



An Innovative District Delivering Educational Excellence

Dear Hilltop Families,

Welcome to a new school year at Hilltop Primary School! The excitement is building as we prepare for the 2018-2019 school year. We look forward to welcoming our new Kindergarten students, new students to our school, and all of our current students.

We are really proud of our accomplishments this past year and can't wait to continue to apply all that we have learned to this coming school year. Our school has completed its two year training of PBIS. Our goal is to continue to SOAR in all that we do with even more strategies for building strong character for students. Along with PBIS, all grade levels will be implementing a new character based program called Second Step. This program highlights positive behavior and compliments PBIS very well. To learn more, please join us at our Curriculum Evening or visit [www.secondstep.org](http://www.secondstep.org).

Our PTA is about as outstanding of a group as one school could ask for. We would love for all school members to attend meetings and be a part of these great efforts. The PTA has helped provide classroom improvements, staff lounge make overs, along with curriculum and playground improvements (including a new basketball hoop and Gaga Ball Pit). We can't wait for the students to get to use them.

Our Octoberfest committee has been planning during the summer months. We need YOU! We need you to join in the fun, we need you to volunteer, we need you to donate items and we need it quickly. **Mark your calendars for Saturday, October 6, 2018 from 11 am to 3 pm for Octoberfest.**

Please note the dates listed in the newsletter to start our school year. The calendar for the remainder of the year will be listed on the Hilltop website and you can easily subscribe to this calendar via your smartphone.

The staff looks forward to welcoming all of our students back for an exciting school year. We will see you very soon!

Sincerely,

Mike Moch  
Hilltop Primary School Principal

## 2018-2019 Upcoming Calendar Dates:

Wednesday, August 29  
Open House 4:00- 6:00 pm  
School Pictures Available at Open House 4:00-6:00 pm

Tuesday, September 4  
First Day of School for ALL Students: Kindergarten through Fourth Grade (School Hours: 8:55 am- 3:35 pm)

Monday, September 10: School/Class Picture Day

Tuesday, September 11: Curriculum Evening 5:30- 7:30 pm

September 10- September 28  
FAST Assessments for Grades 1-4

Monday, September 17  
PTA Meeting @ 6:30 pm (free child care provided)

Friday, September 21  
Fourth Grade Students Invited to Sing the National Anthem at MWHS Football Game

Friday, September 28  
MWHS Homecoming Parade @ 5:00 pm

Saturday, October 6  
Octoberfest 11 am- 3:00 pm

Thursday, October 11  
Picture Retake Day

October 17- October 19  
No School: Professional Development/Education Minnesota Conference

Wednesday, October 31  
Halloween and Parade @ 1:45 pm

Monday, November 5  
Parent/Teacher Conferences 12:00- 4:00 pm

Tuesday, November 6  
Election Day

Thursday, November 8  
Parent/Teacher Conferences 4:00- 8:00 pm

Thursday, November 13  
Parent/Teacher Conferences 4:00- 8:00 pm

\*\* For an At-a-glance calendar see the last page of the newsletter and/or subscribe the Hilltop website calendar.

### **ADSI (Academic and Behavior Supports)**

It is important that we provide assistance to strengthen the skills of all our students. Hilltop Primary School provides ADSI (Alternative Delivery of Specialized Instructional Services) in a small group setting for reading, math and behavior intervention supports. These programs require parent/guardian permission. Your signature allows us to support students in these areas. All parent/guardians will be contacted prior to any student receiving these support programs. Please see the Acknowledgement Form to sign off for your child to receive these supports.

### **Attendance**

It is important that all students attend school each day. Please call the attendance line at 952-491-8505, before 8:30 am if your child will be absent. It is your responsibility to let us know if your child will be absent or late. If we do not receive a phone call, you will receive an automated message reporting your child's absence. You may also complete an absence through Family Access. A summary of the district policy can be seen in the Quick Links of the Hilltop webpage.

### **Classroom Placement**

You will be able to view your child's assigned teacher on the Family Access online system on Friday, August 24. Log into Family Access, on the left hand side and click "Schedule". You will then see your child's teacher for the year.

Please remember that the teachers and the administration work hard on student placement. Classes are balanced by many different factors. Please give the teachers and students time to transition into their next grade level. Teacher changes will not be made as many factors are taken into consideration before students are placed into the classrooms.

### **Conference Sign-up**

Fall conference sign-up will be completed through Family Access. All families will receive an email reminding you of your log-in information. If you have not received this information, please check your junk email. Otherwise, feel free to contact the school office and we can assist you.

### **Curriculum Evening**

Families in Grades K-4 are invited to attend our Curriculum Evening. The evening is Tuesday, September 11 from 5:30-7:30 pm. During this time you will have a series of thirty minute activities to choose from that will include curriculum information, Hilltop School information, snacks and child care for school age children. Please mark your calendar for **Tuesday, September 11 from 5:30-7:30 pm.**

### **Emergency Contact Form**

Please update and return the Emergency Contact form enclosed during Open House or by the first day of school. Please make sure you look at the back of the form to confirm all information.

### **Family Access**

Please see the final page for specific information regarding Family Access.

### **Family Handbook**

The Family Handbook will be provided on the school website. Please note the Acknowledgement Form attached that indicates you have read and understand the contents of the handbook. Please specifically note the attendance policy, as there is often questions about absences, doctor's notes and unexcused absences and tardy slips. Please return the form at the Open House.

### **FAST Assessment Program Being Implemented During the 18-19 School Year**

As we start the 18-19 school year, the district will be implementing the FAST (Formative Assessment System for Teachers) Assessment program across our school district. During this past school year, we piloted the assessment program and found that it provided staff very comparable data in half the time compared to NWEA MAP Growth assessments which have been used in the district for many years. The FAST Assessment program was created at the University of Minnesota and is very similar in format to the NWEA MAP assessments in math and reading in which the assessments are computer adaptive and unique for each child based on the accuracy of student responses. NWEA MAP math assessments will still be used at the middle school and high school levels this year for students enrolled in advanced/accelerated math courses while we wait for the FAST Assessment program to release a middle school/high school version of their math assessment.

#### *Why the change from NWEA MAP?*

Standardized testing takes time away from instruction and FAST is able to deliver detailed information about individual student academic performance in reading and math in half the time when compared to NWEA MAP.

In addition, FAST has connected its reading and math fall and spring assessments to progress-monitoring assessments that can provide regular, detailed information on students' current level of learning and growth in math and reading throughout the school year. This information can be an effective tool to support student learning.

Information about the FAST Assessment program can be found on FASTBridge website at <http://www.fastbridge.org/about-us/our-story/>. When students complete their fall assessments with FAST, parents will be provided information about their child's scores to address students' strengths and any gaps in reading and math.

Please contact your building principal or Mark Femrite, Asst. Supt. of Teaching and Learning ([femrite@westonka.k12.mn.us](mailto:femrite@westonka.k12.mn.us) or 952-491-8002) with any questions you may have.

### Hilltop Website

The school district has a new website! Please check out the website and choose Hilltop under "select a school." The Hilltop Website has information that is important for families. You can access the Hilltop Website at [www.westonka.k12.mn.us](http://www.westonka.k12.mn.us).

### Lunch Information

Lunch information including prices and an application for free or reduced lunches was mailed from the district office in August. If you have questions regarding the application, please contact food service. Just a reminder, breakfast is free to ALL Kindergarten students.

### Morning Drop Off and Afternoon Pick Up

A strong recommendation is that all students ride the bus, if it is provided for your area. This is easiest for the transition to school and back home. However, if you are planning on dropping your student off in the morning or picking your student up afterschool, please follow the process below.

#### Drop-Off

All parents dropping off must enter the parking lot at the first entrance. The second entrance is designated for bus drop off/pick up only. Please pull into the lot loop all the way to the sign "please pull forward to here." Please make sure you give your hugs and kisses prior to drop off to keep the line moving. Students can be dropped off starting at 8:40am.

#### Pick-Up

Each family will receive one "pick up sign" that is to be placed in the window of your vehicle at pick up time. Your child's name will be called and they will exit the building. Please have your child work on opening and closing the door, as well as buckling up on their own to keep our line moving.

#### Bus Lot

A separate lot has been designated for bus pick up/drop off only. Note this lot may be used during non-school hours for events such as Open House. There are parking spaces in the main lot at the front of the school.

### New Students

We love welcoming new students to Hilltop Primary School. Along with all of our new Kindergarten students we have nearly 20 new students in grades 1-4. We will conduct New Student Welcome Groups at the start of the school year. Please let Mr. Moch know ([mochm@westonka.k12.mn.us](mailto:mochm@westonka.k12.mn.us)) if for some reason you don't want your new student to attend the welcome group meeting times.

### Octoberfest

**Saturday, October 6**

**11:00 am – 3:00 pm**

Octoberfest is one of our biggest PTA fundraisers! This is a time that we ask all community members to be involved and help us raise money for special programs and activities at Hilltop. Last year, the PTA raised over \$28,000 at Octoberfest. Please plan to sign up to assist at Open House.

### Open House Night

**August 29 • 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM**

Open House Night is for all students in Grades Kindergarten through Grade 4. This is a night for students to visit Hilltop, learn about their classrooms, meet their classroom teachers, get school pictures taken, drop off school forms and greet other students and families.

Be sure to stop at the many tables to complete your start of the year business including: PTA Table, Community Education, Transportation and Food Service. *You can also add money into your child's Food Service account – the food service folks will be ready to enter the payment directly into the accounts for your child/children.*

### Security and Safety—PLEASE READ OUR NEW PROCEDURE

At Hilltop Primary School our goal is to create a safe environment for our students. As we progress through changes to increase our security one area will have an impact on our families visiting the school. All parents and guardians will be asked to make an appointment to visit the school for any reason, whether to volunteer, visit for lunch or pick up/drop off your child. We will be using an on-line form or you may call the office. Please look for a separate email to families with the specific instructions to complete this task. We apologize for any inconvenience as we balance between our welcoming environment and safe school environment.

### **School Messenger E-mails – News from Hilltop Primary School**

Hilltop Primary also uses an online e-mail system for updates on the school, the school year, and special events. The e-mail addresses used are from the Family Access system (so, please make sure that you update this information). The system will use the first two e-mails listed on Family Access when it sends out the information. The e-mail system also is valuable if Westonka has a late start for school or closing school early. It is our emergency contact system – so, please make sure you update all phone numbers into the system.

If your e-mail or phone number changes during the course of the year, please update the Family Access system. Our phone and e-mail system notices the updates and makes the changes automatically.

### **School Supplies**

The school supply lists are available on the Hilltop website. Please print a list for your reference. School supplies may be brought to the Open House. Please make sure that school supplies, that are not community supplies, are labeled with your child's name. If you ordered a School Supply Pack from *Staples*, the School Supply pack should have been delivered to your home.

In the primary school setting, students receive a locker for their coats, phy ed shoes, and winter clothing. Please do not bring items to “decorate” the locker.

Backpacks must fit into the lockers. Please do not buy the backpacks with the wheels as they do not fit inside the lockers. Also, please mark your child's backpack with their name and grade level. Please also label sweatshirts and jackets to start the year. They are often left behind in the lost and found.

### **Need Help with School Supplies?**

WeCan is our local agency that helps families in need with School Supplies. You need to bring: 1) Your ID, 2) Your child's ID (a report card will work/social security card), and 3) Your last Utility bill/lease/mail for proof of address in order to participate in this event. WeCan can be reached at (952) 472-0742. The WeCan office is located in the strip mall with the Westonka ECFE Center.

### **Staff Meals and Special Luncheons**

*A note from Tina O'Shea—PTA Staff Meal Coordinator:*

Hello Parents! Each year, as parents, you have an opportunity to say thank you to the staff for all the time they take with our children to provide them a great education, in a safe and fun environment. There are a variety of meals for the staff (Welcome Back Breakfast,

Conference Nights, Teacher Appreciation Week, and Para Appreciation Week) and various grade levels are assigned to each meal. An e-mail is sent to the grade level(s) in charge, so please sign up to bring food items on your grade level event.

All we ask for with the meals is that you bring the meal in a disposable container and we do all the set up and clean up for you! A simple way to say “Thanks for everything that You Do!” For those parents new to the school and for those who haven't had a chance to help out, we prepare for 17 - 20 people total and everything can be homemade, but doesn't have to be either.

### **Student Fee Payment**

Family Access is our online payment system. When you log into Family Access, you will see a link to pay your child's fees. All students are required to pay a technology fee, Environmental Education fee, field trip admission and busing fee, and yearbook fee. The fees are put into a lump sum for the parents to pay through the Family Access System.

Wolf Ridge fees will be noted in the system for third and fourth grade students with their remaining balance for the trip. This is an optional fee to pay at this time. The fee will be adjusted as fundraising is complete for each student. However, the fee will need to be paid prior to the end of March for our fourth grade students. All other students K-2 are assessed an \$80 fee in Family Access that can be paid as an optional fee towards the Wolf Ridge trip. We suggest paying a small portion each year prior to the trip.

Please go to the Hilltop website, click on “Family Access” and log into your account.

Grade 4 students will need a recorder for music class. (All Grade 3 students will receive a new recorder and the fee is included in the overall fee.) If your Grade 4 student did not purchase a recorder last year, please make sure that you purchase one through the system this year before the first day of school. An order will be placed at that time for recorders. Please pay your fees before the first day of school.

### **Student Pictures**

School pictures will be offered at Open House from 4:00-6:00 pm on Wednesday, August 29. Please see the enclosed order form for more information. If you are not able to make it to Open House, pictures will be offered again on Monday, September 10 during the school day.

## **Volunteers**

There are many school wide opportunities to volunteer. Many of the volunteers assist in classrooms, field trips, small groups, etc. **ALL VOLUNTEERS MUST COMPLETE A BACKGROUND CHECK.** Two forms are included in the back to school mailer. All background checks need to be completed and returned each school year.

## **Welcome to Our New Staff**

We are excited to continue to grow at Hilltop Primary School. With this growth also comes some rearrangement of staff members. First, we would like to welcome Andrea Radcliff. Andrea will be joining our first grade team as the fifth section. Andrea has previously taught Kindergarten in Albert Lea, MN. We are excited to have Andrea join the team.

Our third grade team will once again welcome back Sabrina Ruud. Mrs. Ruud loved her second graders so much she followed them to the next grade.

Our current fourth grade will continue to be three sections, so Solveig Lawrence will be moving to second grade. Mrs. Lawrence began her teaching career in second grade, so she is excited to return to her roots.

We are excited to add a new position, PBIS Specialist. Tiffany Christensen will now be working with small and large groups regarding behavior interventions and strategies. This position began last school year as part time and will now be a full time position.

We are excited to welcome additional Special Education paraprofessional support to our staff. Our new staff members include: Julie Orr, Julie served as short term para this past school year and will now be working full time. Catherine Ottebreit, Catherine served the district in food service this past year and will now transition to a SPED para. Catherine has four children that attend Shirley Hills. Lisa Bartkowitz, Lisa has served as a paraprofessional for 15 years prior to working at Hilltop. She is excited to join the district as her son is a middle school student at GMS.

We would also like to welcome Monica Kahmeyer. Monica will serve as a Kindergarten paraprofessional. Monica has previously subbed for Hilltop and her children previously attended Hilltop. Monica will bring some great energy to our Kindergarten students.

Finally, we would like to welcome Troy Schlintz. Mr. Schlintz will be our new day custodian. He has spent the last five years as an evening custodian at Shirley Hills. We wish Mr. Darryl and Mr. Eric well as they begin new adventures outside of Hilltop Primary!

## **Wellness School**

Hilltop Primary School is a Wellness School. This means that we value nutritious snacks. Students are asked to bring a snack to school every day. The snack should include fresh fruit, yogurt, pretzels, or any other healthy food.

## **DISTRICT POLICY ON WELLNESS AND BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Families are not expected to bring in something to share with students in the classroom on the day of the birthday. If a parent or guardian chooses to send something with their child to celebrate the birthday, it needs to be a non-food item. Teachers will not hand out food items on the birthday. Food items will be sent home with the child that brought it to school.

A library book may be purchased for the child's birthday. The child then can announce their library book over the morning announcements. The book is donated to the library and has a book plate in it with the child's name. Stop and see Mrs. Hempel and Mrs. Mahoney in the library.

## **Birthday Invitations**

Please do not send birthday invitations to school. Handing them out in class causes many hurt feelings. Thanks and we appreciate your help in this matter.

## **Wolf Ridge**

When your child is in Grade 4, he/she will attend a weeklong trip to Wolf Ridge in Finland, Minnesota during the month of May.

It takes \$400 per child to attend Wolf Ridge. Students start fundraising for the trip in Kindergarten and each child has their own account that pays for the trip. We ask that each child pays \$80 per year.

Our Read-a-thon is our Wolf Ridge fundraiser. This fundraiser allows students to collect pledges from friends, families and neighbors while doing something great, reading! 94-100% of profits go directly to the individual student accounts. Our fundraiser takes place in February.

## Family Access User Information Page

Family Access is our online system that we use for a Student Information System. It is important that all parents login to this system and update phone numbers, e-mail addresses, emergency information, and other important information. Report cards, student fees, and classroom teacher assignments are part of this system. At the end of each term, report cards are posted to the system.

All families will receive a reminder email (or initial email for new families) with information on how to access your username and password into the Family Access system. It is important to write your username and password down and keep it into a secure area for your immediate access. If you have more than one student in the Westonka School system, all students will be accessed through the same system.

Please make sure that all information is updated before the beginning of the school year.

### **BACK-TO-SCHOOL FAMILY ACCESS CHECKLIST**

Information entered in Skyward/Family Access is information teachers, office staff, and district staff use to communicate with you. *It is extremely important that you update all information requested below.*

### **LOG INTO YOUR FAMILY ACCESS ACCOUNT**

After you log into Family Access, each gray box listed below corresponds to a button on the left side menu.

#### **STUDENT INFO:**

“View Student’s Family” – Verify names, phone numbers, address for your family

“Request Changes for Student”

Update student & family names, addresses, phone numbers

Enter **Emergency Information** (dentist, doctor, insurance) – optional

Enter/Edit information for at least 2 **Emergency Contacts** (non-parents)

**BUSING:** See pick up and drop off locations and times

**FOOD SERVICE:** View account balance and purchases, make payments to your child’s account

**SCHEDULE:** View your child’s Homeroom Teacher

**FEE MANAGEMENT:** View and pay your child’s school year fees

- Click on Make a Payment
- Make sure Online Payment Vendor is set to Revtrak
- Click on Update Payment Amount
- Click Pay Charge box (after amount due)

- Update Cart
- Click on Pay with Vendor (be sure it’s set to RevTrak)
- Submit Payment Yes
- Go to Checkout
- Continue with setting up a RevTrak account, enter credit card info, and finish payment

**TEACHER CONFERENCES:** Sign Up for Fall Conferences (scheduling option will open in September)

**SKYLERT:** Indicate how you want to receive school/district notifications **\*\*\*IMPORTANT:** General phone calls and emails (attendance, Friday News, Food Service notifications, etc.) only go out to Primary Phone & Email and Secondary Phone. The 3<sup>rd</sup> phone number is only called for school hours emergencies (early school closings), so we recommend the 3<sup>rd</sup> phone be your work phone number.

**SCHOOL DIRECTORY:** View contact information for other families in the district or school

**MY ACCOUNT (top right side of Family Access page):**

- Change your login and/or password – optional
- Indicate what information you would like shared in the online School Directory

# HILLTOP CALENDAR 2018 - 2019

Office Phone: (952)491-8500

Attendance Line: (952)491-8505

School Hours: 8:55 am – 3:35 pm

Nurse Line: (952)491-8504

## 2018 - 2019 SCHOOL LUNCH PRICES

Students: \$2.75

Adult: \$3.80

Milk: \$.50

Breakfast Kindergarten: Free

Breakfast Gr. 1-4: \$.95

### AUGUST

- 8 New to Hilltop Family Social 6:30 – 7:00 pm
- 20 PTA Exec Committee Mtg 9:00 am – 12 pm
- 15 Kindergarten Meet and Play Groups
- 27-30 Staff Workshop Day
- 29 Hilltop Open House, 4:00 – 6:00 pm

### SEPTEMBER

- 4 First Day of School (Grades K – 4)
- 10-28 FAST Assessment (Grades 1 – 4)
- 10 Hilltop Pictures/Lifetouch Photography
- 11 Curriculum Night 5:30 – 7:30 pm
- 21 4th Grade at MWHS Football Game, 7:00pm
- 17 PTA Meeting, 6:30 pm, Media Center
- 28 MWHS Homecoming Parade, 5:00 pm Hilltop Kazoo Band Gr 3-4

### OCTOBER

- 6 Octoberfest Fall Carnival, 11:00 am – 3:00 pm
- 8 PTA Executive Committee Meeting, 4:00 pm
- 11 Picture Retakes
- 17 Teacher Workshop, **No School**
- 18, 19 Education Minnesota Conference, **No School**
- 31 Halloween Parade, 1:45 pm

### NOVEMBER

- 5 **No School**, PD, 8:00 am – 11:30 am, Conferences 12:00 – 4:00 pm
- 8, 13 Parent Conferences, 4:00 – 8:00 pm
- 12 PTA Meeting, 6:30 pm, Media Center
- 22, 23 **No School**, Thanksgiving Break  
Scholastic Bookfair
- 27 Music Concert and Art Showcase Grade 1 - 6:30 pm and Grade 3 – 7:30 pm

### DECEMBER

- 10 PTA Executive Committee Meeting, 4:00 pm
- 24 – Jan 2 **No School**, Winter Break

**DATES ON CALENDAR ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

Modified: 8/07/2018

## JANUARY

- 3 School Resumes
- 7 PTA Meeting, 6:30 pm, Media Center
- 17 Kindergarten Round-Up, 4:30 pm and 6:00 pm
- 18 **No School**, Professional Development
- 21 **No School**, Professional Development 8:00-3:30 pm

## FEBRUARY

- 7 Science Fair/Family Fun Night – Spaghetti Dinner, 5:00 – 7:00 pm
- 11 PTA Executive Committee Meeting – 4:00 pm
- 14 Valentine Party
- 18 **No School**, President’s Day
- 19 **No School**, Professional Development

## MARCH

- 1 Sleepover Grades 2 – 4 7:00 pm – 7:00 am
- 11 PTA Meeting, 6:30 pm, Media Center
- 12 Parent Conferences, 4:00 – 8:00 pm
- 14, 19 Parent Conferences, 4:00 – 8:00 pm
- 22 Professional Development
- 25-29 **No School**, Spring Break

## APRIL

- 8 - 19 MCA Grades 3 and 4
- 15 PTA Executive Committee Meeting, 4:00 pm Media Center
- 30 Hilltop Concert Grade 2 – 6:30 pm and Grade 4 – 7:30 pm
- 30 Fine Arts Night Grade 2 and 4

## MAY

- 6 - 24 NWEA Grades 1 - 4
- 9 Grandfriends Day (1<sup>st</sup> Grade)  
Scholastic Bookfair
- 10 **No School**, Professional Development
- 13 PTA Meeting, 6:30 pm, Media Center (Octoberfest Meeting to follow PTA Meeting)
- 17 Last day of AR /**All Library Books Due**
- 17 AR Party
- 20 - 24 Wolf Ridge, Grade 4 Students
- 27 **No School**, Memorial Day
- 31 **Last Student Day/Field Day**

## JUNE

- 3 Teacher Workshop Day

**DATES ON CALENDAR ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

Modified: 8/07/2018