Gecko Gazette Robert E. Willis Elementary School



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ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

It's amazing how fast the school year has passed by. January was a busy month returning to the routines of school after the winter break. February marked the start of the Florida Statewide Assessment Program, as fourth and fifth grade students participated in the Florida Standards Assessments (FSA) English Language Arts (ELA) Writing assessment. During the first three quarters of the school year we have already seen a tremendous amount of growth from our students and are proud of how hard they work each day toward achieving their goals.

During the fourth quarter, students in Grades 3, 4, and 5 will participate in the FSA ELA Reading and Mathematics assessments. FSA was designed to measure student achievement of the Florida Standards. Students in Grade 5 will also participate in the Statewide Science Assessment (SSA). The SSA measures student achievement of the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards.

In 2016–17, the FSA for Grade 3 ELA Reading and Grades 4-5 ELA Writing will be delivered in a paper-based format. The Grades 4–5 ELA Reading and Grades 3–5 Mathematics FSA assessments will be delivered in a computer-based format. The Grade 5 SSA will be delivered in a paper-based format.

ELA Reading and Mathematics assessments contain 56–66 items. More information, including the number-of-items range for each assessment, can be found in the Test Design Summary located on the FSA Portal. FSA ELA and Mathematics sessions are administered over two days. The ELA Reading and Mathematics for Grades 3–5 consists of two 80minute sessions. Computer-Based Testing (CBT) Work Folders are provided for each Mathematics session. A sample of the work folder is available on the FSA Portal. CBT Worksheets are provided for each reading session for note taking. A sample of the worksheet is available on the FSA Portal. The FSA portal is located at: http://fsassessments.org/

In addition, reference sheets are provided for some mathematics assessments. Computer-based and paperbased practice tests, as well as paper-based test item practice handouts, for each assessment are available on the FSA Portal. Practice tests allow teachers, parents/ guardians, and students to become familiar with the system, functionality, tools, and item types that will be encountered on the FSA. For resources to help students better understand the Florida Standards to which the assessments are aligned, please visit CPALMS.

Student performance on Florida's statewide assessments is categorized into five achievement levels. Student performance at each achievement level is provided on student reports for students, parents, and educators. It is important to note that students in grade 3 must achieve a Level 2 or higher on the FSA ELA Reading Assessment for promotion purposes.

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM (cont.)

For more information on this requirement, as well as good cause exemption information for students who score in Level I, please see the Third Grade Guidance page on the FDOE website.

Please ensure that your child receives several good nights of sleep prior to testing dates and during the testing window. Proper sleep and a healthy breakfast can make a difference in your child's performance. Also, be sure that your child arrives at school on time every morning during testing. A stressful morning can be a huge distraction for students. If your child is ill during testing it is best to keep them home, make-up dates are built into the testing window.

Please also remember that supervision for students is not provided prior to 8:00 a.m. unless they are enrolled in Gecko Care. Over the last few weeks we have seen more and more students dropped off at school before 8:00 a.m. Please do not drop off your child before 8:00 a.m. Your child's safety is of the utmost importance to us, and we appreciate your support with this policy.

Thank you for all you do to support Willis Elementary School. We are extremely grateful for your support and generosity. Your ongoing commitment ensures our students have what they need to achieve their goals!

Bill Stenger, Principal Billie-Jo Fintel, Assistant Principal

Date	Grade	Test
March 28 & 29	Grade 3	ELA Reading
April 5	Grade 4 & 5	ELA Writing Make-ups
April 11 & 12	Grade 5	Math
April 18 - 21	Grade 4	Math
April 25 - 28	Grade 3	Math
May 1 - 5	Grade 4	ELA Reading
May 2 & 4	Grade 5	Science
May 9 & 10	Grade 5	ELA Reading

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Our FSA Assessments are fast approaching! We are providing you with a table summarizing assessment dates for Third, Fourth and Fifth grades.

It is very helpful for each student to get a good nights' sleep and eat a healthy breakfast before each test. Being on time to school will also reduce any nervousness your child may be experiencing.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me!

Thank you, Phyllis Morales Certified School Counselor Willis Elementary School 941-316.8245 x 2004



P.T.O. PAGES

What a wonderful winter it has been at Willis!

There are still a few Walk-a-thon prizes to come, but winners so far have enjoyed extra recess time and silly stringing Coach Morales & Coach Quinn, who were such good sports! Students have also received their walker tokens, t-shirts, spring book fair credit, as well as their snack and no homework coupons. Next up is the picnic lunch and the magician which are scheduled for March 16th. And, of course, everybody is anxiously waiting for "On the Roof!"

We are excited to announce that the volunteer area furniture and supplies have been ordered so that all the volunteers who give their time to create folder games, posters, homework packets, and decorate doors for the classrooms will have their very own workspace. The library is also beginning a transformation - painting has been scheduled, so be sure to keep your eye out on the new look! The P.T.O. is also evaluating options for classroom libraries and tablets with the school administration.

So many families enjoyed Muffins with Mom, taking a sweet picture, and then shopping at the Book Fair. The spring Book Fair was an outstanding success! Thank you to all who volunteered that morning and for all who helped work at the Book Fair.

Our very first Kona Ice Spirit "night" was held in February. About a hundred students enjoyed a snow cone at the park, and then the truck was able to come over to Willis to serve our "after school" children. We also enjoyed another great spirit night at Chik-Fil-A. Five Guys will be sponsoring our next Willis Spirit Night on March 15th so be sure to mark it on your calendar!

The Gecko Gala was held on March 4th and had a wonderful turn-out, with almost 200 attendees. It was a beautiful evening enjoying "adult" time with our Willis staff, parents, and community supporters while raising over \$30,000!

There are still several awesome events to look forward to this spring! The Father/Daughter dance will be held Friday, April 7th (event sold out!) and our first Mother/Son Baseball game will be held Sunday, April 23rd (more information coming soon). The annual Talent Show and Field Day are just around the corner!

Be sure to order your 2016/17 yearbook and create your personalized pages for your child's yearbook! The deadline is midnight, April 10th. Another special fundraiser you may want to participate in is having a commemorative brick engraved for your child. These make perfect fifth grade celebration gifts too! They will be installed before the end of the school year.

Enjoy your conferences with your teacher and have a happy and restful spring break!

Respectfully, The Willis P.T.O.

2016/17 P.T.O. BOARD MEMBERS*

<u>Ashley Henderson</u> - President <u>Courtni Darpino</u> - Vice President <u>Deb Hossenlopp</u> - Vice President <u>Tara Merino</u> - Treasurer <u>Christa Nash</u> - Secretary

*click on each name for email

Gecko Gala 2017

Saturday, March 4th marked the 12th year for Willis Elementary's annual spring fundraiser, the Gecko Gala. Over two hundred Willis families, staff and sponsors enjoyed the evening at the Lake Club Clubhouse while sipping on the infamous pink flamingo drinks and enjoying hors d'oeuvres while the bidding on 170 auction items. There was something for everyone: golf foursomes, theme park tickets, summer camps, amazing class baskets, signed sport memorabilia and much more that netted over \$30,000 for the school!

A heartfelt thanks goes out to ALL of you for once again making the Gecko Gala auction a huge success! This evening would not have been possible without your support, our amazing staff, sponsors, and the many merchants, small business owners and companies in our community who donated in support of this event. We are especially grateful for all of our Gecko Gala sponsors, listed below. We were absolutely amazed at the creativity and time spent in creating all the classroom baskets, coordinated by our wonderful room parents. A special thanks goes out to Neil and Jenny Hunn for sponsoring Willis at the Lake Club. And, thank you to our teachers, Mrs. Curveo, Mrs. Keclick, Mr. Frisbie & Mr. Franceski, for volunteering to help with the childcare.

The Gala would not have been successful without the ongoing efforts made by those who volunteered. Your help, time and donations were so amazing and we cannot thank you enough!

Ashley Henderson P.T.O. President Gala Chair

Willis Elementary's GECKO GALA Saturday · 4° · March Annua' FUNdraiter & Bechranic Auction





THANK YOU TO OUR GECKO GALA SPONSORS!

<u>Grand Royal Palm Sponsor</u> - Zarghami Dream Home Specialists <u>Mangrove Sponsors</u> - Brain Balance Achievement Centers, Gator Stamping, Hornback Chiropractic, and Jumpin Fun Sports <u>Ballroom Table Sponsor</u> - Valerie Demino from Lularoe <u>Oak Sponsors</u> - Golf Car Outlet, Lakewood Ranch Family & Cosmetic Dentistry, Moricz and Varone Orthodontics, and PDQ

Under the Sea * Father Daughter Dance 2017

Willis Elementary is delighted to announce the return of the Father Daughter Dance on <u>Friday</u>, <u>April 7th</u>. Willis daughters in grades K-5 are invited to attend, along with their fathers. We will enjoy a fun filled evening including dancing, desserts, a photo booth, and more.*

Please be aware that due to space limitations only 400 tickets will be made available, and they will not be available at the event.



If a father/stepfather is not able to attend, you are welcome to have an uncle, grandfather, or other important role model in your child's life accompany the girl to the dance. All daughters must be accompanied by an adult and siblings are not allowed unless they already attend Willis.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Willis Elementary P.T.O. at williselementarypto@yahoo.com.

*attire for the father daughter dance is semi-casual



Silly String Fun!



P.T.O. MEETING!

Our next P.T.O. Meeting is **Wednesday**, **March 29 at 2:00p.m.** in the Cafeteria.

BOX TOPS

Our next Box Tops Collection, and last for the year, will be **May 3, 2017**. We are still counting our last collection and will announce the top three classroom winners soon, and each of them will receive a popcorn party.

SHOPPING ON AMAZON?

Support Willis while you shop!

Use the below link or simply log in to <u>Smile Amazon</u> and select Robert E Willis Elementary P.T.O., Inc. as your charity of choice and then shop as you normally would. Amazon will donate 0.5% if your purchase to Willis PTO. You only have to select Willis as your charity once. It is that easy!

LAST DRESS DOWN DAY!

Friday, April 7th - \$2 donation.

WILLIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BRICKS

Help build your children's road to learning! Commemorate your child's enrollment at Willis by buying a brick with your customized message. The 4" x 8" engraved bricks will be installed in the school courtyard.

- ★ Price: \$50.00 per brick (you can pay <u>here</u>)
- ★ How: fill out the <u>Brick Order Form</u>.
- ★ Deadline: Please place your order by March 28th

SPIRIT NIGHTS SAVE THE DATES!

Spirit Nights are fundraisers where Willis families eat at a local restaurant on a specific night and part of the proceeds for the sales go back to Willis.

- ★ Five Guys: Wednesday, March 15th
- ★ Kona Ice at the Park: Friday, March 31st
- ★ PDQ: Monday, April 17th
- ★ Menchies (River Club Plaza): Thursday, May 3rd







YEARBOOK

Your last chance to order your Willis 2016-17 Yearbook is just round the corner! The deadline to order is April 10, 2017.

Yearbooks are \$17.00 and can be ordered by linking <u>here</u> and then entering the school passcode: **101474471416856**.

Special customization is also available this year to add two free pages that you design just for your child. You can add images, text, and messages to highlight individual events throughout the year. Check it out!

For any questions, please contact our Yearbook Chair, Liz Baas: lizbass@gmail.com.

DONT MISS OUT! Father/Daughter Dance Friday, April 7, 2017 ******

Mother/Son Baseball Game Sunday, April 23, 2017





MUSIC

The Willis Elementary Talent show will be held on May 18th and 19th, 2017. The tryouts will be on April 13th during the school day. If you are interested in trying out for the talent show, please download and fill out the <u>permission slip</u> and return it to Mrs. Isaacs by April 13th. More information regarding the show and the tryout is on the permission slip, so be sure to read it carefully before returning it to Mrs. Isaacs.

Please be aware that the students should have their act fully learned by April 13th to ensure a successful tryout. Tryouts are open to all grade levels. Good luck everyone!

Mrs. Christy Isaacs, Music Teacher x2079

SCIENCE

Happy Spring from Mrs. Bradl! Our student scientists have been very busy this grading period working through the different science concepts. Kindergarten and first grade have been studying how all living things needs air, water, shelter, space, and food to live and survive. Second grade enjoyed talking about weather and making or using the different tools scientists use to

talking about weather and making or using the different tools scientists use to measure or predict weather. Third and fourth grade have been experimenting with and learning about sound energy, electrical energy, heat energy, light energy, and mechanical energy. Fifth grade has been studying how plants and animals adapt to their environments.

All of our student scientists have been doing a great job taking care of and working carefully with our science supplies, tools, and equipment. We are fortunate to have enough microscopes, balances, graduated cylinders, magnifying glasses, and other tools for every student. Our students are demonstrating lots of responsibility by being so good and conscientious with these materials. Way to go Geckos!

Ms. Amy Bradl, Science Teacher x2021



CLINIC

Spring is here and living in Florida we are lucky to have access to many fresh fruits and vegetables. Did you know that we all need to have at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables daily? A serving is considered the size of your hand. Have you tried a star fruit or dragon fruit? What about a turnip or



brussel sprout? Have you ever grown or gone to pick fresh veggies and fruits? Eating a variety of fresh foods can keep our bodies healthy along with plenty of exercise (60 minutes a day) and a good night's sleep (recommend 9 hours a night).

I will be looking forward to hearing about what new fruits and vegetables you are trying! Keeping our Willis Gecko's healthy and safe is our goal.

> Mary Fischer, RN, School Nurse Kris Miller x2010/x2011

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The <u>2017 Elementary Track Meet</u> will be held at Bayshore HS again this year on April 22nd 2017. This is the only chance students from different elementary schools can compete against each other athletically. The track meet is open to only qualifying 3rd, 4th and 5th graders. The event is a 400 meter run and is based on fastest time. Tryouts will be optional and held during P.E. class after Spring Break. Qualifying students will be the top three runners for boys and girls in 3rd, 4th and 5th grades. We will also select some alternates runners from each group in case one of the qualifying students cannot make the event.

In January, two time Stanley Cup Champion and former <u>Tampa Bay Lightning</u> defenseman Jassen Cullimore came to Willis Elementary with 5 Ligtning staff members to teach the 4th and 5th graders about the sport of hockey. The students took turns learning how to stick handle, pass and shoot the hockey ball. The Lightning program is traveling to elementary and Middle schools around the Tampa Bay area to help promote and grow the sport of hockey. Each 4th and 5th grade student that participated received their own hockey stick, hockey ball and ticket voucher to a Tampa Bay Lightning game. The Lightning also donated free hockey sticks, goals, and goalie equipment to the P.E. department to help teach the sport of hockey.

Miles of Smiles, Coach Morales Coach Quinn x2080/2068



ART

Spring time is the best time of year to be a teacher! Many activities are happening at Willis. Art helpers are looking forward to working with Mrs. Isaacs on the Talent Show to assist the participants in putting on memorable and fantastic performances. The annual Fifth grade paper mache "parade of faces" is in full swing and the students have worked for many weeks in preparation. We are hoping to have some of the masks on display for conferences on March 30th. The Student Senate recently provided support to the Art Department to which we are very thankful. The Senate also suggested some creative ways to raise funds for new art supplies.

Earlier in the year the fifth graders studied Frida Kahlo, a Mexican painter focusing on self-portraits. <u>The Dali Museum</u> in St. Pete has <u>an exhibition in celebration of Frida's work</u> on display through April 17, 2017. If anyone would like to meet me at the Dali Museum, I plan to go on <u>Thursday March 23rd</u> in the evening during Spring Break. The museum is open on Thursdays until



8:00pm, and the entrance fee after 5:00pm is \$10 (adults, ages 13–17), \$8 (ages 6–12), and always free to kids 5 and under.

The students made sketches of the circus and sent them to FELD Entertainment, the Ellenton based live show production company that owns Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. If selected, the students would be allowed to create and paint a circus wall mural at the FELD entertainment complex. In exchange, we would get to keep all the left-over paint to decorate the P.E. equipment building with a sports themed mural.

Last, the doors to the art room "Studio 201" open at 8:00 AM Monday through Friday, please feel free to stop by anytime to say hello!

Happy Spring, Mr. Roy London, Art Teacher x2053



Kindergarten

The year is flying by in Kindergarten! We enjoyed a fun POW WOW and learned about Holidays Around the World and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. We had our 1st and 2nd Quarter Gecko Awards and our Winter & Valentines Parties!

Our 100th Day Celebration was a blast as we celebrated our success and reinforced our different strategies to count to 100. We can count by 1s, 2s, 5s, and 10s! We will continue to work on addition and subtraction word problems as we focus on numbers more than 10. Geometry and Measurement are our next units in Math.

Science will continue to be exciting as we explore the life cycle of living things! In Social Studies, the students enjoyed creating their own timeline and sharing with their peers. We are still working hard to build word fluency, comprehension, and finding Main Idea and Key Details. Opinion and letter writing will be fun too We are very excited for our last quarter as we prepare to be First Graders!

We appreciate all of your support at home to help make your children successful and confident learners. Please continue reading and using flashcards to reinforce these skills at home!

We still have more FUN ahead!



First grade visiting the "Bee Hive" at O'Brien Family Farms.



Mr. Violette's class after "Extra Recess" that a student won at WAT!

First Grade

Now that we have completed our third quarter in First Grade, we can see how well our future Second Graders have been performing. We want to continue this progress into the fourth quarter, so please keep your child on a good routine with plenty of sleep.

We want our students to be reading for 15 minutes per night to develop their stamina for the longer reading passages they will see on their assessments. When reading fiction stories, have your child look for sequence of events. Identifying what happened first, next, and last can help them understand the plot of the story. In informational text such as biographies, remind your child to look for facts and details about that real person's life. These facts will be organized in time-order sequence.

For Math, we will be analyzing and comparing data shown in a picture or bar graph. We want the students to be able to compare and contrast the data in the graphs to interpret trends. Then the students will be learning about three-dimensional shapes. Our objective for the students will be to identify and describe these shapes based on their defining attributes. Finally, we always want our students to be practicing their math facts by mastering sums to 20, along with the skills to solve double-digit addition problems.

In Science this quarter, the students will investigate the composition of the Earth, and learn about the water, rocks, soil and living organisms found on its surface. In Social Studies this quarter, the students will demonstrate a beginning understanding of economics by exploring goods, services, needs, wants, spending and saving.

> Fun Website for Money https://www.usmint.gov/kids/

2nd Grade

Our second graders are learning and growing at lightning speed! Now that we have hit the mid-year point, we will continue to move forward with full momentum. Here is a peek of some things to come.

Our math gears have shifted from two and three digit addition and subtraction to time, money, and measurement. Many of us do not often carry cash, so this is a great time to help students pull out their piggy banks and practice counting groups of coins. Telling time using an analog clock often seems like a thing of the past in our digital world and many students often need extra practice with this skill. Don't forget to also continue to practice basic math facts as we change topics, so that students do not lose the fact fluency they have gained. Calling out math facts is a great game to play in the car!

The students are truly blossoming as readers! It is important to continue reading with your child and encouraging them to read for at least twenty minutes each night. As you read fiction texts together, you can discuss how and why a character changed in the text, any lessons that were learned, problem and solution, etc. In the nonfiction texts, discuss the main idea and key details, compare and contrast information learned, identify the purpose of text features, cause and effect, etc. Remind your child to find text evidence that proves their thinking.

We are looking forward to a field trip to South Florida Museum in April, and we love seeing your child learn and grow. Thank you for all of your continued support in your child's education!

3rd Grade

Third graders have been working hard prepping for their first FSA tests.

In reading, we are focusing on using all the strategies we've learned so far this year in order to prove our answers. In math, we are focusing on fractions, measurement, and geometry while continuing to review our multiplication and division facts.

All of the third grade teachers are immensely proud of the determination and stamina our third graders have shown this year. These Willis Geckos are definitely up to the challenge and we cannot wait to see their fantastic results!



Mrs. Flynn's 2nd graders celebrating "Read Across America" featuring 4th grader Savanah Adams.



4th Grade

Readers, writers, scientists, and mathematicians ... that's what we see in our outstanding, hard-working fourth graders! Here's what's happening currently in each subject area.

One of our goals is to build a love of reading in our students - and it is showing! Students are plowing through the Sunshine State books, and are also buzzing about all the interesting independent books they are reading. Trending book series include the Harry Potter, Series of Unfortunate Events, Diary of a Wimpy Kid, and the Percy Jackson series.

Measurement is the "area" of study in math currently. Our students continue to use listening, speaking, reading and writing about math to enable connections and discovery of mathematical relationships.

Our scientists are studying the five forms of energy-light, heat, sound, electrical and energy of motion. Students will also discover how energy creates change. There is a focus on sound energy and pitch. Also, students will describe wind and water as sources of energy that can be used to move objects. Students explore how heat flows and learn about conductors and insulators.

Finally, we are sooooo proud of our 4th graders' writing! They became immersed in writing informative and opinion essays this year, and really gave it their all on the FSA Writing Assessment! Way to go fabulous fourth graders!

5th Grade

As we move into the final quarter of 5th grade, we have many events coming up. Report Card Conference Night is March 30th. You should have, or soon will, received information from your homeroom teacher how to sign up for a conference if you wish to review your child's report card.

The 5th grade testing dates are listed below. Please be sure your child is at school on time on these days. It is important that they are well rested and have a good breakfast. Please talk with your child about the importance of working hard all the way to the very end of the test. Now is not the time to let up! We will update you if there are any changes or additions to the testing schedule.

Finally, we have the Fifth Grade Celebration field trip on May 23rd for all 5th graders (details will be sent home soon). And, the Fifth Grade Recognition Ceremony will be May 25th. We look forward to seeing everyone on this special day!

5th Grade Test Dates

April 11: Math FSA April 12: Math FSA May 2: Science SSA May 4: Science SSA May 9: ELA FSA May 10: ELA FSA



trust yourself. you know more than you think you do.





THANK YOU TO OUR WILLIS BUSINESS PARTNERS!

<u>Platinum</u>

Jumpin Fun Sports LWR Family & Cosmetic Dentistry Primrose School at Lakewood Ranch Morrish Stewart Orthodontics Zarghami Dream Home Specialists

<u>Gold</u>

Brain Balance Center of Lakewood Ranch Gator Stamping Golf Car Outlet Hornback Chiropractic Lularoe, Valerie Demino Kristin M. Culliton, Bright Realty Kumon Lil Divas and Dudes Moricz & Varone Orthodontics MSD Engineering PDQ Premier Sports Campus Reel Deal Pressure Washing Square 1 Burgers & Bar Thomas A. Bowles DDS

CALENDAR

<u>March</u>

- 15 Runner's Club (7:30am) SPIRIT NIGHT: Five Guys (4:00 - 10:00pm)
- 17 NO SCHOOL (Record Day)
- 20-24 NO SCHOOL (Spring Break)
- 28 Brick Orders Due (see P.T.O. pages)
- 29 P.T.O. Meeting (2:00pm)
- 30 Report Card Conference Night
- 31 EARLY RELEASE (12:30pm) SPIRIT NIGHT: Kona Ice (12:30 at Park & then After Care at school)

<u>April</u>

- All Pro Dads (7:30 8:30am)
 Dress Down Day (\$2) EARLY RELEASE (12:30pm) Father/Daughter Dance (7:00-9:00pm)
 Talent Show Tryouts SPIRIT NIGHTS: PDQ
- 14 NO SCHOOL (Holiday)
- 17 SAC Meeting (6:00pm)
- 19 Kindergarten Round Up (10am-2pm) and 4pm to 6pm)
- 21 P.T.O. Meeting (2:00pm)
- 23 Mother/Son Baseball Game

May

- 3 EARLY RELEASE (1:15pm) Box Tops Collection SAC Meeting (6:00pm)
- 5 All Pro Dads (7:30 8:30am)
- 12 P.T.O. Meeting (2:00pm)
- 26 EARLY RELEASE (12:30pm)
- 29 NO SCHOOL (Holiday)
- 31 LAST DAY OF SCHOOL! (EARLY RELEASE)

The Gecko Gazette is a quarterly publication for the Robert E. Willis Elementary School. For any questions or comments feel free to contact Christine Shaklik at <u>shaklik@me.com</u>.