



# THE LEPRECHAUN

A Nationally Recognized School of Excellence



JANUARY 2026

## Principals Corner

Dear Parents,

Happy 2026!! With January being the start of a new year and our second semester, it's the perfect time to analyze our goals, reflect on our accomplishments, and address what we have left to achieve in this school year. We completed PM2 (our second progress monitoring assessments) for ELA and Math and will take the writing portion on January 27th and 28th. It's amazing how much growth students can make in such a short amount of time!

Please block off May 4-15 as students will be taking their PM3 ELA and Math assessments. The writing assessment will be given to 4th and 5th graders on March 31st and April 1st. Please make sure you don't have appointments scheduled for these days. We will not be approving absences for reasons outside of the LCS attendance policy.

Thank you for your continued support. From homework help to volunteering in the cafeteria, it all matters. Killearn Lakes is an excellent school due to collaboration between home, school, and the community. As always, please reach out if you ever have a question, concern, or great idea you'd like to share. We're here for you.

Jenny Blair & Champayne Ricciardi



Did you know that Chronic absenteeism—or missing at least 10 percent of school days in a school year for any reason, excused or unexcused—is a primary cause of low academic achievement and a powerful predictor of those students who may eventually drop out of school? Ten percent is a total of 18 throughout the course of the school year. Likewise, students who are chronically tardy and/or leave school early miss out on key learning opportunities which in turn hinders their academic achievement.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Dec 22—Jan 6 | Winter Holiday—<br>NO SCHOOL                      |
| Jan 7        | Students Return                                   |
| Jan 13       | PTO—Skate World Fundraiser                        |
| Jan 20       | PTO meeting—6:00 pm                               |
| Jan 23       | Spring Picture Day—<br>Class Photos & Individuals |
| Jan 27       | 100th Day of School                               |
| Jan 28       | 1st grade—101st Day of School                     |
| Jan 29—Feb 6 | PTO—Shamrock Shuffle                              |

Visit us on the web: [www.leonschools.net/killearnlakes](http://www.leonschools.net/killearnlakes)

# IN OUR LEARNING ERA

KILLEARN LAKES ELEMENTARY

## Physical Education

We are so excited for Winter Break and we hope you spend it doing all of the things you love! Here is a game that would be fun to do with family and friends to get everyone up and active:

### ELF ON THE SHELF TAG

1. In some homes during the holidays, families play a fun game called Elf on the Shelf. Every night when people are sleeping, the elf moves all around the house and tries not to get caught.
2. On the start signal, toss the ball back and forth with your partner. When you hear the music begin, the partner with the ball becomes the elf. They will move at a speed-walking pace through the activity area, trying not to get tagged by their partner without the ball. If tagged, hand the ball off and switch roles. The new tagger will do 3 snowman jacks before trying to tag the new elf.
3. When the music stops, find a new partner to play catch with. This will be your new tag partner when the music starts again.

We can't wait to see everyone in The New Year!



What do snowmen call their kids?

Chill-dren!

~Ms. Dennis & Mrs. Hickman

## Media Center

Hello from the Media Center!

Happy New Year! I hope you had a wonderful holiday break. As we begin the third nine weeks, I'll have 3rd-5th grade classes back for Media Special Area. Kindergarten-2nd grade students are still welcome to check out books from the library anytime.



Last year we added a Book Vending Machine for our library.

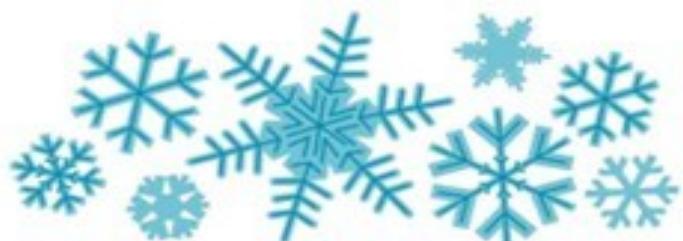
It runs on special tokens and not real money. Students can earn a token two ways:

\*Leveling up on Lexia Core5: Each time a student levels up, their name goes into a drawing. Every Friday, two students per grade level are drawn on the WKLES Morning News and get to visit the library for a token and to select a book.

\*Secret Students: During Media classes, two students are chosen as "Secret Student" each visit and get to select a book. By the end of the year, every child will have earned a token and chosen a book to keep. Happy Reading!

I absolutely LOVE teaching your children and I love their excitement for reading! If you ever need to reach me, my email is [stemlek@leonschools.net](mailto:stemlek@leonschools.net).

Sincerely,  
Katie Stemlek



## Musical Notes

Hello KLES Families!!

Hello KLES Families!! I hope everyone had a wonderful, restful holiday break filled with family, friends, and lots of music.

Before we left for break, here are some things we did in music class:

**Kindergarten**-We played some center games. One game they went fishing for a music note to make a four beat rhythm. They also used Legos to make rhythms. All the games helped them practice writing and saying the rhythms we have been working on all year.

**1st grade-5th grade**-We played some fun center games. All of them were music themed, of course! We played Music Twister, Music Candyland, Composer Go Fish, and we even learned to play some songs on the autoharps.

Thanks for sharing your musical kiddos with me.

Holly Pursino

Music Teacher

Killearn Lakes Elementary



## Art Updates

There are two main branches of Cubism, Analytical Cubism and the later Synthetic Cubism. Analytical cubism was about breaking down an object (like a glass cup) viewpoint-by-viewpoint, into a fragmentary image; whereas synthetic cubism was about flattening out the image and sweeping away the last traces of allusion to three-dimensional space.

**Kindergarten and First Grade** are exploring Cubism with Picasso.

**Second and Third Grade** are painting like the impressionist Monet.

**Fourth and Fifth Grade** students are Learning about Analytical and Synthetic Cubism.



Look for some master pieces to come home soon!

-Mr. Tavares J

## Guidance

Guidance greetings to all of our wonderful families!!

I truly enjoyed having our 3-5th grade students in Special Area 2nd nine weeks. Our time in Guidance allowed students to connect with their peers, identify various coping strategies, recognize the value of positive thinking and gratitude, and identify their own unique strengths. They wrapped up the quarter by ranking their top three personal strengths and making beautifully creative cocoa mugs with marshmallows of gratitude; I hope they will share these things with you. I look forward to having these students back after spring break.

This month, I am thrilled to welcome back our wonderful K-2 students. We will be revisiting the KLES 3R's - Keep Learning Every Second by being Respectful, Responsible, and Ready to Learn. Parents, please encourage your students to work on these skills at home over the holiday break. Finally, thank you to all of our amazing KLES volunteers and PTO members; your compassionate care for our students, faculty and staff is both noticed and appreciated. I wish you all a safe, peaceful, and joyous holiday season.

All my best,  
Mrs. Harris



## School Reminders

### School Supervision Hours

7:45 am—3:20 pm

Bells ~ 8:30 am & 2:50 pm

### Dismissal Changes

**ALL dismissal changes must be entered in PikMyKid by 2:00 pm.**

Emergency changes will only be accepted through the office by phone or in person until 2:30 pm.

### New Visitor Check-in System

Please bring your ID to be scanned into the system.

### Lost & Found

PLEASE label all clothing (jackets; hats; etc.) that come to school so we can return it to your child.

## Drop off/Pick-up

Please do NOT park next door at the church each day for drop-off and pick-up. The side road is full with busy cars using the designated drop-off area in the rear of the school. It is NOT SAFE for children to cross this busy roadway!

### KLES offers 5 drop-off options:

1. Ride the bus
2. Curbside car drop off in rear of school
3. Before school EDEP
4. Park in parking lot on campus and walk child to entry gate by the office
5. Walk to school using the neighborhood sidewalks and crossing guard in front of the school.

Deer Lake UMC and LCS have an agreement to allow parent parking in the church lot for overflow parking when there is a school event; not for daily use.

Please help us keep the children safe by following school drop-off and pick-up procedures.

## Accidents Happen...

Our extra clothes in the office are already running low. Please consider donating any **clean** clothing - boys and girls articles of all sizes are welcome!



# SAFETY

# FIRST



## EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Please be sure to have (at minimum) BOTH parents or one parent AND an alternate person to contact that can pick up the student in case of emergency!

### How to add others for emergency contacts:

Log into FOCUS app

Click "More Info" (light blue box)

Click "Student Info" (light blue box)

Open the toggle arrow on the left side of the screen

Select "Addresses & Contacts"

Verify who is already on the list

Click "New Contact" (blue box)

Complete ALL information –

-First, Last Names

-If a parent – select "Mother/Father" from drop down (include address if prompted)

-Select contact level: Custody/ Emergency/Pick up/Restraining Order

-Select the contacts priority level

**SAVE** (green button at bottom)

## Lunch Bunch Reminders:

\***ALL visitors MUST check in at the Front Office**

\***Once checked in at front desk you may head to the cafeteria. Please do not meet your child before they enter the cafeteria, or escort your child back to the classroom.**

\***Due to food allergies, there is no sharing of, or bringing in food for other children.**

\***Your student may have ONE friend join them at the table on stage.**

\***Please avoid bringing 'sweet treats' or sodas for the kids.**

\***Cell phones should be used for emergencies only– no photographs of other children allowed.**

## Nurse notes

### for "Return to School"

Fever free **24 hours** after fever breaks without use of fever reducing medication (Tylenol/ Ibuprofen)

Vomiting/Diarrhea 24 hours symptom free from last incident



### for PREVENTION

Lice ~ Do NOT share hair brushes, hats, jackets; If you notice your child scratching their heads—GET CHECKED, it is much easier to treat the earlier you catch it.

Proper hand washing  
Cover your cough (and sneeze)  
Dress for the weather

## Attendance

Attendance at school is very important. When students arrive late or are picked up before dismissal, teaching and learning are disrupted. It's quite eye opening, when you do the math, that missing just ten minutes a day adds up to nearly  $1 \frac{1}{2}$  weeks of missed instruction in one school year (nearly half a year over the 13 years of schooling).

*Please make every effort to have your child in school from 8:30-2:50 each day.*

### Every Minute Counts!

Just a little bit doesn't seem like much but...

| When your child misses just... | That equals...               | Which is...               | And over 13 years of schooling that's... |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 10 minutes per day             | 50 minutes per week          | Nearly 1.5 weeks per year | Nearly half a year                       |
| 20 minutes per day             | 1 hour & 40 minutes per week | Over 2.5 weeks per year   | Nearly 1 year                            |
| Half an hour per day           | Half a day per week          | 4 weeks per year          | Nearly 1 and a half years                |
| 1 hour per day                 | 1 day per week               | 8 weeks per year          | Over 2 and a half years                  |

*Please be on time every day and avoid picking your child up early.*

## KLES PTO

Welcome back to our Killearn Lakes Elementary School campus and community, where we have many exciting events to kick off 2026 together!

Since we are already halfway through the school year, yearbook sales will open on **Wednesday, January 7th**. Be on the lookout for a link to purchase a yearbook and secure your personalized message lines, advertisements, and other memories.



On **Tuesday, January 13th**, we have planned a private party just for KLES families at Skate World, with more details coming soon about timing and tickets. We hope to share a lap with you there in support of our top-notch school!

On the following **Tuesday, January 20th**, we will host our third PTO meeting of the year from 6:00-7:00 p.m. in the Media Center with free childcare provided. Attending is an excellent way to connect with other parents and community members and find out more about future activities and volunteer opportunities.

One of those upcoming events is our annual Shamrock Shuffle fundraiser, which will kick off on **Thursday, January 29th** and culminate on **Friday, February 6th** with students having fun and getting fit while running laps to raise money for the school. Last year's generous donations helped us purchase beautiful new playground equipment that our children now enjoy. We are excited to see what we can come together to improve in our school community this year!



On behalf of the KLES PTO, happy New Year!

Emily Catena

PTO Communications Director

killearnlakespto@gmail.com

www.killearnlakespto.org

https://www.facebook.com/

KillearnLakesElementarySchoolPTO  
@klespto

## COUNSELOR'S

WELCOME BACK! We hope your Winter Break gave you time to rest, recharge and spend time with people who uplift you and make you smile! January is such a great time for a fresh start! We encourage you to begin this new year like a fresh page in your story and YOU get to decide what you will write next!

This month, try to focus on these important things that can really make a big difference for you! Set small, manageable goals for yourself. This is a powerful way to build confidence and long-term good habits! Start off by setting one academic and one personal goal for yourself!

Use your talents and strengths in positive ways. Reflect on what you are naturally good at and look for opportunities to use these skills in creative, helpful ways that bring you happiness and joy. Surround yourself with good people. Good people foster healthier relationships and habits, so seek friends who exhibit positive energy, who motivate you and contribute to your personal growth.

Continue to practice gratitude and random acts of kindness all year! These practices will boost your mood, reduce stress and depression, increase your self-awareness, enhance your ability to be empathetic and compassionate, help you build stronger connections and will create an overall sense of happiness and well-being!

We encourage/challenge each of you (parents and students) to take time to truly self-reflect and think about how you can, or will, make this the best year ever. If need be, look back at the messages and information shared in the last several newsletters to remind yourself that you are AWESOME and capable of doing anything you set your mind to! Show yourself some grace and keep pushing forward! You've got this!

### Food for Thought

- \*Always do your best
- \*Be proud of your best efforts
- \*Learn from your mistakes
- \*Believe in yourself
- \*Be the best version of YOU
- \*Make good choices
- \*Be kind, thoughtful and respectful
- \*Acknowledge the small wins and praise them
- \*Remember simple, sincere gestures can make the greatest impact in the lives of others



"Learn from yesterday. Live for today. Hope for tomorrow." – Albert Einstein

Here's to a year filled with learning, growth, and moments that make you proud of yourself! As always, reach out to any of us if you need to! ~Your Guidance Team: Mrs. Barrineau, Mrs. Harris, Mrs. DeValle and Ms. Parsons

## Pre-K Notes

We hope everyone had a fun and relaxing winter break! We can hardly believe that we are halfway through the school year. We had a great field trip to the Tallahassee Museum right before the break. The children loved seeing all of the animals, having a picnic, and especially their first bus ride!



Jenny Blair,  
Principal  
Champayne Ricciardi,  
Assistant Principal  
8037 Deerlake Drive  
East,  
Tallahassee, FL  
32312-5076  
Ph. 850-921-1265  
Fax 850-922-2566

### Looking to get ahold of us?

- 1 - Front Office
- 2 - Bookkeeper
- 3 - Registrar
- 4 - Clinic
- 5 - Guidance
- 6 - Cafeteria
- 7 - EDEP

### KLES Mission Statement

Killearn Lakes Elementary School provides students with an equitable learning environment to create and develop lifelong learners.

### LCS

"No person shall on the basis of sex (including transgender, gender nonconforming and gender identity), marital status, sexual orientation, race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, age, color, pregnancy, disability, military status or genetic information be denied employment, receipt of services, access to or participation in school activities or programs if qualified to receive such services, or otherwise be discriminated against or placed in a hostile environment in any educational program or activity, including those receiving federal financial assistance, except as provided by law." No person shall deny equal access or a fair opportunity to meet to, or discriminate against, any group officially affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America, or any other youth group listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society.