sup>

Students will need a healthy breakfast and a good night’s rest to be successful taking these important assessments. Parents can increase the likelihood of positive results by encouraging their child to fully engage and do their very best. Please contact the school with any questions that pertain to the upcoming state assessments.

To finish the newsletter, I would like to address safety with a specific focus on morning drop off and dismissal. Earlier in the school year, I sent a message to families regarding my concern about safety during these busy times of the school day. Cars drive too fast on Lima and Jewell and do not stop for the staff members who provide crosswalk services. Additionally, parents and students cross Lima unsafely, not waiting for the staff to stop traffic. Since sending the recorded message and email to parents, a staff member has been struck by a vehicle during school dismissal and two cars have been in an accident during morning drop off. The later happening when a parent and child walked out into traffic without looking for cars or waiting for crosswalk staff to support. If we are to keep everyone safe, this cannot continue to happen. In the most

recent weeks, the school has begun partnering with the Aurora Police Department and Aurora Public Works to work toward a solution. The most notable evidence is the digital sign board that rests on the east side of Lima asking drivers to slow down. We will also have Aurora PD on site on random days to issue tickets to those who do not drive safely and to remind students and parents to wait until our crosswalk staff stop traffic to cross Lima. Finally, a small group of parents and I will be working with Aurora Public works to implement a "Traffic Calming" program in an effort to make these high traffic times safe going forward into the future. I recently met with Aurora Police Para Officer, Ricardo Hargrove, who prepared this letter for our Ponderosa Community:

*To: Ponderosa Elementary School*

*From: Officer Ricardo Hargrove*

*Date: March 18, 2022*

*Re: Parking and traffic violations before and after school drop off*

*Dear family members of Ponderosa Elementary School. My name is Officer Ricardo Hargrove with the Aurora Police Department assigned to the District 1 Police Area Representative Unit (PAR). It has come to my attention of parents and/or family members who are bringing students to and from school are forgetting how to properly obey the traffic laws. Please give yourself enough time in the morning and afternoon to get your kids to and from school so that you are not in such a rush.*

*The speed limit on S. Lima St. is 25 mph and 20 mph when the posted signs are flashing. Please drive safely and slow through this school zone especially during the drop off and pick up times.*

*There are also "No U-Turn" signs posted along S. Lima St. so please obey these signs. Please be courteous to everyone around you.*

*If you are park on the street, remember you must park 5 feet from any driveway. You cannot block the driveway. Please do not double park anywhere in front of the school as you are impeding the normal flow of traffic. Lastly, do not park in the marked handicapped parking spots if you are not handicap. As people who are really need to use these spots.*

*I'm asking all of you to take safety seriously as I do not want to see any student, staff member, parent, or family member get injured due to someone not obeying the traffic laws.*

*Please join me and let's make Ponderosa Elementary a safe place for everyone to come to.*

*Thank you,  
Officer R. Hargrove.*

Parents – please join us in the effort to make drop off and dismissal as safe as possible. Nothing could be better for our students and school community than to end the year safely and incident free. Let's make this spring semester the very best of the school year.

Sincerely,

Chad M. Gerity  
Principal Ponderosa Elementary School