

# Cougar News

## A Note From the Principal

March is here and our students continue to grow academically and socially. I have been impressed with the efforts of the students and staff regarding preparation for state testing. We still find time to have fun and learn at the same time.

Middletown City Schools continue to struggle with the current school funding formula. As you may be aware, we are back on the ballot for an operating levy. It is very difficult to explain the circumstances in a note, but I would offer to anyone to call me for any explanation of the situation with state funding of schools and the effect it has on Middletown City School District.

Thank you to all the parents who came to our Dr. Seuss celebration. It was our best turnout for a Parent Activity than any other night.

As always, it is my honor to be Principal of Creekview Elementary. The strong community, dedicated staff, and commitment for excellence from our students make Creekview a great place to work.

Jon Graft

## Skeeter Payne Elementary Boy's Basketball

**Good Luck teams as league games begin this Saturday at Wade E. Miller Gym**

### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Creekview Navy

Garrett Jones	Bryan Hammock
Corey Sipple	Kahlil Denton
Eli Thompson	Kaleb Gustin

### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Creekview Gray

Brady Baker	Milam Hartman
Deal Harris	Ryan Cassidy
Shawn Vincent	Shane Vincent

### 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Grades Creekview Blue

Sidique Bailey	Kody Gustin
Jacob Hall	Josh Senft
Micah Senft	Bobby Rall

### 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Grades Creekview Green

Jaylon Hill	Josh Woodward
Zach Green	Saige Richards
Chris Holmes	Jaton Clemons
Jerome Humes	Sam Michael
Kelcey Jackson	

## Featured Grade Level News Third Grade

Third graders have been very busy this year. We have been working hard to improve our reading skills and fluency, learning our math facts, and having fun along the way. The third grade achievement test will be in May and all students are working hard to prepare for the test. Some students have practiced their skills on the laptops, which makes learning more fun for all of us. If we do well on the achievement tests, we will be spending a day at Jacot Park as a reward

for our efforts. Mrs. Harris's third graders were selected to perform "Woke Up This Morning" at our school-wide Black History Assembly on February 26, and they did an excellent job. We enjoyed the Book Fair very much, thanks to the hard work of Mrs. Sant and her volunteers. The year is passing quickly!

Ms. Brewer, Mr. Robinson,  
and Mrs. Harris

## Scholastic Book Fair A Success!

The winner from the "Family Night at the Beach" event was Marcellis Smith. He received \$25 in books and his classroom (Mrs. Parsons 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade) also received \$25 in books.

There were 4 winners from the contest "Count the Shells." They were Tabitha Blue (3-B), Heather Thomas (5-K), Alexia Moore (1-L), and Hunter Van Amburg (K-AM-R). Each got to choose a poster or a \$5 book from the fair.

Coming May 15 is the Buy One-Get One Free or 50% off Scholastic One Day Book Fair.

Thanks for all the help from parent volunteers!

Sue Sant-Creekview Librarian

**PTO Meeting  
March 27  
4:15 p.m.**

## Creekview

### Parent News WebLink

Creekview parents have an additional resource for important Creekview news. Simply log onto [www.middletowncityschools.com](http://www.middletowncityschools.com). Go to Creekview Elementary. Then go to Classroom Pages. There you will find Creekview PTO.

### Congratulations

#### 5th Grader Selina Kreamelmeier

During half-time on Feb. 24, Selina and 21 other students were recognized at the Miami University Men's Basketball game for participating in the Miami University Athletic Department Reading Program. Selina received a sweatshirt and a medal. Papa John's Pizza is donating a pizza party to her homeroom, Mrs. Senften. The Creekview Library also received a check for \$75. Great job, Selina!

### Spring Pictures

Creekview and LifeTouch Photography will team together again to take photos of your children. Photo date is March 21.

## Creekview E-Mail List

Would you like to be notified of important Creekview news by e-mail? Join our e-mail list by sending an e-mail to [gseft@middletowncityschools.com](mailto:gseft@middletowncityschools.com) In the subject line, type ADD ME.

## March Dates

3/14 Early Dismissal  
3/16 NO SCHOOL  
3/21 Spring Pictures  
3/23 End of Grading Period  
3/27 PTO Meeting  
3/28 Early Dismissal  
3/30 MEGAFRIDAY  
4/6-4/13 Spring Break

## Don't forget your General Mills Boxtops March is Collection Month!!

Creekview earns cash for every box top turned in. This is an easy fundraiser. Simply cut out the General Mills box top on your favorite products and send in to your child's teacher. March is one of the months that our coordinator sends box tops to General Mills. So get those box tops into your homeroom!! Thank you to parent coordinator, Amy Brown, for chairing this fundraiser.

**Cougar News is a volunteer effort of the Creekview PTO. 03/07**  
**Why do Middletown Schools need to ask for levies now?**

**You will find more answers at upcoming Community Forums. Each session will feature a short presentation by District Treasurer Eric Sotzing and Superintendent Steve Price, and will allow time for questions and answers:**  
**Tuesday, March 20, 6:30 P.M. at Middletown High School**  
**Wednesday, March 21, 6:30 P.M. at Rosa Parks Elementary School**  
**Thursday, March 22, 6:30 P.M. at Highview Elementary School**

A simple answer is because school revenues are fixed or declining, while the cost of education continually rises. Many of these costs are out of the control of the local board and administration.

### Schools have "fixed" income...

Middletown Schools have chosen to ask the community for "emergency levies", which ask for a fixed dollar amount of revenue that stays the same every year the tax is collected; no increase. Property values rise over time, but Middletown Schools receive the same amount of income from a levy every year, no matter how long ago the levy was passed.

In recent years, state funding to offset

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local taxes has declined. And, the state changed the way business property taxes are collected, so MCSD has lost some local funding as well.

## **...but inflation and demands on schools increase every year.**

The Middletown City School District, like all districts, faces inflation, state and federal unfunded mandates, and an increasing level of services expected by residents. Here are just a few:

-Special education services must be provided for all children in the district who qualify under state and federal guidelines, regardless of cost. This can cost up to \$66,000+ per child.

-State regulations dictate that districts must employ at least one classroom teacher for every 24 pupils grades K-4.

-Most of the budget, as for any school district, is for staff who are responsible for the education, transportation, and safety of Middletown children.

Attracting and keeping good people is a priority, and accomplishing this with limited resources is a challenge.

-Middletown residents have told us they expect us to keep providing non-required programs like AP and honors courses, the GATE program, the Alternative Academy, sports, performing arts, and others.

## **Middletown School voted tax history**

Middletown residents have voted to increase local taxes for schools 7 times in the last 40 years:

-5 for operating costs like salaries and utilities

-1 legally restricted to building maintenance and equipment

-1 legally restricted to new buildings

The operating issues have been renewed throughout the time shown but the district continued to receive the same dollar amount in revenue as on the day the issue passed.

## **Financial crisis in 2005**

In 2005, ten years with no increase in locally voted funding, the schools faced a serious financial crisis. A community-led finance committee studied the problem and made the following three recommendations to the Board of Education:

1. That the district make an additional \$2 million in cuts in addition to the

\$7.5 million in annual expenses that had already been cut.

2. That, in May 2005, the district place a combined issue on the ballot to renew the 1980 emergency issue and add 7.1 mills.

3. That, when the 1995 emergency issue expires in 2007, the Board seek to renew that issue and add millage.

The Board accepted this plan. They cut more out of the budget. In May 2005, the community supported the renew/addition levy, averting the financial crisis and deep cuts to education.

## **2007: Completing the Plan**

The financial plan recommended by the community led committee was in keeping with the district's philosophy of "on-time" revenue. Rather than asking voters in 2005 to approve a more expensive issue to last a longer period of time, the committee recommended that the Board ask only for enough to last until the 1995 emergency issue came up for renewal in 2007. This May, the Board will seek community support for the third piece of the committee's recommendations to assure fiscal stability for the Middletown Schools.

In May, this \$4 million renewal and \$3 million addition is on the ballot to complete the financial plan aimed at the stabilizing the district and continuing academic progress. It means \$7 million to Middletown Schools (only \$3 million is new funding). This issue will cost a resident about \$10.00 a month more per \$100,000 of home value.

If we don't pass this issue, we will have to cut \$7 million out of the annual budget. The following is an example of what \$7 million means to the Middletown Schools' annual budget, not a list of cuts. \$7 million is equivalent to:

+80 staff members;

+More than 3,000 textbooks;

+\$85 per student for classroom supplies, equipment, and services;

+All high school busing; and,

+All extracurricular activities.

**Specific cuts will be announced at the Board of Education Meeting on March 12, 6:30 P.M. at the Board of Education 1515 Girard Avenue. If you have cable TV, you can watch the meeting on TV Middletown, Channel 24.**