

# Wolf Times

Volume 14, Issue 5

January, 2017



Year is January 28. The Lunar New Year is the year 4714, or the year of the rooster.

January is the first month of a new year. Our country of the month is Israel. We invite families to lend us souvenirs and artifacts for our front lobby display. It is a good time to once again introduce the idea of “Firsts” to our students. What does it mean to do something for the first time? After making a collection of their own personal firsts, our children will be encouraged to create hypothetical firsts. The children also will investigate the firsts that occur during the month of January.

## From the Desk of Jacqueline Norcel

“Happy New Year, Bonne Année, Gung Hay Fat Choy, Feliz Año Nuevo, Viel Gutes, Neues Jahr, Snorhavor Nor Tari.” However the greeting is said, the message is the same. We all look to the beginning of a new calendar year with renewed hopes, aspirations, and resolutions.

Different cultures also have historical traditions of welcoming in the New Year, from eating black-eyed peas in the American South to creating geometric Rangoli (a form of sand painting decoration) in India as part of the five-day Hindu festival of Diwali. These culturally rich celebrations offer time for both reflection on events past and resolutions for future behavior.

The New Year’s holiday offers students the opportunity to critically consider the multicultural traditions practiced in our society. A study of the changing of the year offers myriad social studies connections – from questioning how calendars have developed, to analyzing celebrations across geographic and political boundaries to making a personal commitment to improve the community in some way.



During January, the staff at Frenchtown will be helping our students understand and respect time. How is time measured? Do you know who first began to measure time? Why are there different calendars and different New Years? The children will be made aware of our New Year’s customs and traditions. This year Chinese New

January 1<sup>st</sup> – First practical fire engine went into service 1853.



January 5<sup>th</sup> – Nellie Taylor Ross became the first woman governor.

January 7<sup>th</sup> – First voting under the new U.S. Constitution took place during the first U.S. Presidential Election.

January 9<sup>th</sup> – First successful balloon flight in America - 1793.

January 10<sup>th</sup> – The first meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations was held.

January 11<sup>th</sup> – First time milk was delivered in bottles – 1878.

Amelia Earhart Putnam – first woman to fly solo across the Pacific Ocean from Honolulu to California.

Sarah Caldwell – first woman to conduct the Metropolitan Opera.

Robert C. Weaver – first Black American Cabinet member – 1966.

First time basketball played -1894

January 21<sup>st</sup> – U.S. launched the first atomic submarine, Nautilus, in 1954.

January 22 – Elizabeth Blackwell – First woman doctor graduated from medical school – 1849. First time gold was discovered in California – 1848.

January 31<sup>st</sup> – First U.S. Satellite launched – 1958.

January is an excellent time for us to review goal setting and study skills with our students. Teaching independent work skills is similar to

delegating. When you think about it, helping students to work independently is much like being a manager in the workplace by assisting employees to take responsibility for their work. The techniques for teaching these skills also are remarkably similar.

We can start by identifying and focusing on the key skills that students must possess to manage work. Among these skills are breaking large, complex tasks into smaller, manageable pieces; constructing and following a work schedule; identifying and securing necessary resources.

Students should be selecting, modifying and using work processes, and understanding and achieving quality results. Often, these elements can be taught effectively through real life examples, beginning with simple tasks such as making a sandwich. Students can make a list of ingredients and utensils needed; describe the process and sequence they should use; estimate time required; consider alternatives if any of the usual resources are not available; and describe the final outcome. Later, more complex examples that are similar to what students will be asked to complete in the classroom can be analyzed in a similar manner. However, instruction and discussion must be accompanied by plenty of supervised practice to give students both experience and real life examples upon which to draw later – if they become confused or stuck.

The move from instruction and practice to actual application must be gradual. Initial projects should be relatively small. The work must be divided into small chunks. The guidelines we provide them with need to be clear and relatively narrow in scope. Students should have frequent check-in points on their progress and the expected results must be described in very specific terms. Students should be asked to evaluate their work.

This month we are emphasizing the “**K**” in T.R.A.C.K.S. which stands for **kindness**.

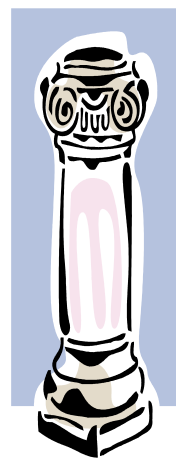
Our lessons will be developed to give our students an opportunity to engage in activities that help them learn about tolerance and respect which helps one act with kindness. A few books you might get at the library to share with your child are:

- Say Something by Peggy Moss (PreK-2)
- Play Lady/La Senora Juguetona by Eric Hoffman (PreK-2)

- Nobody Knew What to Do by Becky Ray McCain (PreK-2)
- Blubber by Judy Blume (3-5)
- The Hundred Dresses by Eleanor Estes (3-5)
- It’s OK to Be Different by Todd Parr (PreK-2)
- Oliver Button is a Sissy by Tomie DePaola (PreK-2)
- Alley Oops by Janice Levy (PreK-2, 3-5)
- Felita by Nicholasa Mohr (3-5)
- Pinky and Rex and the Bully by James Howe (3-5)
- Mr. Lincoln’s Way by Patricia Polacco (3-5)

Our goal at Frenchtown is to provide a safe and nurturing atmosphere for our students and staff. If a parent has an issue with a student they must come directly to Mrs. Strever or myself. If they want to see the teacher for any reason they must first e-mail the teacher for an appointment. When you arrive first check in with Mrs. Essing and then report to the office. The office will call the teacher. **No parent should ever go directly to a teacher’s classroom in the morning or at dismissal time.** Remember parents enter the building by door number 9 for dismissal. Show your driver’s license or pass and sign your child out and leave by door number 10.

I hope that this New Year brings you joyful hours, pleasant memories, thoughts of family and friends, and much happiness and blessings.



Character  
Corner—  
Mr. Weitzman,

**Social Worker**

**T.R.A.C.K.S.**  
**K = Kindness**

The pillar of character from T.R.A.C.K.S. that we will focus on for January is “kindness.”

## Kindergarten News...

**Mrs. Bershefsky, Mrs. Buswell,  
Mrs. Capone, Mrs. Crawford**

The month of December was a very busy time in kindergarten. Our Social Studies curriculum goes into full swing as we travel around the world to celebrate various holidays and learn about all their different traditions. We started the month in Denmark and learned that children stuff wooden shoes with hay and carrots and place them by their windows in the hopes that St. Nicholas will visit and leave some candy and toys behind. The focus of this holiday is kindness since St. Nicholas shows kindness to those in need and always thinks of others. Next, we moved onto Sweden to celebrate Santa Lucia Day where we discovered that it is dark there almost all day and night at this time of the year. Santa Lucia is the saint of light and a celebration that more light will be coming soon. We left chilly Sweden to go to a warm Mexico to learn about Las Posadas. This holiday lasts nine days and is a reenactment of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem and how they were turned away from every inn. The children got to role play the parts of Mary, Joseph and the mean inn keepers. Then, we learned all about the eight days of Hanukkah. We just couldn't believe the story about the miracle of one day's worth of oil lasting eight days. It was indeed a miracle! We enjoyed some Hanukkah stories and playing the dreidel game. Finally, we ended with Christmas and enjoyed a winter-themed celebration. We hope you enjoyed the special gifts the children made you! Happy Holidays!

We finished up Unit 1 in Foundations in early December. In Unit 2 we will be focusing on the formation of all the capital letters (Each capital letter goes from the sky line to the grass line) and tapping out cvc (consonant – vowel – consonant) words. The quicker they become at tapping and blending the more fluently they will be able to read. Please practice tapping at home and continue working on sight words.

Math centers are a favorite time for the kindergartners each day. We are currently working on Unit 4 which involves measuring lengths with Popsicle sticks and cubes as well as measuring on a balance by comparing which object is heavier. Our big focus has been and will continue to be number sense – numeral recognition, counting and the start of solving story problems this month. We are

learning the difference between an expression ( $3+2$ ) and an equation ( $3+2=5$ ) and preparing them for addition and subtraction within the sum of 5. By the end of the year, we want them to be as proficient as possible in solving these equations. After the holidays we will be asking for your assistance to practice at home to help them gain fluency just like you help with sight words. It really makes a difference and we thank you for all your help and support!



In science we learned all about weather. In addition to learning about different types of weather, we also discussed how the weather affects how we dress. We focused on the four seasons and noted the characteristics we observe for each one. We hope you heard all about our melting and wind experiments. The children enjoy being scientists! We culminated the unit with an exciting visit from Kevin Arnone, a meteorologist with WTNH News Channel 8. We are now moving onto a new unit called "Push and Pull." I am sure you will hear all about our experiments building ramps, swings and so on. This will continue through January.

In writing, we all finished our first narrative writing unit and had our publishing celebrations. We then worked briefly on a unit where we observed objects from nature closely, and then drew them in detail and wrote facts about what we observed. From there we went back into narrative writing and will learn even more skills to help develop and increase our writing skills.

We ended the month with our very first Frenchtown PBIS (Positive behavioral Intervention System) Day on December 21<sup>st</sup>. Our academics and activities centered on teaching about kindness and good character. We had a school wide assembly as well. It was a successful day!

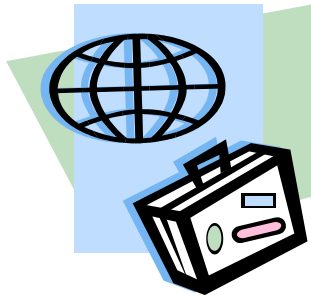
We hope you all had a relaxing and enjoyable holiday recess and that you were able to spend quality time with family and friends. If you have not already done so, please send in the supplies we asked for to start off January. Happy New Year!





## Grade One News...

**Mrs. Gambardella, Mrs. Mordecai,  
Mrs. Rodrigues, Mrs. Shinnick**



During the month of December, first grade was alight with the glow of the holidays. We packed our “suitcases” and traveled to other first grade classrooms to learn about holiday traditions that span the globe. You may have seen menorahs and kinaras glowing in celebration of Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. We also learned about the Italian tradition of La Befana and the Mexican Legend of the Poinsettia. Then we went to SHU to see a play about the holidays called “Jack Frost”. Most importantly, we shared the traditions from our own diverse backgrounds as we came together in multicultural understanding.

At math time, we worked in our third unit called Solving Story Problems. We learned how to solve both addition and subtraction stories. We also practiced counting and writing the numbers to 120. How far can you count? We are busily practicing math facts with our flash cards.

During our Foundations lessons, we learned new “glued sounds”. Glued sounds are consonants and vowels that glue together to make a new sound. Our new glued sounds are ang, ing, ong, ung, ank, ink, onk, and unk.

We celebrated PBIS Day on Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>. We focused on fun activities that helped us work together and get to know other first graders. We all remembered what the letters of TRACKS stand for as we cooperated on team projects.

Then we said good bye to all our friends as we headed out for a great vacation.

## Grade Two News ...

**Mrs. Angon, Mrs. Boyle,  
Mrs. Pereira, Mrs. Tuohy**

December flew by and the second graders were very busy learning many new skills!

In reading, the students have been focusing on developing their reading strategies to help them

become stronger readers. They have been practicing making connections, visualizing, and making inferences in their independent reading books. Each night as you read with your child, remember to talk to him/her about the book he/she is reading. Ask questions about the book’s main idea, characters, the problem and solution as well as the vocabulary used in the story. This will help to improve your child’s reading comprehension.

In math, the students have been working hard on Investigations Unit 3. This unit teaches the children to develop ideas about counting and quantity, the composition of numbers and the operations of addition and subtraction. The students also investigated what makes numbers even and odd. Please keep in mind that it is important for the children to memorize the math facts. You can help them with this task by practicing with flash cards at home. Our goal is for every second grader to know the facts automatically without their fingers!

Our second grade scientists have been busy investigating the weather! They became weathermen and women and recorded the weather each day in their science journals. They became experts on the different clouds types and learned how meteorologists use the clouds to predict weather patterns. They also learned how to use and read a thermometer. Not only did they become familiar with many of the instruments used by meteorologists, they also acquired many new vocabulary words associated with the properties of air and weather conditions.

The students were amazing in their December concert performance! They sang their hearts out and made everyone so proud. We would like to thank Mrs. Tavella for all of her hard work and dedication!

As the New Year begins, please be mindful of the change in weather and make sure that your child comes to school with the appropriate clothing for outdoor recess. The second grade teachers would like to wish you all a happy holiday season and a year ahead filled with happiness and prosperity!



## **Grade Three News...**

**Mrs. Atwood, Mrs. Cretella,  
Mrs. Martins, Ms. Pugliese,  
Ms. Sansone**

Happy New Year! Welcome back! We hope everyone had a fun and enjoyable holiday season with their family and friends. January is a great time to reflect and set goals that we want to work on and improve. It's like a new beginning!

In reading and writing, we are focusing on non-fiction texts. We are learning about non-fiction text features, and we will be applying these strategies in our writing! Students are still monitoring their comprehension while they are reading by stopping and asking, "Who is the text about and what is happening?" Keep reading every day and don't forget to hand in your Reading Log every Friday!

In math, we are continuing our unit on addition and subtraction with 2 and 3 digit numbers. Students are practicing using strategies such as breaking apart numbers into 100s, 10s, and 1s, using a number line, drawing place value pictures, and using an algorithm or equation. Our basic fact quizzes for trimester 2 will focus on multiplication. With multiplication, they will complete 30 problems instead of the typical 40 problems with addition and subtraction. Keep practicing those math facts at home, especially multiplication!

In social studies, we are beginning our unit on forest and prairies. We will be learning how the plants and animals in each ecosystem support each other.



In science, students enjoyed researching facts about birds found in our area during the winter. Then they designed and constructed a birdfeeder that would attract a particular type of bird. We have some future engineers in our third grade! We are currently learning about the human body. Do you know how many bones are in the human body? Do you know what the biggest bone in the human body is called? Ask your children, they will know! In the human body unit, students will focus mostly on bones, joints, muscles, and the nervous system.

We are well into the winter season and would like to remind children to wear appropriate clothing for recess, such as warm coats, gloves, scarves, and hats. We would also appreciate boxes of tissues and wipes for the classrooms. Remember to ask your child if they need to replenish any of their school supplies, such as pencils, glue sticks, crayons, markers, etc. Finally, we would like to wish everyone a great start to a new year!

## **Grade Four News...**

**Mrs. Carley, Mr. Fiore,  
Mrs. Weinstein, Mrs. Wolfe**

As a new year begins, we reflect upon all that students have accomplished in the past few months. They have grown academically, socially, and emotionally. Our fourth grade curriculum is rigorous, but students have risen to the challenge. We encourage them to delve below the surface of a text or a mathematical problem and use critical thinking skills. The month of December provided many exciting learning opportunities.

To complement our writing program, where we have shifted from writing in the narrative genre to opinion writing, our focus in reading is a mix of fiction and non-fiction text. While reading fiction, children recognize the key elements of a story- the characters, setting, and plot- the same elements we worked on when composing our realistic fiction essays with story arcs. Students learned to analyze character change, seeking to find the climax of a story, an event that turns the story in a different direction and results in a change in the character's feelings. In addition, they are continuing to analyze the message of the story. While reading non-fiction, we encourage children to use non-fiction text features to aid the comprehension of complex text. We supplement the text with multi-media resources. It is rewarding to watch students progress in their ability to compose a written response to literature. We expect all responses to begin with a topic sentence, followed by specific evidence from the text to support a student's thinking. We are noticing the use of more transition words in both written responses to literature and essay composition. While completing assignments both at home and in the classroom, we encourage students to use a highlighter to draw attention to key phrases and pieces of evidence in the text. Engage students in conversations about their nightly reading. Expressing thoughts verbally often assists students in getting their words down onto paper. Please

remind students to proofread their assignments for spelling accuracy and proper writing conventions.

In math classes, we wrapped up Unit 3, becoming masters of multiplication and division with 2-digit numbers. In addition, students learned to use their BFF (Basic Fact Friend) when multiplying by powers of ten. Later in the year, we will return to multiplication and division using larger numbers. All classes have been practicing their critical thinking skills using math exemplars. While solving problems, children walk through a series of specific steps. They must first restate the question to clarify their understanding of the problem. Next, they solve the problem using mathematical equations, charts, drawings, or number lines. After solving the problem, they must communicate their thinking in words, using math vocabulary. During the month of January, we will investigate “Size, Shape, and Symmetry: 2-D Geometry and Measurement”. Students will focus on classifying two-dimensional shapes, comparing the size of angles, and working with both linear and area measurement. They will define and categorize polygons using shapes that have common attributes, as well as use 90 degrees as a benchmark reference for finding the measurement of other angles. Many students still do not know their basic facts. It is important that they practice for a few minutes nightly to improve speed and accuracy.

In writing, children are mining their seed ideas from narrative writing to spark ideas for opinion writing. In this, our second unit, students first think about topics about which they have a strong opinion. For example, “I love ice cream!” They formulate a claim and, using their prior knowledge, seek reasons to support their claim. Children are introduced to “boxes and bullets”, a method to organize their thoughts. This strategy will carry into the second part of the unit, in which students formulate a thesis, and take notes from reliable resources to support their opinion. It is important for students to practice keyboarding skills, as all state testing is computerized. In the past few months, we have been trying to increase our use of Google Docs and/or Google Classroom to provide children with opportunities to keyboard at home.

Our study of Force and Motion and Newton’s Laws provided students with a good foundation for understanding the world of simple machines. We are learning how tools and machines can make “work” easier for us. How was it possible

for the Egyptians to move those heavy bricks to build the pyramids?



Social studies classes have been learning about Connecticut history, the first colonists, and what this region had to offer to those who settled along our river ways. Do you know why

Connecticut is known as the Constitution State? It won’t be long before we begin our journey through the regions of the United States.

During our second annual PBIS Day, the fourth grade team had a chance to interact with every student on the grade-level. Children engaged in activities centered around T.R.A.C.K.S. to promote a positive school climate and encourage acceptance of individual differences. We continue to promote kindness on a daily basis.

The start of the New Year brings not only new beginnings and joy, but also cold weather and unfortunately, the cold and flu season. We are gradually depleting our supplies of tissues, cleansing wipes, and paper towels. A fresh supply of donated items would be greatly appreciated. To help curtail illness, please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for outdoor activities; we suggest warm jackets, hats, and gloves. Once the wind begins to swirl, it can get quite cold on the playground. When the temperature drops below 32 degrees, we will remain indoors.

We appreciate your ongoing support. Continue to encourage your children to be independent and read all directions before responding to questioning.

We wish you all a year filled with good health, happiness, and prosperity!

### **Grade Five News...**

**Mrs. Alfano, Mrs. Demshak,  
Mrs. Ferraro, Mrs. Gaspar,  
Mrs. Grunow**

**Invention Convention:** As Albert Einstein said “Imagination is more important than knowledge, for imagination embraces the world.” It’s Invention Convention time! Hope your child enjoyed the 5<sup>th</sup> grade Take-Apart on Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup>. Connecticut Invention Convention (CIC) is the

“longest continuously operating program for children inventors” in the nation and is now celebrating its 34th year. Nearly 10,000 K-8 students are involved in CIC school-based programs annually. You received the Invention Convention Timeline, Intent to Invent, guidelines for inventors, and rubrics.

### **Important Dates:**

- January 10<sup>th</sup> – Choose the invention you are going to invent
- January 20<sup>th</sup> – Parent signature “Intent to Invent”
- January 30<sup>th</sup> – Explain problem and identify solution (#1-12)



Students compete at Frenchtown on **Tuesday, March 9<sup>th</sup>**. Parents and guests are welcome to come see inventions during the day (more information to follow). Winners of Frenchtown present their inventions at the

CIC Regional CT Convention on April 1<sup>st</sup>, winners of regional compete at the CIC State Convention at UCONN on April 29<sup>th</sup>, and winners of state present at the National Convention on June 1<sup>st</sup>. The goal is to give students an unforgettable experience in using knowledge and creativity to solve real-world problems in hope that they will use their skills to make a difference. Each student designs an invention, creates a display board demonstrating the invention process and the invention in use, documents what was done and how it was done in an inventor’s log, and then describes the invention and the inventing process during an interview process by judges. Judges may ask questions like: What problem does your invention solve? Why did you decide on this invention?, or What was the biggest problem that you faced while working on your invention? Remember it is all about problem solving and discovery. There are going to be problems that your child encounters while working on the invention but hopefully he/she perseveres. Check out the site [www.ctinventionconvention.org](http://www.ctinventionconvention.org) for more information.

What is **STEM**? You may be hearing the term STEM (Science – Technology – Engineering – Math) used more often now. The engineering design process is used to make new things. A problem is identified, a plan is developed, and a design is created but your child will soon discover the communication piece is just as valuable.

Creation can be frustrating but it is sometimes from the struggle that we learn the most.

**Common Core** is another term you continue to hear. One of the objectives of Common Core is to increase questioning for greater participation, higher level thinking, and comprehension. Knowledge is acquired through involvement with content, active engagement, inquiry, problem solving, collaboration, argumentation and critiquing.

**Reminder: No School** on Monday, January 2<sup>nd</sup> (New Year’s Day) and Monday, January 16<sup>th</sup> (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)

### **Math News...**

**Mrs. Gidwani, Mrs. Sansone**

Calling all Parents of students in Grades 3, 4 and 5: Please join us Parent Math Morning (9-10am) or Parent Math Night (7-8pm) on Tuesday, January 31<sup>st</sup>. We will share Common Core Standards for Math, Smarter Balanced practice sites, Math apps, Math websites and answer any questions. Snow Date is Feb 7th. A flyer will come home soon!

### **From the Library...**

**Mr. Cellini**

Hello everyone and Happy New Year. I am writing to you from what is currently known as a Library Media Center, however during winter break, it changed to what will be known as the Learning Commons. The Learning commons will have a new look and focus as the students arrive back from break. So stay tuned to all of the new and exciting things going on in this ever changing space. Also be on the lookout for new books that are going to be shared with the students in this new year. I know some of the students are dying for new books in series such as Diary of Wimpy Kid, I Survived, Harry Potter, and many more. I will also be starting a morning book club for this and it will consist of students coming in before school to read, and discuss books and other forms of literature. So be on the lookout for the flyer either in your email or coming home with your child. Just a reminder that if you have any library books laying around please try to get them to school as quickly as you can, it would be greatly appreciated. Thank you



again I hope break was restful and everyone is ready to tackle the second half our school year,

## Music News...

### **Mrs. Tavella**

Along with the winter's chill,  
we are all learning a brand new skill.  
In K and 1, we learned how to sing high and low.  
With our handsigns, the direction we show.

In second grade we composed our own melody.  
We took pitches from a scale and placed them randomly.  
We then performed on a xylophone.  
Lots of creativity was shown!

In third grade we are breaking in our new recorders with B-A-G.  
We are learning how to read the staff and play a three note melody.

In Fourth and fifth grade we are composing as well, duets that harmonize and sound real swell!

## Art News...

### **Ms. Olexovitch**



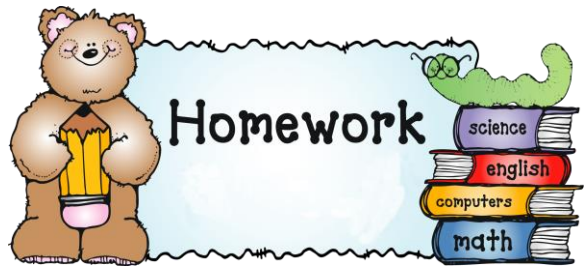
Wow! What a great year we are having in the Art Room!

First I would like to give a **GREAT BIG THANK YOU** to everyone who has made a purchase on Artsonia! Every time an item is purchased from the gift shop, the art room receives 20% of the purchase price! This is a tremendous help with buying more supplies to enrich the program!

Artists in third, fourth, and fifth grade are so excited to use the iPads to upload their artwork on Artsonia. They are now independently using the iPads to upload their work.

Don't forget to mark your calendar for this year's art show on May 3rd from 6-7:30!

The art room is still looking to reuse some of your trash -- Egg cartons, styrofoam trays, paper bags and tin cans will be welcomed throughout the year.



### November Homework Winners

Sara Liptak  
Bernardo Bizinoto  
Vivian DeLoma  
Ashlyn Delaney

### 100% Classroom Winners

Mrs. Gambardella  
Mrs. Gaspar  
Mrs. Martins  
Mrs. Mordecai  
Mrs. Rodrigues  
Mrs. Shinnick  
Mrs. Tuohy

Students received pencils and the class a new book for their library.

## Frenchtown School Dismissal Schedule

### Regular Day:

Regular 8:35 am to 3:20 pm

### Legal Day:

Regular 8:35 am to 1:00 pm

### Early Dismissal:

Regular 8:35 am to 1:00 pm

### Delayed Opening:

90 Minute Delay 10:05 am to 3:20 pm

2 Hour Delay 10:35 am to 3:20 pm

2.5 Hour Delay 11:05 am to 3:20 pm