

Oak Views

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Earning a Scholarship the Fresh and Easy Way!

Senior students worked their shifts at our January Fresh and Easy fundraiser to earn the chance to win a scholarship provided by the grocery store. Throughout the state, the company offers the opportunity for each school to help out during one evening and share in a percentage of the profits. Because of our seniors' participation, one of them will

receive a scholarship of over \$400. The only requirement was that a student had to work a shift at the store, and most did. Workers

included Carlos Plascencia, pictured ready to bag below left, Austin Dominguez, Katie Rytterager-Nickel, Alaina Rosenthal-Guillot, Dilon Wallace, Jon Rizzo, and Nick Rossiter. Ms. Roberts, Mr. Tabone, Ms. Liepman, and Ms. Allen all showed up to help out, too. It was nice seeing so many friendly and familiar faces.



Parents, including Denise Keane, pictured above with Austin Dominguez, stopped by to add to give support. We even saw some alumni and alumni parents! Thank you to all who helped. This is an annual event, so we hope to see you there next year, as well. The scholarship recipient will be announced at graduation.



Special Schedule 3/30

8:35-9:05

Period 1

9:10-10:25

10th Graders with Counselor

11th Graders take EAP Test

**12th Graders – Period 2/3
Final**

10:30 – 11:00

Healthy Kids Survey

11:00 – 11:30

Pizza Lunch (Optional)

Dismissal

See page 7 for details

We Hark to the Siren Song of the Shark

As part of OPUSD's Shark Week, Oak View students were treated to a presentation by Dr. Chris Lowe, a leading researcher of the white shark, prolific along the California coast. His special gift is in tracking and observing the babies as they grow and travel. At

right, Alexis Lewin holds a shark jaw, remarkable for its ability to provide endless teeth to this interesting animal. Oak View ASB donated \$75 to the Monterey Bay Aquarium for their baby great white shark project.

More on page 4.



Principal's Corner

Spring is around the corner and our school garden is filled with blooming flowers! In January, we celebrated our first harvest, as we enjoyed *Salad Day* on January 19th. Soon, we will add some organic vegetables for a late spring harvest. Our students do the planting, fulfill the watering duties, and dig the weeds along the way. More on food- as our consumer math class enjoyed their field trip to Ralph's to authentically compare pricing and to learn about food marketing strategies.

One measure of an effective school assembly is when the staff learns new things along with the students. So it was for our Shark Week assembly in February. We learned that great white sharks are commonly in Santa Monica bay! Enjoy the pics and story contained within..

We are so pleased with the academic excellence among our students as fourteen students earned a GPA of 3.5 or higher for Quarter 2; and I believe that one interesting factor in their success is the very common visits from successful graduates. Read about a few of them in this newsletter.

Teachers and administrators are modeling life long learning as we are attending workshops about the new common core standards. Each month, we learn about the revised teaching and learning outcomes with the goal of preparing each student to be *college and career ready upon graduation*. For our students, this means successful transition to community college, trade and tech schools, service in the armed forces or getting that first job.

Oak View site council parents are staying very busy, as well. Parents enjoyed the first Parents Supporting Parents meeting on February 7th. It was an opportunity to share their stories, challenges and successes with each other. The second meeting is on March 6th with information neurofeedback therapy. Thank you Site Council parents!

Again, please enjoy *Oak Views*. Don't miss the calendar of events and please visit with us anytime-maybe for our upcoming School Barbeque on April 5th. More details to follow. See you then!



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Alumni Update

Daniel Paris ('05) called the other day asking for a copy of his graduation picture. He is currently earning a master's degree at Harvard (and has all A's) and works with the International Higher Education Disabilities Organization, a social justice group that sponsors workshops and speakers and does advocacy work for students with educational disabilities. The reason he needed the pictures? He is being featured in a documentary for PBS about high-achieving students

who experienced academic challenges! More information to follow as we have it.

Chris Weiner ('11) stopped by. He is keeping busy with school and work. While taking a full load at Moorpark, he is also working steadily as a voice-over and as a video game designer.

Jack Sorfazian ('11) is also attending Moorpark and working as a Wells Fargo teller. Jack is heading for a career in law and is currently enjoying

his criminal justice class (but his Biological Anthropology course, not so much).

Emily Wyse ('07) did some volunteer work for us rearranging and updating the library. She is on hiatus from college and is currently working for a local company.

We will create a Facebook page for Oak View alumni soon to facilitate continued contact between graduates and with the school. Keep an eye out

Notes from the Superintendent and School Board President

Last month I wrote to you about the bad news in the Governor's proposal for schools for next year and since then we have been able to quantify it for Oak Park. Here are the figures:

If the Governor's tax initiative PASSES in November, OPUSD will need to cut \$1.3 million from our budget.

If the Governor's tax initiative DOES NOT PASS in November, OPUSD will need to cut \$2.8 million from our budget.

The reason for the bad news is that even if the initiative passes, it proposes 'flat' funding for next year for school districts. The problem with that is that most districts, including this one, are running 'structural deficits,' or we are relying on one-time funds and carry-over monies to make it through each year. Our structural deficit is \$930,000. Last school year, for example, we carried forward \$654,000 of Education Jobs Act funding from the federal government that helped us into this year. Those funds will be fully expended this year keeping the class sizes, programs, and length of the school year in place. In fact, we expect to end the year by exhausting our general fund and using \$430,000 from our mandated Reserve for Economic Uncertainties, which will lower that fund to just 1.7%. The legal mandate in the past for the reserve was 3%, but it has recently been lowered to 1%. This year we were forced to file a 'qualified' at our First Interim Budget Report, one of 120 school districts in the

state to do so. This means that we *may* not be able to meet our financial obligations this year and must be under more careful scrutiny by the County Office of Education. This is the first time that OPUSD has not filed 'positive.' We are certain that we will be able to meet our obligations at this time but at the time the filing was required we were not. I think that this does help illustrate the financial strain that school districts are facing.

In order to meet the challenges for next year, the Board has raised our enrollment capacities for District of Choice students. Adding students where we have room brings additional revenue to the school district above the cost of educating these students. As you know, this is one of the ways that we have been able to avoid catastrophic cuts over the last five years. Overall, we will move from a current enrollment of 4211 to 4427 in the fall, or an increase of 216 students. Note that we are currently staffed for our projected enrollment for this year of 4250 so this is actually a net increase of 177 students.

However, the cuts that are proposed are too great to cover by increasing our enrollment. The Class Size Reduction program for grades K-3 is basically being eliminated next year. Districts that intend to keep the program in place will have to make the choice of cutting something else or raising class sizes at other grade levels as most school district have already done. Our class sizes in K-3 will need to move up from the current 25:1 to

28:1 next year. Class size ratios in grades 4 and 5 will remain the same. Teacher/student ratios at MCMS will move up slightly from 31.5:1 to 32:1 and at OPHS from 32:1 to 33:1. This will save us \$640,000 and can be applied to the cuts outlined above. If you're doing the math, you will see that doesn't fill the entire gap.

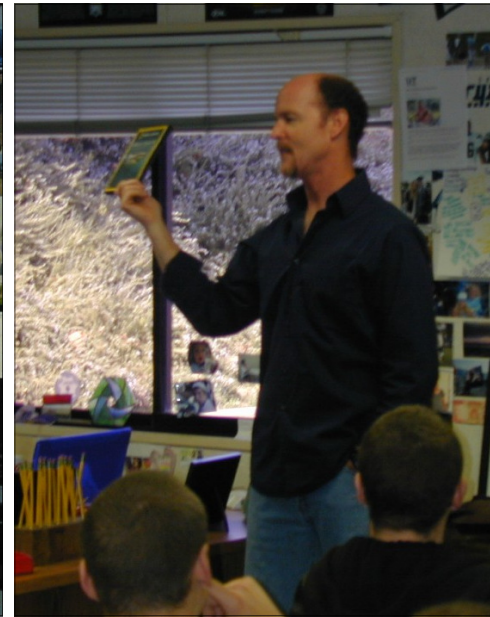
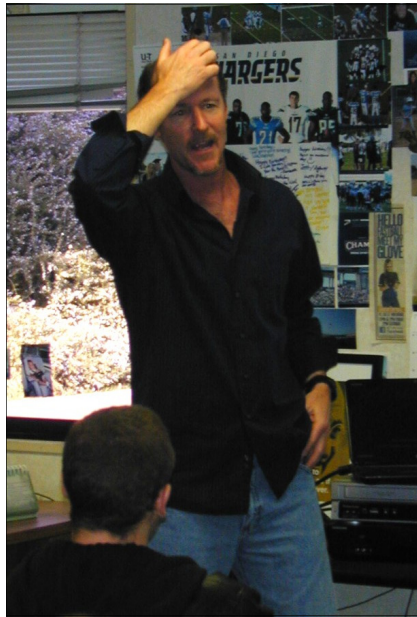
We will be completing a Reduction in Force in March so that options will remain open to us as the budget picture unfolds. School districts are required by law to notify teachers and administrators by March 15 if they might be laid off in the coming year.

Other options for next year will certainly include a reduction in the days of the school year. Currently, districts can shave up to 12 days off the 180-day school year and the proposal for next year is to allow a reduction of up to 27 days. Note that already, students in California attend school less days per year than in most states and nearly all developed nations. The norm in most states and in Europe is 190 days and in Asian nations it is 210 or more. Imagine California students only attending 153 days.

If that is not enough, we are learning about a newly proposed *Weighted Student Formula* that will reallocate funds to school districts based on the number of children who are English Learners or those being served in the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch program. We have small numbers of these students in Oak Park and would take a significant funding hit. We do not

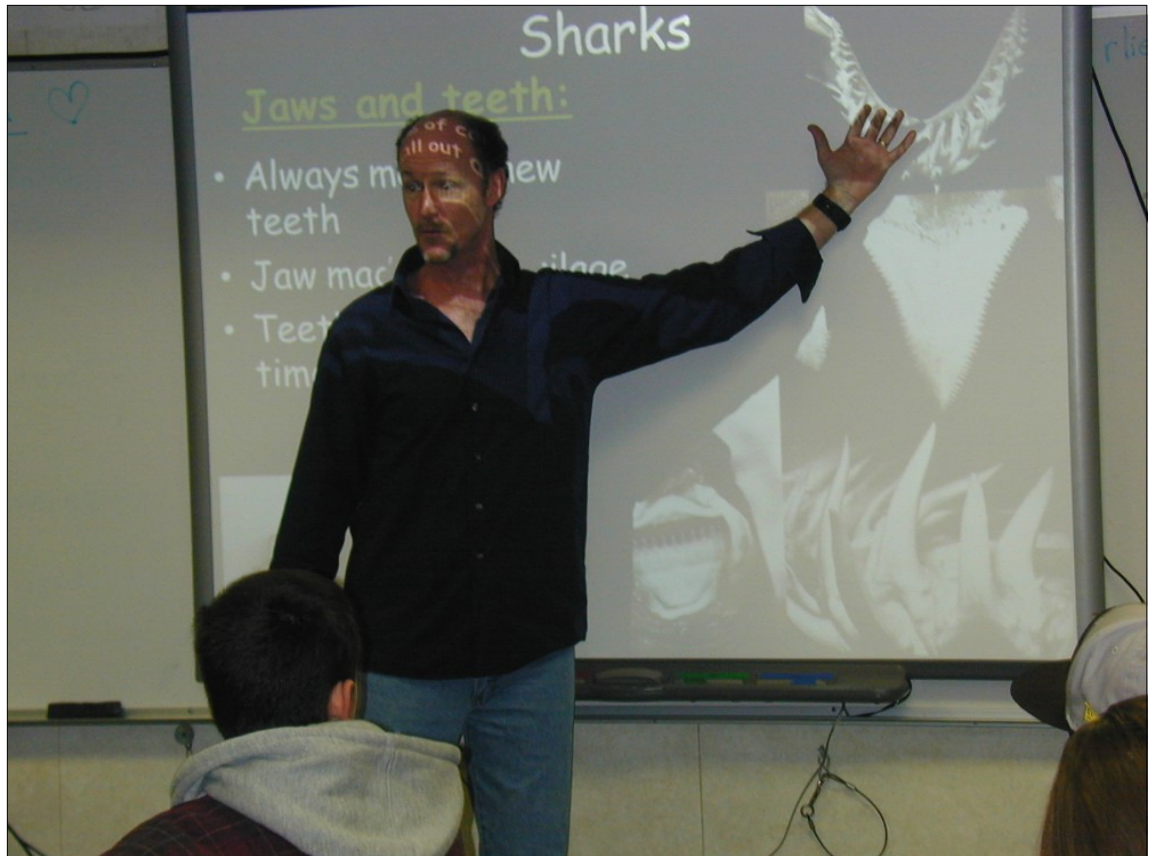
Shark Week

At right, Dr. Knight introduces Dr. Chris Lowe from CSULB. Dr. Lowe is a shark biologist and researcher, the premier researcher of baby white sharks in the world. He and his two graduate students presented information about sharks in general and their area of interest in particular. One interesting shark, previously unfamiliar to all, was the cookie-cutter shark, so called because of the shape of the chunk it bites from a whale or other large sea creature with its sharp and specially designed jaws. Below left, Mia Jacobson-Van Dyke, Kevin Ferman, and Justin Karotkin are entranced.



Far left, Jared Kovacic, Aaron Freeman, Jon Rizzo, and Nick Rossiter enjoy the presentation. At left, Anissa Hewett passes a dried shark fin along to Amanda Liszwieski. It felt much like sandpaper.

Dr. Lowe educated us on why the shark population is plummeting and the dangers of lower numbers. While some sharks are used for food, most that are killed are done so inadvertently — when fishermen are going after other species. Every load of shrimp taken in kills at least a few sharks. With sharks missing from the ecosystem, other animals such as sea lions flourish, and in turn decimate other populations of sea creatures. Every environment needs balance, and predators are an important factor in keeping ocean populations stable. At right, Dr. Lowe instructs students on the internal structure of sharks.



Below, Shane Moore, Blake Piloto, Kevin Ferman, Katy Rytterager-Nickel, Walker Alexandre, and Amanda Martin are held rapt by the presentation. At right Amanda Moghaddam passes dried shark hide to Bre Kay. One of Dr. Lowe's graduate students looks on.



Superintendent's Message continued

view this as a good time to undertake such a 'reform' of education funding, one that will leave districts that serve suburban children with fewer resources, larger class sizes, shorter school years, etc.

Board president, Jan Iceland and I are setting up meetings with our state representatives to talk about

these issues and share our concerns. I will keep you informed about what we learn.

We keep hoping that the slowly improving economy will begin to have a positive impact on our funding, but it is important to understand that the reduction in revenues to public schools over the last

three years in California has been a record \$18 billion. It will take more time for us to see a reversal.

Thank you for reading this rather lengthy narrative. I appreciate you taking the time to grasp the seriousness of the situation and its many complexities.

Dr.



Board Member Jan Iceland Speaks

When I go outside I can't believe that it's the middle of February. Who knows what the weather will be like by the time you read this. That's sort of what it's like being in education lately. Every time we think that we have a pretty good idea of what's coming and where we will be next year, or even later this year, it changes. Unfortunately many of the changes are not to our benefit.

With the latest round of budget cuts it became obvious that we had to take some action immediately. At the February Board Meeting we voted for another small increase in the number of District of Choice students to accept for next year and also to increase class size minimally. This action is a district wide one and will keep our secondary students in classes still well below the sizes in our neighboring districts. We know that we will have to make additional cuts before school begins next fall and possibly during that school year. We as a board and the staff are certainly not happy

about these changes but they are necessary for our district's wellbeing. It is our intent to reverse these actions in future years when the state budget is healthier.

Even with this dreary budget news our district continues to thrive and serve our students well. I don't know if all of you realize what an amazing staff we have. Everyone from the Superintendent to the custodians has the best for all students in mind every day and it shows. Our parents continue to volunteer and give, give, give of themselves. Our February Partners in Education Award went to Debbie Cleary, a Medea Creek parent who exemplifies this. We also honored Sharon Lavene, a Medea Creek teacher for receiving her GATE Teacher Certification and we honored the school counselors at all levels for their continuing good works.

There are parenting classes available and our counselors are also currently running programs for both students and parents addressing depression

and its many accompaniments. I do hope that many of you take advantage of these excellent programs.

Our students participated in and enjoyed Shark Week with Dr. Knight and guest speakers. At Oak Park High School we had outstanding performances of The Odd Couple and the students are preparing for the Mock Trial. Medea Creek students are preparing for our first History Day Competition on March 19th and we received the results of statewide physical fitness tests and found that our students outperformed the state and county averages. These are just a few examples of the types of things going on in our schools every day.

Until next month my best to all of you,

Jan Iceland
OPUSD Board President

EAP and Healthy Kids Survey Coming!

The Early Assessment Program essay and the Safe Kids Survey will be given to students on March 30, the last day of quarter 3. All juniors will take the EAP essay exam which measures readiness for college-level writing. In addition to giving colleges information on student capability, it allows Ms. Allen to craft her English classes the following year to ensure all seniors are up to the writing tasks

they will be asked to perform at the community colleges. Student scores will be sent home as well as to OVHS.

The Healthy Kids Survey helps the district to see, well, how healthy our kids are! It is a district-wide survey given at all schools. Results are used to craft programs and solutions to best meet student health needs. It has driven our

Wellness Committee as well as the Safe Kids Task Force, and has provided data to make necessary changes to policies at every site.

Information on each was sent home recently. For further questions or concerns, contact Linda Roberts or Lou Tabone at (818) 735-3217.

Senior Calendar

3/1 Deadline for OPHS Grad Nite payment (optional)

3/16 Cap and Gown payment due

4/27 Senior Dinner order Deadline

5/14 Senior Breakfast at IHOP

5/17 Senior cap and gown distribution

Senior Group Picture 9:20 a.m.

Senior Dinner @ Westlake Inn, 6:00

6/1 Yearbook order deadline

Grad Ad deadline

All outside credits for graduation must be turned in

6/15 1:00 mandatory graduation rehearsal

Graduation 6:00

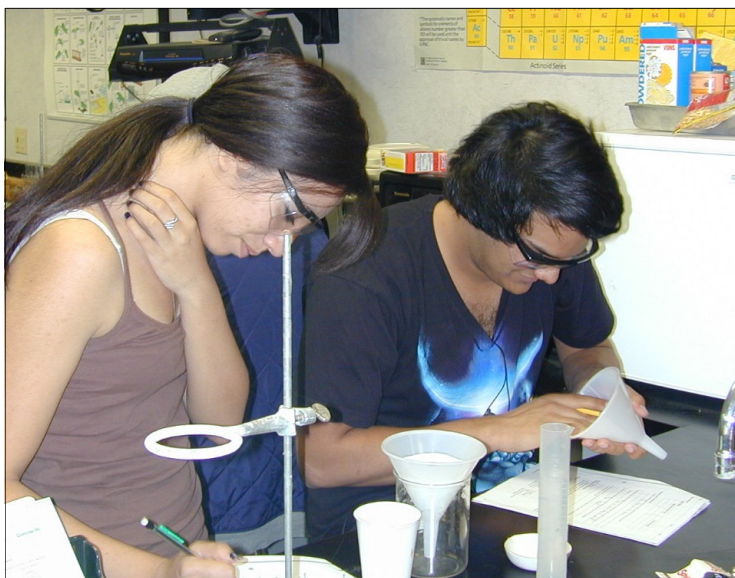


Around School Quarter 3

At right and below, Ms. Liepman leads the period 6 walking class. Ms. Liepman is an inveterate walker and enjoys the class as much as the students do. Most students come to Oak View still needing most of their PE credits. These credits are usually earned by students on their own time through participation in sports or gym membership. Ms. Liepman's class is helpful to students who still need the credits and a welcome break at the end of the day. At right, she is flanked by Alaina Rosenthal-Guillot and Kevin Ferman. Below, Alexis Lewin and Anissa Hewett lead the way. At right, the class sets out.

Far below, Carlos Plascencia replants the garden for spring. Featured? Tomatoes and flowers of course!





Ms. Cohen's Physical Science class continues to conduct labs — this one on temperature changes. Far above left, Alleen Sedas and Zach Mirza. Far above right, Katie Rytterager-Nickel, Kevin Ferman, and Shannon Moss. Above right, Nick Ros-siter and Jon Rizzo. At right, Brandon Lugo. At left, Walker Alexan-dre.



What'cha Readin'?

Anthony Palacios is reading *Hitler Victorious*, a collection of short stories exploring what would have happened if Germany won WWII. "It's a great book to read because we couldn't imagine how different our lives would be if it happened!" he says. Anthony is particularly interested in all things military as he will become a Marine after graduation in June.

A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy is Justin Karotkin's recommendation. "A very interesting book...This book is hilarious, and I would recommend it to someone who has an open mind and sense of humor."

Zachariah Mirza is reading a modern classic, *Brave New World*. "In the future various actions have become obsolete and humans are decanted into a preset social class."

Readers often read the same book over and over, getting something new out of it each time. Claudio Renyer would agree; his book—*Go Ask Alice*. "I've read this book twice and every time I read it, it gets better. When I hear people complain or if I complain about my life, I think of this book."

People choose books for a wide variety of reasons. Jared Kovacic says of *The Hobbit*, "this book is very interesting. I did not finish it yet, but the way they describe the scenery is beautiful."

Sometimes readers recommend books to one another. Ms. Allen suggested Shannon Moss read *The Kite Runner*, with one proviso. Shannon says, "this book is really great and interesting. It really expresses a negative view of violence. But I agree with you; I hate the main character."

Bre Kay is reading *Eragon*, "I haven't

read much of this book yet, but it's really interesting and fun to read."

What My Mother Doesn't Know is a catchy title that tempted Alexis Lewin. "This book is really good and interesting. It has a lot of emotions."

Ms. Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children fell into the hands of Anissa Hewett. "I like this book because it has a good mix of fiction and photography." It's good she likes it because it is just the first in a series yet to come from a very good author.

Alleen Sedas is reading *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. "I like how this book goes into detail about how a person feels about not fitting in." There isn't a life situation that cannot be found somewhere in some book.

It's spring and time for romance, as is found in *The Notebook*, read by Amanda Moddam. "I really love how this novel portrays the fact that true love conquers all and never dies. When the going gets tough, love is always there for you. My favorite part is when Noah is there for Ally and still loves her even though she lost her memory and doesn't know who he is."

Walker Alexandre thinks *Hells Angels* "is great." Sometimes, that's all you need to know!

Dharma Punx is Amanda Lisziewski's current read. "I definitely recommend it for myself. It's such a good story with a very happy ending."

Amanda Martin is sad to be almost finished with *Extras*, one of the books in the critically acclaimed *Uglies* series by Scott Westerfeld. "I really like this book although it's not filled with as much adventure." Amanda is a great reader who often suggests books to Ms. Allen and others.

Speaking of whom, Ms. Allen is reading a number of books at present. She is reading both *Maus* and *Maus II* with her students in English. At home, her fiction book is *Salt*, which oddly enough, is a book about the history of salt and its use by humans. "It is so strange to learn that something we take for granted has had the power to fuel civilizations and bring them crashing to their knees. It makes me respect the shaker a bit more!" she says. Browsing in a bookstore recently, she found *Women* by Charles Bukowski. "A former student turned me on to Bukowski," she says. "He told me if I liked to listen to Tom Waits, I would love this guy, and he certainly was right. He is like the root whose presence you infer,

"I've read this book twice and every time I read it, it gets better. When I hear people complain or if I complain about my life, I think of this book."

Claudio Renyer about *Go Ask Alice*

but don't truly appreciate until you have travelled backward from leaf to branch to trunk and below."

While Ray Gregorchuck is anticipating the January 2013 release of *A Memory of Light*, and Natali Schneider is enjoying catching up with *Maus*, Shane Moore is reading *Top Guns*. "It is very interesting and is hard to stop reading."

Just what we like to hear!





The Consumer Math class enjoyed comparing prices and learning about grocery stores first hand. At left, Justin Karotkin and Jon Rizzo read the unit prices. At right Katy Rytterager Nickel and Alaina Rosenthal-Guillot check the differences in milk prices.



Consumer Math - Shopping at Ralphs



At left, Dilon Wallace takes it all in. At right, Kayli Layton and Carlos Plascencia notice how the most expensive items are often placed at eye level. This class teaches students math they will use in the real world.



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March 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	Quarter 3 progress reports 2	3
4	Jack Hannah's birthday 5	Ms. Allen's Birthday 6	7	8	9	10
11	Sam Fields' birthday 12	13	14	15	16	17
18	No School 19	20	21	22	23	24
25	Kevin Ferman's birthday 26	27	28	29	End of quarter EAP & Healthy Kids Survey 30	31