



February 2024

*Student Services Department
 Newsletter*

“The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched – they must be felt with the heart.”— Helen Keller

Happy February! Even though it is the shortest month of the year, it is jam-packed with events, including Groundhog Day and Valentine’s Day! It is Black History month, as well as: American Heart Month, Canned Food Month, Grapefruit Month, and Hot Breakfast Month! Who knew that a month with only 28 days, well 29 as this is a Leap Year, could fit all that in?

Testing season is upon us and as we’re navigating through our testing season we have a few test-taking strategies to keep in mind.



We are actively looking for Special Education Teachers, Educational Assistants, and Ancillary Staff. Apply at:
<https://espanola.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx>

Test-Taking Strategies

R Read the question carefully, then reread the passage or the problem.

E Examine every answer choice before you choose your answer.

L Label your answer (Math)
 Look for proof in the passage and underline it (ELA)

A Always check your work!

X X-out answers that you know are wrong

Student Testing
 in Progress
Do not Disturb
 Testing will end at
 approximately ~~11:00~~ 11:25

Important Dates to Remember:



- February 2-ECOT data due
- February 14-120th Day of School
- February 16-No School-Inservice Day
- February 16-Child Find @ LNKC 9:00-11:00 am
- February 19-No School-Presidents Day

Contact Us:

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Vocabulary Is Important

In today's world, reading is the key to independence. Reading entertains you when you're bored, keeps you company when you're lonely, and opens up a world of knowledge when you're curious. Through the teen years and into adulthood, reading connects you to friends and family as you text back and forth, helps you order your favorite meal from a menu, and gets you on the right bus on your way to an appointment. Reading makes it possible to have a job, understand the lease agreement for your new apartment, and follow directions on a bottle of prescription medication.

An important part of reading and comprehension is understanding vocabulary. Vocabulary is knowing the meanings and pronunciations of words. For example, the word shop can mean: a store, supermarket, boutique, as well as to browse, purchase, buy, look for.



Vocabulary is broken down into two main parts:

1. **Expressive vocabulary:** words the child uses to express himself when speaking or writing. This includes speaking vocabulary and writing vocabulary. Speaking vocabulary is the words we use when we speak. Our speaking vocabulary is relatively limited! Most adults use only 5,000 to 10,000 words for all their conversations and instructions. Writing vocabulary are words we use when we write and is largely dependent spelling ability.
2. **Receptive vocabulary:** All words understood by the child, including spoken, written, or signed words. These include listening and reading vocabulary. Listening vocabulary are words we understand. By the time we reach adulthood, most of us will recognize and understand close to 50,000 words. Reading vocabulary are words we understand when we read text or sign language.

Vocabulary is usually broken down by tiers when it's being taught:

- Tier 1: Basic words that commonly appear in spoken language. Examples include clock, baby, happy, and walk.
- Tier 2: High frequency words used by mature language users across several content areas. Examples of Tier 2 words are obvious, complex, establish and verify.
- Tier 3: These are words that are not commonly used, except in certain academic areas or situations. Medical, legal, biology and mathematics terms are all examples of these words.

Some tips for expanding your child's expressive and receptive vocabulary include:

- Real life experiences: for example, a child is more likely to know words like "produce", "register", "grocery," and "aisle" if they go to the supermarket regularly

- Literature: books can expose kids to unfamiliar experiences, places and people



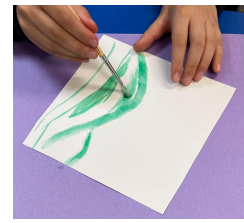
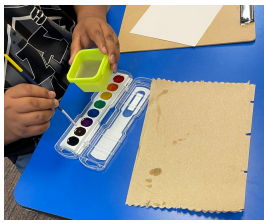
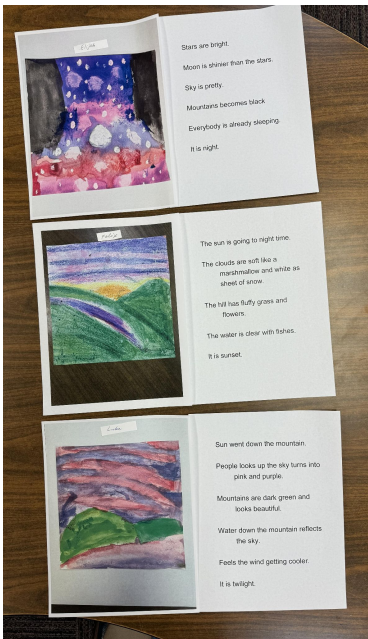
- Conversation: constantly talking with children, even before they are able to produce speech. By describing what the child or adult is doing, or expanding on what a child has said ("pretty flower", "yes, it is pretty! The flower is bright red.") adults expand a child's vocabulary.

Classroom Spotlight

Our Classroom Spotlight is with Ms. Lorna Aligato joined the Espanola Public Schools in 2018 and was assigned as a Resource Special Education Teacher at Abiquiu Elementary. She was then added to Alcalde Elementary and was virtual that school year due to COVID. She was then transferred to San Juan and Velarde Elementary. Most currently she is assigned to San Juan Elementary and Las Cumbres Learning Center. Ms. Lorna says she is so blessed and happy to work with her students. She works diligently to impart the knowledge, concepts, and skills to help them meet their individual goals as stipulated in their IEP.



This school year, we have been introduced to Picture Writing. This has allowed her students to showcase their talent in painting as well as writing. Her students love to do the activities. Through their painting, their imaginations have widened and they have been able to write their explanations on the paintings they have created. This has also helped increase their vocabulary.



THANK YOU
Thank you Ms. Lorna for being an important part of our team!

As part of her teaching she has also created learning centers. She has a Reading Corner, Math Corner, and a Writing Corner. This is where students can focus on the particular learning activity they need to complete during that period.



Keep up the great work Ms. Lorna!

Classroom Spotlight

Our Classroom Spotlight is with Ms. Sheree Gabutero, Special Education Teacher at Tony E. Quintana Elementary School. She joined the Espanola Public Schools in January of 2023. She is grateful she's been selected as the Classroom Spotlight person for the month of January because this month also marks her 1st year working with the Espanola Public Schools.

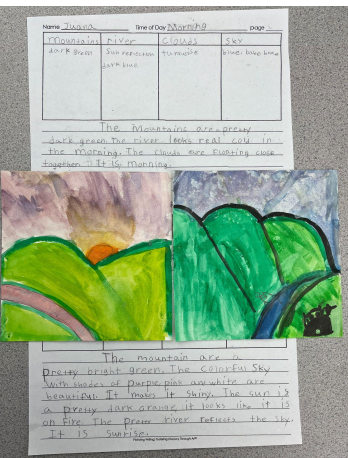
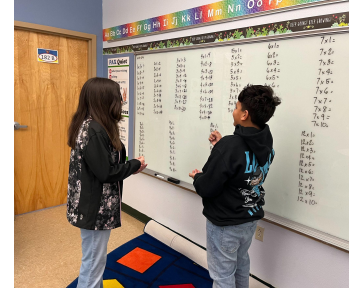
In her classroom, she makes sure her classroom rules are visible to the students. She understands routines are essential for students to know what to do when they enter her resource room.

She has made a Calming Corner in her classroom. When students are having a rough day, she has a space for them to calm down. She works with students with Autism and ED, so having this calming corner really helps her and her students.

In the resource room, her students work on Math and ELA intervention. With the help of her EA, Ms. Frances Sanchez, they work on helping students with their reading skills. They use reading materials and manipulatives to enable students to grasp a great understanding of the subject matter. Their aim is to help the students achieve their goals and to see progress everyday.



In class, if they finish a task she gives rewards. They can play a board game or with the manipulatives. She wants to create a fun-learning environment for all her students.



She also incorporates Picture Writing in her class. As a teacher, she always wants them to excel not just academically but also to bring out their creativity and talent. Through Picture Writing, they learn to express their own ideas and put it into words. They are able to share their paintings in front of the class with confidence.



THANK YOU
Thank you Ms. Sheree for being an important part of our team!



Keep up the great work Ms. Sheree!

Ms. Sheree says, "Thank you for this great opportunity, EPS family!"



Ancillary Spotlight

Our ancillary spotlight is with our wonderful Occupational Therapists. Thank you Ms. Haley Allen Mazza for sending in some pictures. She is our Occupational Therapist with the Espanola Public Schools. As an occupational therapist she individualizes her services by providing treatments that are fun and align with students' goals. Treatments may involve use of gross motor preparatory work, ie fun obstacle course, use of scooter board, or large therapy ball, fine motor/ visual motor activities such as origami water bombs, step by step drawing videos, or snow flakes, holiday themed "parties" with crafting, individualized adaptive tools to increase accessibility to a motivating activity, etc. Her favorite thing about her job is watching her students make achievements they didn't know they were capable of making. She also loves when students show off their new skills to people they care about.



THANK YOU
Thank you OTs
for being an
important part of
our team!



In her free time she enjoys the outdoors especially rock climbing with her husband. She also enjoys painting, yoga, and skiing and/or biking (depending on the time of year). She states, "Having outside hobbies are extra fun because many of my students love to talk about their own passions outside of school and it's nice to talk about things my students enjoy and succeed at as it's one wonderful way I see their confidence grow."

Keep up the great work Ms. Haley!

Our OTs are a very important part of our schools. OTs in the school support children's profession of working and playing in the school setting. OTs can support children in increasing their skills in the following areas: fine motor precision, fine motor integration, upper body coordination, sensory processing, etc. OTs can assist in creating adaptations for students due to physical, cognitive, or sensory needs. They also provide these services at home to children who are unable to attend school.

Our wonderful OTs include:

Haley Allen Mazza
Theresa Guenard
Elisa Salazar Mackensie
Kristine Rutledge
Cassandra Valdez

Thank you for all your hard work and dedication to our students and our district. You are an important part of our team!