

Irrawaddy Inquirer

"ONCE A WADDLE, ALWAYS A WADDLE"

From Mrs. Ritter and Ms. Vallecorse

February 2026

Contact Us - Mrs. Ritter: ritter@csaschool.org AND Ms. Vallecorse: vallecorse@csaschool.org

REMINDER: When emailing with the teachers, please make sure to add both of them into the email.

Important Dates

2/6 - Valentine's Day Party
2/6 - Field Trip Permission Slips Due
2/9 - Parent Council Meeting - 6pm at CSAMS
2/12 - LOVE Day
2/13 - No School
2/16 - No School
2/20 - 100th Day of School
2/25 - Field Trip to Impression 5
3/9 - Culminating Event - Save the Date!

Cold Weather Gear

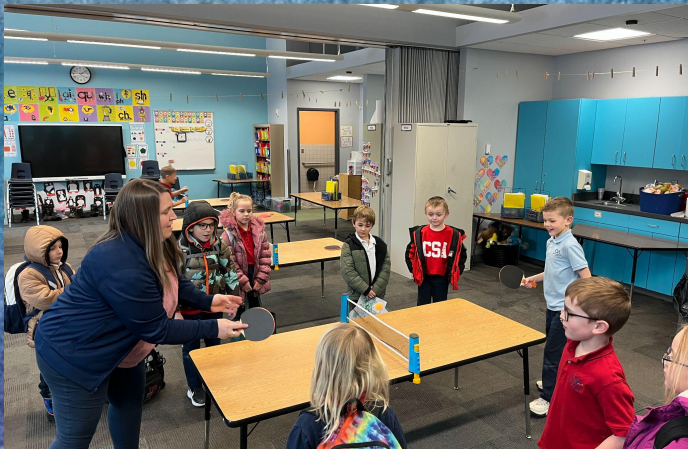
As the weather is getting colder, students should be bringing a coat, hat, and gloves to school every single day for recess and carpool. Teachers check for the wind-chill and radar daily before recess and we will go outside unless the windchill is below zero. To ensure students are adequately prepared, girls that wear skirts can bring in pants to put on underneath for recess and carpool and students can even leave their gear in their locker. It is important for students to be prepared for the daily changes in Michigan's weather. Please label all of their gear. Please ensure your child knows that they must wear a coat outside as weather is colder.

Upcoming Learning Targets

Reading: Readers continue to dig into non-fiction text features and how to tune into new information. Using non-fiction texts has offered readers the opportunity to develop questioning skills, work on targeting key facts, working with partners to retell, and tuning in to main ideas by identifying topic sentences. In our guided reading groups, readers continue to work on skills related to their independent and instructional reading levels. For some groups, continued focus on building sight word fluency is key while for others, developing deeper comprehension skills is the focus.

Writing: Our writers are working through a new unit on non-fiction writing and practicing writing with the purpose to inform. This will lead us into the next part of the unit where students will begin working on writing animal reports. Through a process of shared research, writers will learn and write information related to their animal's appearance, diet, habitat, and other facts they deem interesting to share. This work will be featured in our Culminating Event and we're excited to be able to invite you in to see our writers at the end of this unit! Keep an eye out for a save-the-date for our event in early March!

Math: Mathematicians will continue to focus on math fact fluency, continue to work on fact families, review solving for the missing number, review important math vocabulary, and focus on using various addition strategies to add 3 digit numbers (as it applies to our mathematicians) such as using a number line, place value, or partial sums.



Beluga Ball

Have you heard?? The Beluga Ball is coming around on Saturday, March 21 and will be a live-streamed event including a live auction for things like first in line at carpool, coveted front row parking spaces, classroom projects, and more! A silent auction with open bidding will be available as well.

The Beluga Ball committee could use help with donations toward some auction spots and seeking donors or ad sponsors. Keep an eye on the Tuesday Times for messages from the committee and how you can help to support our biggest fundraising event. Funds from the Beluga Ball have brought things to our campuses like new computers, playground equipment, science resources (science kits, microscopes, etc.), and has stocked our libraries with thousands of books.

Thank you for all the donations received so far for our class projects and for your partnership in supporting our school! Email us or belugaball@csaschool.org with questions or to help!

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Love Day

There are 2 important days coming up! The Valentine's Day classroom party will be held on Friday, February 6th. The school and our classroom will be celebrating Love Day on Thursday, February 12th! We intend on using both days to ramp up the relationship building and fun!

Love Day has become an annual tradition at CSA where we devote a day to just being and doing what we love. This will be a spirit-wear day where students can wear what they love to school (so long as it is school and weather appropriate, but yes, this can include jeans!) and is also the day of our school-wide pancake breakfast. We will work to create a day of fun, love, and togetherness that we hope our students cherish. Keep an eye out for more specifics about this day in the Tuesday Times and via class emails.

Valentines Day Party

Our final class party is upon us and we can't wait to celebrate in style with our learners. Our reps have been hard at work planning another unforgettable day! It will be a Valentine-themed spirit-wear day, too! Shirts and accessories are welcome, with uniform bottoms. As always, any CSA spirit-wear is okay, too. Check out our sign-up genius in the weekly emails for donation opportunities.

As you may begin planning out Valentines, should your learner choose to bring them, here are a few tips. We have 42 students in our class. We will be decorating valentines bags and passing out valentines on Thursday, February 12th- NOT during the Valentine's Day party. This may vary class to class as well, so be sure to check on that procedure if you have children in multiple classes/units. How to address valentines: Please either leave the "To: ____" space blank or fill in with a generic greeting such as "To: My friend". This helps to streamline the process of handing these out. Thanks for your help! :-)

100th Day of School

The 100th day of school is coming up! In celebration we will be having a spirit wear day on **Friday, February 20th!!** Here are some exciting things about this day: Your child may dress up as someone who is 100 years old! This means gray/white wigs, appropriate clothing, walkers, cane, beard, suspenders, glasses etc. We cannot wait to see them!

If your child prefers, they may design and wear a shirt or design and wear a cape with 100 things on it. This could be drawn on or attached to the shirt or cape!

As always, CSA spirit-wear is acceptable on these days. Spirit-wear is optional and students can stick with their uniforms if they so choose. See examples below!



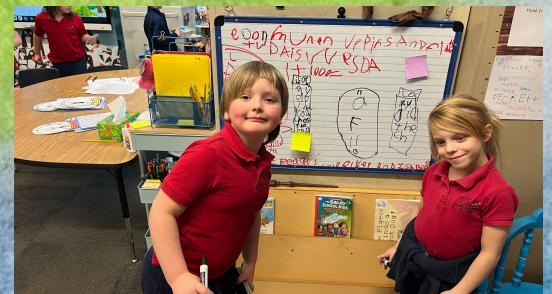
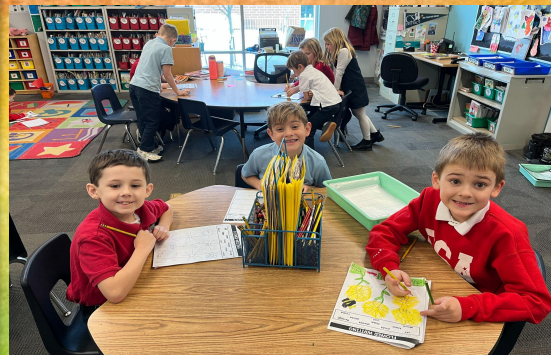
Culminating Event

Join us in celebrating our wonderful writers! We've begun work in laying the foundation for our upcoming culminating event which will shift to showcase our writing skills. This cross-curricular event gains further foundation from mentor texts we've studied, and will study, during Reading Workshop as well. Much of our reading focus has been on identifying and using nonfiction text features and exploring texts with the purpose to inform. In writing, our learners have begun shifting toward factual writing versus much of the story-telling styles we've worked on up to this point. Our Culminating Event will showcase this new genre of writing where students will present an animal report with elements of nonfiction text features and shared research.

More information will come soon as far as timing of the event and possibly having families choose time slots to attend to help with flow in the classroom as this event will run during the school day. The event will be on March 9th and run from 2:00-3:00pm. While here, we will invite you to check out the work of their classmates as well! Please plan to arrive at the start of your time slot and come on in! Some families may need more or less time to visit and see projects, but we hope this system allows you to spend time appreciating and celebrating your writer's hard work!

Field Trips

We've got another field trip on the books and we're super excited! Navigator classes will venture to Impression 5 in Lansing for some hands-on science fun and learning. The Irrawaddy class will explore the science center on February 25. Be sure to check your learner's Tuesday folder soon for permission slips to sign and return with payment. Also included with the permission slip will be a form to indicate whether you'd like to pre-order a school-provided lunch for your learner that day. Please return the form or email us directly so that we can make sure that is accounted for.



Character Corner

In February, the month of love, relationship building, and a whole lot of socializing - we like to take time to revisit our social protocols and connect it to Getting Along. Our social protocols are a list of specific, manner and etiquette based procedures to help students build social skills. The Social skills each have specific steps to complete it successfully as well as a rationale and helpful hints. The five protocols focused on during lower elementary are: introducing yourself, greeting adults and peers, following instructions, getting another person's attention, and accepting no for an answer. CSA modeled their social protocols after the work done by Dowd and Tierney in Teaching Social Skills to Youth.

Social skills are important for students to master. Too often we encounter children and adults that simply lack the basic skills of appropriate social interaction. They are needed to effectively interact with others, meet basic needs, ask for help and build up the acquisition of the character traits of getting along, kindness, optimism, respect, responsibility and work ethic. It is important for these skills and traits to be modeled consistently by positive role models so that these become expectations and second nature to students. Lacking in or lacking to use these skills leads to increased relationship woes, hurt feelings, and negative interactions. You've probably seen these moments happen at home when someone stops focusing on respectful interactions and responses and begins to cause strife. Hence, the need to work on these at home and school.

The teachers in all classrooms will introduce these to students and reinforce them throughout the year using the same teaching strategies as with procedures and routines. Each protocol is introduced using overt modeling of the steps, followed by consistent practicing. It is then reinforced and acknowledged in students' everyday activities throughout the year like read alouds and group work. Social protocols look and sound like what we typically consider traits of manners and etiquette. For example, making eye contact during interactions, smiling, and using a pleasant voice are key steps in many of the protocols. Students becoming confident in meeting new people and more willing to follow directions or accept no for answer without argument are evidence of social skill growth. The two biggest challenges at this age (and around this month) are consistent use of "accepting no as an answer" and "following instructions the first time given". Sometimes as comfort grows, so do one's casual or careless responses. We will focus a little more on following through on these protocols to make sure students understand the importance and feel the difference when these are used and when they are not. In the end, the more social protocols that are followed, the stronger the relationship and the more getting along we see! Please check out the additional page to see some of the posters we use in the classroom.

Introducing Yourself <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Look at the person and smile.2. Use a pleasant voice.3. Offer a greeting. Say "Hi, my name is..."4. Shake the other person's hand.5. When you leave, say "It was nice to meet you". 	Greeting Adults & Peers <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Look at the person.2. Use a pleasant voice.3. Offer a greeting. Say "Hi" or "Hello". 	Following Instructions <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Look at the person.2. Say "Okay".3. Do what you've been asked right away.4. Check back. 	Getting Another Person's Attention <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Wait until the other person is finished speaking or is available to you.2. Look at the person.3. Get that person's attention by saying "Excuse me..."4. Wait until he or she acknowledges you. Proceed with what you wanted to say. 	Accepting "No" for an answer <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Look at the person.2. Say "Okay".3. Stay calm.4. If you disagree, ask later. 
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"The time is always right to do what is right." – Martin Luther King Jr.