



Wyoming Primary Schools

Elm • Hilltop • Vermont

November 22, 2024

Dear WPS Families,

Over the next few weeks, I will be highlighting some of the instructional approaches we use at Wyoming Primary Schools to provide all students with the building blocks needed for the future. This week, I will share information about a key component of our math instructional practices, Number Talks.

Number Talks are a teaching strategy designed to improve students' mental math abilities, number sense, and mathematical reasoning skills. During a Number Talk, students are presented with a math problem or a series of problems, and they are asked to solve them mentally without using paper, pencils, or calculators. The key aspects of Number Talks include:

1. Focus on Mental Math

- **No Written Work:** Students solve problems in their heads, which encourages them to develop and rely on their mental calculation skills.
- **Multiple Strategies:** Students are encouraged to solve the same problem using different strategies, which helps them see the flexibility of numbers and operations.

2. Student-Led Discussion

- **Sharing and Justifying Thinking:** After solving the problem, students share their strategies with the class. They explain how they arrived at their answer, which deepens their understanding and allows others to learn from different approaches.
- **Teacher as Facilitator:** The teacher's role is to guide the discussion by asking probing questions, encouraging students to think critically, and helping them clarify their thinking.

3. Encouraging Mathematical Discourse

- **Building Confidence:** Number Talks create a safe space where students can discuss and explore mathematical ideas without fear of making mistakes. This helps build their confidence and fosters a positive attitude toward math.

- **Listening and Reflecting:** Students listen to their peers' strategies, compare them with their own, and reflect on the most efficient or effective methods.

4. Developing Number Sense

- **Understanding Numbers:** Number Talks help students build a strong sense of numbers, including how they relate to one another and how they can be manipulated in different ways.
- **Recognizing Patterns:** Through repeated exposure to various problems, students start to recognize patterns and develop a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts.

5. Examples of Number Talk Problems

- **Basic Arithmetic:** Simple addition or subtraction problems, like $8 + 7$ or $15 - 9$, where students might use strategies like making tens or decomposing numbers.
- **Multiplication and Division:** Problems like 6×8 or $24 \div 6$, where students might use doubling, halving, or known multiplication facts to solve them.
- **Estimation:** Problems that require estimation, such as approximating the sum of $98 + 102$, to develop students' ability to make reasonable guesses.

6. Benefits of Number Talks

- **Improves Fluency:** Regular practice with mental math helps students become more fluent and quicker with calculations.
- **Deepens Understanding:** By discussing different strategies, students develop a deeper understanding of math concepts, rather than just memorizing procedures.
- **Promotes Critical Thinking:** Number Talks encourage students to think critically and creatively about math, exploring multiple pathways to solutions.

Number Talks are typically brief, lasting about 10-15 minutes, and can be integrated into daily math lessons. They are an effective way to build a classroom culture of collaboration, communication, and a growth mindset in math.

Counselor Corner

This time of year, many people begin to think about gratitude. Gratitude is pausing to notice and appreciate the people and/or things we often take for granted. It's about focusing on what's good in our lives and being thankful for the things we have. Based on scientific literature, gratitude is an experience that has four parts:

- What we **NOTICE** in our lives for which we can be grateful
- How we **THINK** about why we have been given those things
- How we **FEEL** about the things we have been given
- What we **DO** to express appreciation in turn

Like most skills, gratitude can be practiced. Here are some simple ways to teach gratitude to children, through conversations.

There are gratitude prompts for each of the four parts:

- **Notice:** Awareness is the first step! Get in the habit of noticing happy or beautiful moments. State these out loud.
- **Think:** Ask questions that help your child think about their gratitude. For instance, if they receive a gift a gratitude question might be, “What do you think they were trying to show you by giving you this gift?”
- **Feel:** Start conversation about how gratitude feels. “Where do you feel gratitude in your body?” “Do you think you can spot it when someone else feels grateful?”
- **Do:** Encourage actions such as writing thank you cards, saying thank you and volunteering to help others.

*Adapted from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill article “Raising Grateful Children”

WPS Mission, Vision, & Core Values

We are excited to invite you to play an important role in shaping the future of Wyoming Primary Schools. As part of our commitment to creating a nurturing and inspiring environment for our students, we are developing new vision, mission, and core values statements specific to WPS. Your input will help ensure that these guiding principles reflect the shared hopes and values of our entire school community.

Why this matters:

Our vision, mission, and core values statements serve as a foundation for decision-making and set the direction for the experiences we create for every child. These statements guide our work, relationships, and goals as we strive to make Wyoming Primary Schools a place where all students thrive.

What do each of these mean?

- **Vision Statement:** Our vision is a clear picture of what we aspire to achieve in the future. It answers the question: *Who do we want our students to become, and what kind of environment do we want to create to help us achieve this vision?*
- **Mission Statement:** Our mission describes our purpose and the role we play in students' lives. It answers the question: *What is our primary goal, and how do we aim to achieve it for our students?*

- **Core Values:** These are the fundamental principles that shape how we approach our work and relationships each day. They answer the question: *What values should guide our decisions, actions, and interactions within our school community?*

We would love to hear from you! Please take a few minutes to [answer the three questions in this survey](#) to share your insights on our vision, mission, and core values by November 29, 2024. Your feedback will help us create a meaningful foundation that reflects the hopes and aspirations we all have for Wyoming Primary Schools.

Thank you for being a part of this important process!

A Message for 4th Grade Strings Students

Fortissimo To Go Ticket Link: The link is finally ready to purchase tickets [HERE!](#) Please feel free to share and post on any socials that you may use - the more people who attend, the more money is raised for your Wyoming School Music Association!

***Reminder* - Tickets are not required to see your student perform, but only if you are going to be purchasing donuts and coffee (or juice) during the event. They are also cheaper if you use the link and pre-order! ;)

RSVP for FTG Performance: Please use [THIS LINK](#) to RSVP for your child for the Fortissimo To Go Performance. I understand that Saturday mornings can be busy, so students will be excused if they are unable to attend; however, *I HIGHLY encourage them to attend if at all possible because this is their chance to show you and their loved ones how much they've learned in a short amount of time!* The RSVP link [HERE](#) allows me to more accurately depict stage set-up at the event.

FTG Performer Information: Check out the links below for information for your student performer. These have been sent out already via email and Thursday folder, but I wanted to resend in case I missed anyone.

School Fees are Now Due

Please log into your child's EZPay account to see if you have any fees due: [EZPay Link](#)

Implications for Non-Fee Payment

If a student is not up-to-date with payment of student fees (or is not current with their payment plan with the Treasurer*), the following privileges will be withheld:

- 4th Grade Class Trip
- 6th Grade Class Trip (e.g. Camp Kern)
- 7-12 Dances (e.g. Homecoming, Prom, etc)
- 8th Grade Class Trip (e.g. Chicago)
- 9-12 Class Shirts

- Junior/Senior Parking Spots
- Senior Class Trip (e.g. Washington D.C.)
- Graduation Tickets
- College Transcripts

*If a family is not able to pay, please contact our Treasurer, Ronda Johnson, who will work with the family to set up an appropriate payment plan schedule.

Upcoming Dates

- **Thanksgiving Break** - Wednesday, November 27 - Friday, November 29 - No School for Students or Staff
- **Winter Parties** - Friday, December 20
 - Half-Day Kindergarten Party - 10:30-11:15
 - Full-Day Kindergarten and Grades 1-4 Parties - 2:30-3:15
- **Winter Break** - December 23rd - January 3rd
- **Professional Development Day - No School for Students** - January 6th

[View the full WCS calendar here.](#)

News from Around Wyoming

[Click here for more Events and Information from around WCS & the community](#), including:

- Finance Friday: What is a Municipal Bond?
- WHS Toys for Tots Drive is Underway!
- Upcoming Events
- WSMA's Fortissimo to Go on Dec. 7
- WyoShop Hours
- Wyoming Firefighters Association Turkey Raffle on Nov. 22 & 23
- JWC Light Up Wyoming Luminary Sales Events Dec. 4 & 7