

Ridgecrest Elementary School
 1901 119th St North
 Largo, FL 33778
 727-588-3580
<http://www.ridgecrest-es.pinellas.k12.fl.us/>

Ridgecrest Roar

Principal - Donna Benkert
 Asst. Principal -
 Cindy Bennett
 Superintendent -
 John A. Stewart

VOLUME , ISSUE 3

Principal's Message

Attendance Matters!
 – New Research supports the unquestionable link between attendance and student achievement. Students who attend school between 85 and 100 percent of the time pass the state tests in reading and math at much higher rates than students who attend school less than 85 percent of the time.

Donna C. Benkert

Please help us help your child succeed in school by following these guidelines:

- Encourage daily attendance
- Schedule appointments for after school
- Allow for your child to have at least 8 hours of sleep every night
- Encourage your child to eat breakfast every morning
- Contact school staff to problem-solve any transportation concerns

It's important that your child get here on time and stay until the end of the day. Students miss out on valuable instruction time when they miss even a couple minutes of class. Here's a friendly reminder of our school hours and attendance policy here at Ridgecrest.

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday- 8:35-2:50
 Wednesday- 8:35-1:35

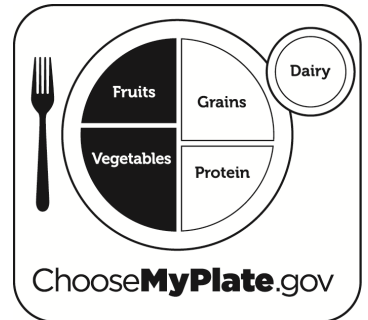
Students are expected to be in their classrooms and ready to learn by 8:35. They are marked tardy if they are not in their classroom by that time. They are marked as being extremely tardy if they arrive after 9:05. Students are expected to be at school until the end of the day and are marked as an early release if they leave prior to the last bell. The policy states that 3 tardies or 3 early releases count as an absence. Attendance concerns are brought to the attention of the school's Child Study Team and as a last resort are referred to the State Attorney's Office, which no one wants to happen. Please help us to avoid this by following the attendance policy. Thank you.

DECEMBER

Healthy Tip

Don't skip breakfast!
 Blend fat-free or low-fat yogurt or milk with fruit pieces and crushed ice. Use fresh, frozen, canned, and even overripe fruits. Try bananas, berries, peaches, and/or pineapple. If you freeze the fruit first, you can even skip the ice!

Make Half your Plate Fruit and Veggies!



President's Message

Wow! It's the Holiday season already! I hope everyone has a safe and wonderful break! I wish you all peace and joy!

Give the gift of sharing to our school. It truly is the gift that keeps giving as the memories your child will gain last a lifetime. Check with your teachers to see how you can help in our school. We also are in need of volunteers to make the PTA program happen. Without you we cannot run our programs. Please email marushablack@gmail.com if you can help with any our programs : 5th grade social, Valentine's Dance, Teacher Appreciation, Newsletter, Get Fit at The Ridge, Celebrating Black History and Celebrating India.

MUSIC NOTES

NEW TO OUR MUSIC PROGRAM

Mrs. Garrett and Mr. Jarvis would like to share with all the new items that were added to our music program at Ridgecrest! These items were purchased with referendum funds that were approved by Pinellas County voters: 3 xylophone stands, 23 ukulele cases, "Music K-8" curriculum, guiros, jingle bells, egg shakers, wood blocks, tone blocks, claves, tambourines, castanets, triangles, and finger cymbals. This could not have been done without your support of the arts programs in Pinellas County. Thank you SO much!!!

5th Grade Chorus

Due to a schedule conflict for many of our 5th grade students, our concert has been **re-scheduled** for **Thursday, December 15, 2011 at 6:30 p.m.** (Students need to be here by 6:15.) Please make plans now to attend. Our students have been working really hard to prepare for "A Holiday of Music." **CHORUS ATTIRE: SOLID BLACK** (no design on front of shirt) pants and shirt for our grand finale and the darkest shoes they own.

Phyllis Garrett & Ben Jarvis
garrettp@pcsb.org & jarvisb@pcsb.org

Recorders

Thank you SO much to those who have made donations for the purpose of purchasing recorders for our 4th and 5th graders. Donations are still being accepted!

Students, Mrs. Garrett, and Mr. Jarvis were SO anxious for the arrival of our recorders!!! THEY FINALLY ARRIVED Tuesday, November 8!!! Thank you again to all who made this possible for ALL 4th and 5th grade students!!!

"Expressions of Largo"

"Expressions of Largo" was held at Largo High School on Tuesday, November 15, 2011. This event showcased the arts programs from Ridgecrest Elem, Mildred Helms Elem, Anona Elem, Fuguitt Elem, Ponce de Leon Elem, Southern Oak Elem, Largo Middle and Largo High Schools. The following students sang with the 120 voice elementary chorus: Billy Black, Abigail Grassick, Demori Hawkins, Edrienna Henderson, Caitlin Katz, Faythe Kelly, Beverly Maddux, Bruce Maddux, Samuel May, Kayla McClain, Konner Stine, Mikayla Stott, Caylee Ward, Isaiah Wolfe, and Erica Wonicker-Cook. The concert's grand finale was a combination of all choruses, orchestras and bands with "America, the Beautiful." Our elementary students also added the sign language while singing. This was such a fabulous concert to witness!!!

Healthy Resolutions to make for the New year!

- * Dance Your Heart Out! Pick any music you like, crank it up and then dance away! Dancing is a great way to burn calories and have fun at the same time!
- * Try a new fruit or vegetable every week. Here are a few to begin with: kiwi, squash, pumpkin, asparagus, Asian pear.
- * Go for low-fat frozen yogurt, fruit popsicles, sorbets, and sherbets rather than ice cream or cookies. Sprinkles are also better than caramel or chocolate sauces.
- * Try different kinds of grains instead of plain white rice to add a variety to your meals.
- * Try eating sweet potato instead of plain white potato.



Panthers Give Back

Ridgecrest's Student Council collected canned food for the Salvation Army the week before Thanksgiving break. They collected almost 50 boxes of cans. Mrs. Dirks's class collected 381 cans, the most of any class in the school. Mrs. Jimenez's class collected 208 cans and Mrs. Martin's class collected 144 cans. All Student Council members worked hard to collect the cans from each classroom and organize them into boxes for pickup. Thank you to all who contributed.

This year's PTA Make and Take helped Clothes for Kids. Two items of clothing gave you an opportunity to make and take home a festive wreath. We gathered 8 bags of gently used clothing to help families in our community. Thank you to all that participated.

Parking @ the YMCA

We are very fortunate to have a strong community partnership with the Ridgecrest YMCA located on the north side of our campus. They allow us to use their gymnasium and their parking lot many times throughout the year. They do request that parents use only the side and rear parking lots and save the front parking lot for YMCA members. Please honor their requests.

THANK YOU!

We had a great turnout at Treasure Island Fun Center in October. Please mark your calendars for our next FUNdraiser night, Thursday, January 26, 2012 from 5:30 – 7:30pm.

As you make plans for your holiday break keep Treasure Island Fun Center in mind. They are a great friend to us at Ridgecrest...they donated an extra 25% on top of our earnings.

Magnet, Fundamental and Career Academy Application Period

The **Application Period** for applying to any magnet, fundamental or career academy program for the 2012-2013 school year is scheduled for Jan. 7-20, 2012.

Parents will use their Parent Portal User ID and Password to log onto the Student Reservation System (SRS) web page located on the district website, www.pcsb.org, to apply. Those parents who do not have a User ID and

Password may call the Student Assignment office, (727) 588-6210 or visit any nearby school to obtain one. If families do not have a home computer, they may visit a nearby school or a community location. The SRS also is available in Spanish.

Information Fairs – The district will hold **two Information Fairs** this year:

- **Districtwide Fair** – Pinellas Park High (6305 118th Ave., N, Largo) on Saturday, Jan. 7 from 9 a.m.-noon.

South County Fair – Gibbs High School (850 34th St. S, St. Petersburg) on Tuesday, Jan. 10 from 6-8 p.m.

The Information Fairs allow parents to gather information and ask questions about the district's magnet, fundamental and career academy programs.

Discovery Night schedules are posted online. Additional information about the application process will be posted on the district website as it becomes available.

New Procedures for Public Participation at School Board Meetings – Beginning Jan. 2012

Beginning with the first board meeting in January 2012, members of the public will have two different opportunities to address the Board.

Members of the public

can speak to one or more agenda, but will be limited to one three-minute period. These presentations will occur during the meeting prior to the "Adoption of the Agenda."

A 30-minute public participation time period will be set aside immediately prior to the Board meeting to allow speakers one three-minute period

to speak on matters not covered by the numbering agenda items. If this time period does not permit time for all public speakers, then the remaining speakers will be allowed to speak after the adjournment of the meeting.

School health tips

Common sense can go a long way toward staying healthy in school. In addition to frequent hand-washing, teach your child other school health basics: **Use hand sanitizer.** Give your child alcohol-based hand sanitizer to keep in his or her desk. Remind your child to use the sanitizer

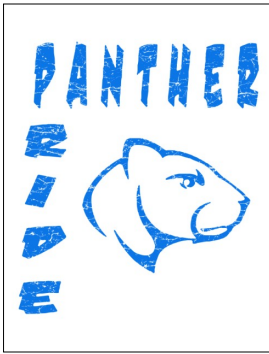
before eating snacks or lunch and after using a shared computer mouse, pencil sharpener, water fountain or other community objects. You might also donate disinfecting wipes to the classroom for general use.

Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.

Give your child a package of tissues to keep in his or her desk. Encourage your child to cough or sneeze into a tissue — then put the tissue in the trash, and wash his or her hands or use hand sanitizer. If it isn't possible to reach a tissue in time, remind your child to cough or sneeze into the crook of his or her elbow.

Keep your hands away from your eyes and out of your mouth. Remind your child that hands are often covered in germs.

Don't share water bottles, food or other personal items. Offer your child this simple rule — if you put the item in your mouth, keep it to yourself.



**RIDGECREST
ELEMENTARY PTA**

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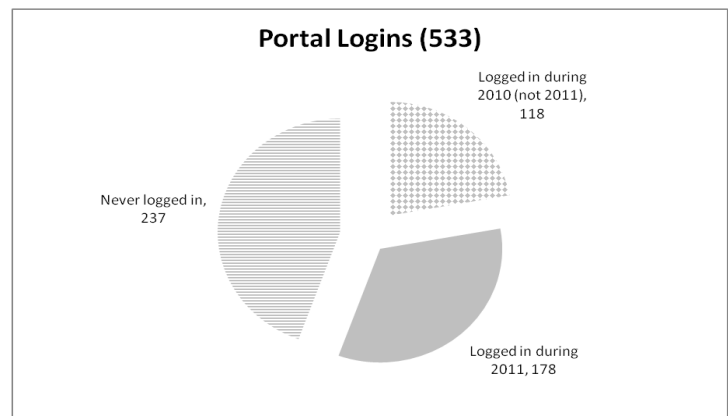
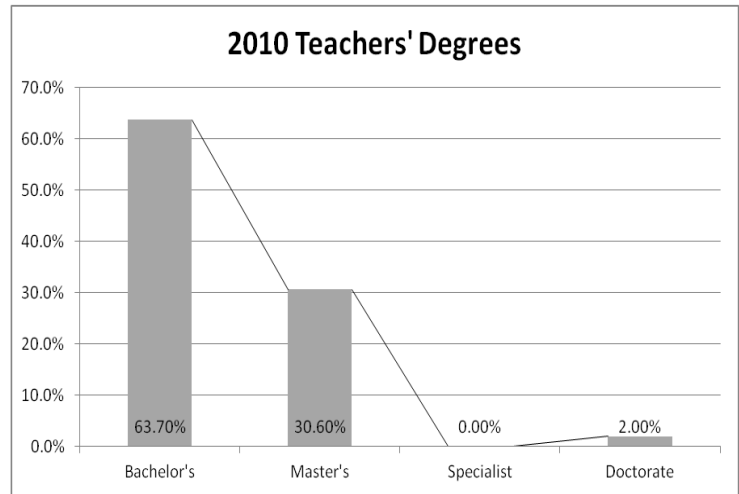


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Amanda Rice
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Michelle Robinson
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Stacey Ward
- T-Shirts—Marilyn Mevers

School Data at Your Fingertips

Pinellas County Schools has a new online tool: the Data Dashboard. You can access this tool at pcsb.org. It includes a variety of data on all county schools from the Florida Department of Education data-warehouse as well as county information regarding enrollment and Portal logins. Below is a brief snapshot of some Data Dashboard information on Ridgecrest Elementary information as of Nov. 24, 2011:

Total enrollment: 765
Exceptional ed (not gifted) 9.9%
Gifted: 48%



**STANLEY SHALIT SHORT STORY
COMPETITION (Grades 4-5)**

sponsored by the Friends of Largo Library announced that Ridgecrest Elementary School swept 5 of the 9 finalists spots. The students had to write an original fictional story (4-8 pages in length) on the theme "My New Friend".

- The winners are:
- Sophia Chen (Mrs. Wellings – 5th grade)
 - Salma Alandary (Mrs. Choi – 4th grade)
 - Alexa Albinson (Mrs. Choi – 4th grade)
 - Zachary Knapp (Mrs. Choi – 4th grade)
 - Rent Montie (Sra. Huff – 4th grade)

There was an awards ceremony on 11/16/11 at 6:00pm at the Largo Library. We are very proud of our creative Ridgecrest writers! Congratulations!!!!

**The Good News Club
Returns to Ridgecrest!**

The Good News Club is an exciting, fun-filled hour that includes dynamic bible lessons, Christian learning activities, meaningful songs, bible scripture memory, and more. The club meets every Friday at dismissal in the multipurpose room. If you'd like to attend, see Ms Booth for a permission slip.

Healthy Tip

Frequent hand-washing is one of the simplest — and most effective — ways to stay healthy in school. Remind your child to wash his or her hands before eating and after using the toilet, blowing his or her nose, or playing outside. Suggest soaping up for as long as it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice.