



# Hillside Happenings

February 13, 2026

100 DAYS OF SCHOOL



And, I'm looking forward  
TO SMORE

[Hebrew translation](#)

[Korean translation](#)

[Spanish translation](#)

## To Note

- There have been many exciting events happening at Hillside! On January 30, students enjoyed our annual Lunar New Year assembly. It was a beautiful celebration featuring many Hillside

students. A special thank you to the KPG for planning and organizing this wonderful event.

- Mayor Glidden joined our PK-Grade Two students for a Groundhog Day event.
- Our students celebrated the 100th Day of School!



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## Spring Conferences

Hillside School's spring parent/teacher conferences will be held on the following days:

Week of March 2-6, from 8:05 a.m. to 8:35 a.m.

Monday, March 2 from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 3, from 1:30 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. (Students will be dismissed at 12:40 p.m.)

Thursday, March 5, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.

Spring conferences are optional. If your child's teacher would like to meet with you, they will contact you directly. However, if you would like to request a conference with a specific teacher, please contact them by **Friday, February 27**, so a meeting can be scheduled accordingly. Staff members' email addresses are available on our website.

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## Staff Update

We wish Ms. Zanin all the best as she begins her leave of absence through June 30, 2026. We are excited to welcome Mr. O'Neill, who has spent the past week getting to know our students and school community and is eager to step into the role of Assistant Principal. In this role, Mr. O'Neill will oversee the Academic Assistance Program and serve as the District Testing Coordinator. Families are welcome to reach out to him with any questions or concerns. ([oneilljc@nvnet.org](mailto:oneilljc@nvnet.org))

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## In The Halls of Hillside

During the year, you will find information about what our students are learning in Music, Physical Education, Art, Spanish, Science, STEM and Library.

### From Ms. Jost, Science Teacher

Third Grade Highlight: In Science Lab, our third graders have been busy exploring Anderson Brook, located at the back of our school property. Students began their investigation by examining leaf bags to look for macroinvertebrates. These are small animals that live in the water and help scientists determine water quality. Through this hands-on exploration, students learned that the brook's water ranges from a little unhealthy to very unhealthy. To better understand why the water quality is affected, students explored how pollution can enter the brook using a nonpoint source

pollution model. This model helped students see how rainwater runoff travels over land, moves into storm drains, and carries pollution into the brook. Finally, students discussed and investigated how this pollution can impact the animals that live in and around Anderson Brook. This learning experience helped students make real-world connections between human actions, water systems, and the health of the environment right here at our school.

## **From Señora Wilson, Spanish Teacher**

Things are warming up in Spanish class, in spite of the temperature outside!

Kindergarten students have been reading stories about families. We know all families are unique and incredibly special, as they belong to us! Please encourage your child to practice their vocabulary at home. At the end of each unit, students will bring home a copy of the story we worked on in class. Please encourage them to read it with you to help with vocabulary retention.

Our first graders have been busy as well! Students have been practicing expressing their age and asking their peers how old they are. In addition, students have also been working with the days of the week and the vocabulary words *ayer*, *hoy* y *mañana*. Ask your child what their “*día favorito de la semana*” is and see if they agree with the answer “*sábado*” (our class polls showed that to be their overwhelming favorite!).

In second grade, students have been learning about the seasons and weather expressions to describe them. Students can express their favorite seasons, and those usually coincide with their birthday month. In the next unit, students will be introduced to the months of the year and practice grouping them into seasons.

Third graders have worked very hard to learn numbers 1-50 and are using them to express the time in Spanish. We’ve noted the differences between telling time using a 12 vs 24 hour clock and how to indicate AM or PM. Students are now learning about the subjects they take in school and how the school day might differ in different parts of the world. As a culminating activity, students will present their daily schedule in Spanish along with the time they have each class.

The fourth grade is reviewing a bit of all of these topics! We recently completed our calendar unit, which focused on the days of the week, the seasons and months of the year, asking and answering when our birthday is, and expressing what time of year we celebrate our birthday. We will soon begin our weather unit and will be responsible for creating and presenting a 3-day weather report for a location and month of their choice. We work daily to become comfortable asking and answering questions in Spanish whenever we can.

Gracias for your support!

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## **From The Health Office**

The nurse’s office is in need of gently used children’s clothing. All sizes are welcome. Clothing is kept on hand in case a student needs a change of clothes while at school.

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**by Ms. Zanin, Assistant Principal (zanink@nvnet.org)**

With spring conferences approaching in early March, this is a great time to think about your child's growth so far this year. While teachers may reference assessment results, the heart of the conversation will focus on your child's progress in the content areas and how they are developing in relation to the Northern Valley curriculum standards.

As you prepare for your conference, you might consider questions such as:

- What progress has my child made since the beginning of the year?
- What are my child's strengths and areas for growth?
- How does my child approach challenges or new learning?
- What can we do at home to support continued growth?

Conferences are a valuable opportunity for teachers and families to work together, celebrate successes, and plan next steps. We look forward to these conversations and to continuing our partnership in supporting every child's learning.

## Test Talk

Families of students in kindergarten through grade 3 can expect to receive literacy assessment reports in the coming weeks.

Letters will be sent home leading up to future assessments, but please note the following dates for your reference.

CogAT testing will take place the week of March 23rd for students in grade 2 and those who are new-to-district in grade 3. Grade 4 students will be tested the week of March 30th. The CogAT measures verbal, nonverbal, and quantitative reasoning and is used as part of the eligibility process for the Hillside Enrichment Program (HEP).

NJSLA-Adaptive testing will include a reading, writing, and math unit. Testing at Hillside will take place May 6-7 and 11-13.

LinkIt Benchmark testing will take place early June for grades 2-4.

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## From The Counselors

It's winter break and we hope it brings your family a much-needed reset filled with time to connect, relax, and make memories together. If you're feeling a little tired, unmotivated, or "blah," you're not alone. Our cave-people ancestors spent this time of year in deep rest mode, and while our modern world keeps us moving, our bodies haven't lost touch with that rhythm. Winter can be tough!

**This week's mini-family challenge:**

Try doing *one small thing each day* to support your energy and mood:

- Go for a quick walk together

- Soak up sunlight by a window (be like a cat!)
- Stretch or move your bodies
- Listen to a favorite song with your kids
- Sip warm water with lemon in the morning
- Do 10 quick jumping jacks
- Pause for a few deep breaths
- Drop your shoulders, straighten your back, and close your eyes for a few seconds
- Go to bed a little earlier than usual and rest, rest, rest!

Even small moments of care can help everyone feel a bit brighter this winter!

Small things count. Rest counts. You matter!

## Upcoming Dates

**2/16-20-** Winter Recess, school closed

**3/3-** 12:40 dismissal (PK 12:30) for Parent/Teacher Conferences

**3/17-19-** PTO Spring Book Fair

## Kindergarten Registration and Preschool Application



### 2026-2027 Kindergarten Registration



Hillside Elementary School's Kindergarten Registration is now open!

Visit [www.closterschools.org](http://www.closterschools.org) to register your child.

Parent Orientation will be held on March 31, 2026 at 7:00 PM

\*Children must be registered in order for parents to attend this event.



If your child will be five years old on or before October 1, 2026, please register now. If you have questions, please call Hillside School at 201-768-3860 ext.41118





# Preschool Info



## Discover Closter Public School's Integrated Pre-K Program!

Closter Public Schools proudly offer an Integrated Pre-K program for Closter children ages 3 or 4, (must be 3 by October 1, 2026) designed to nurture young learners in a warm, engaging environment.

Give your child a strong start at Closter Public Schools!

Applications are available on the district website - [closterschools.org](https://closterschools.org) beginning January 9, 2026. Closing date is February 11, 2026. Limited openings will be filled via lottery on February 27, 2026. All applicants will be notified of lottery results via email.

\*If your child is turning three years of age before October 1, 2026, and is currently receiving or has received Early Intervention services, or if you have concerns impacting the development or learning of your preschool-age child (ages 3-5), please contact the Child Study Team at 201-768-3860 (x41119) for further information regarding the identification and evaluation process.



## PTO News



Hillside Elementary



**Book Fair**

**March 17-19**

**Family Shopping Event**

**Wednesday, March 18**

**3:30-5:00 PM**

**Set up your Book Fair eWallet Account!**



<https://bookfairs.scholastic.com/bf/hillsideelementaryschool22>



## Reminders

- For your reference, [here is the link](#) to the school calendar (CLICK A-F Day Calendar). If school is closed due to inclement weather, we will follow the letter day listed on the calendar.



**Ms. Dianne M. Smith**

Principal