



Volume 9  
Issue 5

# Shooting Star Scoop

## January 2015

*The monthly newsletter for Nikiski North Star Elementary*  
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District  
[nikiskinorthstar.blogs.kpbsd.k12.ak.us](http://nikiskinorthstar.blogs.kpbsd.k12.ak.us)



### Important Dates

#### January 9

Bus Evacuation Drill  
3:20pm

#### January 12

Site Council Meeting  
3:45pm - Lounge

#### January 19

Vacation Day  
NO SCHOOL

#### January 22

Geography Bee (4th-5th)  
Library

#### January 26

Bingo for Books  
5:45 - 7:00pm in Gym

#### January 30

School Spelling Bee  
Library



### Principal Points

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a relaxing and enjoyable holiday break. The first day back from vacation we spent some time reminding students about positive behaviors that help students have fun and stay safe in the lunchroom and playground. Our PTA used money collected from the Box Tops for Schools program to purchase new sleds for our school. Now if we could only get mother nature to cooperate and provide some snow then we would be able to safely use those new sleds while having fun

Report cards were sent home today with your student. Please take some time to talk about the standards with your student and talk about the score they received. Our next set of parent conferences will be February 5 and 6 so that will be a great opportunity for you to visit with classroom teachers about questions you may have regarding standards based report cards.

I have included in this newsletter an article from "The New York Times" about the importance of reading aloud to children. Two pieces of information that stood out were, "For children ages 6 to 11 being read aloud to regularly and having restricted online time were correlated with frequent reading." The report goes on to say that many parents assume when their students reach school-age that the kids want to read independently and the reading aloud from parents stops. However, the research shows that "reading aloud through elementary school seemed to be connected to a love of reading generally". Students who enjoy reading are able to make connections to text and that is such an asset for students as they progress through their academic career. Please encourage your child's use of our school library and if you need additional books and resources for your home please ask because there are many low cost or free ways to provide books for children.



*Look what Oceanna, Olivia, Shania and Jayde made!*

...continued on page 2



## Points continued

Standardized testing for students will look much different than in previous years. Testing is for grades 3-5 but it will be done on a computer rather than using pencil and paper. Nikiski North Star staff members spent time during the December inservice training learning about AMP (Alaska Measures of Progress) and working through some of the practice tests available. We are excited about the opportunity the new test format provides to students as a means of demonstrating what they have learned.

I appreciate the caution of drivers during our pick-up and drop-off times. Just a reminder that parents who are dropping off or picking up should do so using the traffic lane closest to the school. Thank you for your extra concern about the safety of our students. As always, if you have any questions or comments please feel free to let me know.

Margaret

## Hour of Code Challenge



*Congratulations to the Nikiski North Star students who participated in national computer science week (Dec. 8-12) and who took part in the global 'Hour of Code' challenge! Over 70 million students in over 180 countries participated in the 'Hour of Code' this year! A number of NNS students completed all the coding challenges and earned special CODE certificates.*



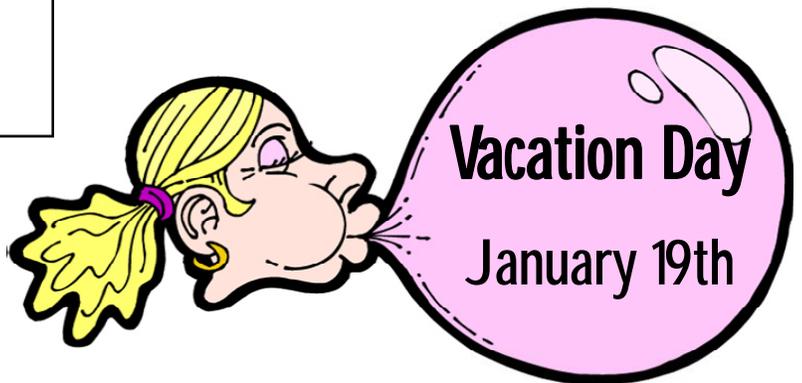
## Elks Hoop Shoot Winners!

*The winners of the Nikiski North Star Elks Hoop Shoot Competition are listed below. These students competed December 6th at the Kenai Recreation Center in the Regional Elks Hoop Shoot.*

Boys 8-9 yrs old  
**Caleb Litke** - 2nd place

Girls 8-9 yrs old  
**Destiny Langston** - 2nd place

Boys 10-11 yrs old  
**Caleb Griffith** - 1st place



## Study Finds Reading to Children of All Ages Grooms Them to Read More on Their Own

By MOTOKO RICH JAN. 8, 2015

Cue the hand-wringing about digital distraction: Fewer children are reading books frequently for fun, according to [a new report](#) released Thursday by Scholastic, the children's book publisher.

In a 2014 survey of just over 1,000 children ages 6 to 17, only 31 percent said they read a book for fun almost daily, down from 37 percent four years ago.

There were some consistent patterns among the heavier readers: For the younger children — ages 6 to 11 — being read aloud to regularly and having restricted online time were correlated with frequent reading; for the older children — ages 12 to 17 — one of the largest predictors was whether they had time to read on their own during the school day.

The finding about reading aloud to children long after toddlerhood may come as a surprise to some parents who read books to children at bedtime when they were very young but then tapered off. Last summer, the American Academy of Pediatrics [announced a new policy recommending that all parents read to their children from birth.](#)

“A lot of parents assume that once kids begin to read independently, that now that is the best thing for them to do,” said Maggie McGuire, the vice president for a website for parents operated by Scholastic.

But reading aloud through elementary school seemed to be connected to a love of reading generally. According to the report, 41 percent of frequent readers ages 6 to 10 were read aloud to at home, while only 13 percent of infrequent readers were being read to.

Scholastic, which operates book fairs in schools and publishes popular children's books including the [Harry Potter](#) and Captain Underpants series, has been commissioning the “Kids and Family Reading Report” since 2006. For the first time this year, the report, conducted by YouGov, a market research firm, looked at predictors that children of different ages would be frequent readers, defined as children who read books for fun five or more days a week.

Kristen Harmeling, a partner at YouGov who worked on the report, said that children in the survey frequently cited reading aloud as a special bonding time with their parents. As children age, “I don't think that parents know how important that time and the role that it plays in children's lives,” she said.

*Continued...*

Of course, children who love to read are generally immersed in households with lots of books and parents who like to read. So while parents who read to their children later in elementary school may encourage those children to become frequent readers on their own, such behavior can also result from “a whole constellation of other things that goes on in those families,” said Timothy Shanahan, professor emeritus of urban education at the University of Illinois at Chicago and a past president of the International Reading Association.

There is not yet strong research that connects reading aloud at older ages to improved reading comprehension. But some literacy experts said that when parents or teachers read aloud to children even after they can read themselves, the children can hear more complex words or stories than they might tackle themselves.

“It’s this idea of marinating children in higher-level vocabulary,” said Pam Allyn, founder of [LitWorld.Org](http://LitWorld.Org), a nonprofit group that works to increase literacy among young people. “The read-aloud can really lift the child.”

Other literacy experts say the real value of reading to children is helping to develop background knowledge in all kinds of topics as well as exposure to sophisticated language.

“It wouldn’t have to be reading” to accomplish that, said [Catherine Snow, a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education](#). “A two-minute conversation about something on television or something in a magazine or something that you’re reading yourself can also have some of the same positive effects as reading aloud.”

Although the Scholastic report found that teenagers were more likely to read frequently for fun if they had dedicated independent reading time in school, only 17 percent of all children surveyed reported having time to read a book of their choice at school daily. Just 10 percent of 12- to 14-year-olds and 4 percent of 15- to 17-year-olds reported having that time in class. Such reading time at school may be particularly important for low-income children, who reported that they were more likely to read for fun at school than at home.

While previous studies have shown [little connection](#) between independent reading time at school and better reading habits or comprehension, some large school districts, including Boston and Chicago, encourage teachers to include time in the day for students to pick books and read.

Parents also see a connection. Emily Skelding, a mother of four in New Orleans and a former middle school teacher, said that her eldest son, Sumner, 15, used to devour books as a child. But now that he has no time at school to read on his own — or perhaps more significant, to choose the books he wants to read — “he stopped reading for pleasure,” Ms. Skelding said.

A version of this article appears in print on January 8, 2015, on page A16 of the New York edition with the headline: Study Finds Reading of All Ages Grooms Them to Read More on Their Own. [Order Reprints](#) | [Today's Paper](#) | [Subscribe](#)