



# Stephens Elementary Eagle Banner

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The Mission of Polk County Public Schools is to provide a high quality education for all students.

## FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK:

Happy Holidays!

Now that we have the first nine weeks under our belts, I would like to share the following information related to helping children learn and improve their grades. **One of our main goals this year is to teach students the skills they need to be critical thinkers by using Higher Order Thinking (HOT) skills.** Instead of simply memorizing facts and ideas, children need to engage in higher levels of thinking to reach their fullest potential.

### How Parents Can Help

Families can play a significant role in encouraging higher order thinking with children, even when having a casual conversation. Asking open-ended questions that do not have one "right" answer gives children confidence to respond in creative ways without being afraid of being "wrong." After reading a book together, a parent might ask their child a question such as: "If you were that character, how would you have persuaded Jonah to turn himself in?" Rather than, "What was the main character's name in the book?"

**Below are more examples of questions to ask your child to spark discussion, make them think critically, engaged in thoughtful ideas and encourage higher order thinking.**

1. "What do you think might happen next?"
2. "Does this remind you of a time your life?"
3. "Can you tell me about what you read today?"
4. "Why did he/she act that way?"
5. "Why did you decide to choose \_\_\_over \_\_\_?"
6. "Can you explain/show me that in another way?"
7. "How would you rank \_\_\_?"
8. "What do you think a solution might be?"
9. "How do you imagine \_\_\_ would look?"
10. "How is \_\_\_ similar to/different from \_\_\_?"

Try asking your children these questions at home and in a variety of educational and non-educational settings. Rather than just having a conversation, you can also ask your child to respond to these questions in writing. Be prepared to respond to your child's answers with even more thought-provoking questions to continue to encourage higher levels of thinking. This will increase communication between parents and children, as well as, increase learning. Thanks for all you do to support learning at our school.

Sincerely,  
Chandra Hall, Principal

Stephens Elementary School  
1350 North Maple Avenue  
Bartow, Florida 33830  
863-534-7455

**Chandra Hall**  
Principal

**Chabre Timmons**  
Assistant Principal

**Lee Breiter**  
Program Facilitator

*The mission of James E. Stephens Elementary is to provide educational opportunities in an environment that promotes learning, self-esteem, and confidence.*



Parent Involvement  
"Building Relationships"

### **Title I Parent Involvement Mission Statement**

District and School-based Title I Parent Involvement Programs in Polk County will strive to **build relationships** to create **real** family engagement for **every** child, **every** family, **every** teacher, **every** day.

# volunteers

- Applications are available in the front office or can be sent home in the agenda.
- One time \$25 background check fee. (money order only)
- To attend field trips you must be an approved volunteer.
- Approval lasts through high school and beyond.
- Deadline is Feb. 1, 2014.
- Not sure if you are already approved? Call us and



WE APPRECIATE OUR  
NOVEMBER & DECEMBER  
VOLUNTEERS!

A special thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers who have donated or will donate their time to helping our school meet its goals in November and December.

**FREE**

ONLINE FCAT RESOURCE FOR GRADES 3-5

[www.fcatexplorer.com](http://www.fcatexplorer.com)

FCAT Explorer is designed to help your child practice reading, math, and science skills. Students can access this website from school and/or home. Ask your child or their teacher about login information.

**A B C**s Of Student Success  
**O** is for OVERCOMING OBSTACLES.

When kids face obstacles that seem insurmountable, parents must be there to...

- encourage children to have high -- but achievable -- expectations.
- ask children *How do you eat an elephant?* (One bite at a time!) That's how people face obstacles too. Help your children divide and conquer their obstacles.
- Help children recall past experiences. Emphasize their accomplishments. Use those memories to build kids' confidence as they "keep their eyes on the prize."

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## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**November 22:** Birthday Club; Tops for Tops;  
PBS Celebration

**November 25-29:** Thanksgiving Break

**December 2-19:** FAIR Progress Monitoring

**December 3:** 2nd Grade Junie B. Jones Field Trip

**December 4:** Early Release (dismissal at 12:10 pm)

**December 6:** Interim Reports

**December 20:** Birthday Club; Tops for Tops;  
PBS Celebration

**December 23-January 6:** Winter Break

STUDENTS RETURN TO SCHOOL on JANUARY 7, 2014

### Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO) News:

**Membership:** The PTO is always open to new members. Soon we will begin the process of working on our holiday float.

**Tops for Tops:** We are collecting Box Tops for education each month. Your child may wear a uniform free, school appropriate, shirt on Tops for Tops day if they turn in 10 or more Box Tops. Please see the school calendar for dates.

**Soda Can Tabs:** We are collecting soda can tabs in the front office to benefit the All Children's Ronald McDonald house. This is a great opportunity for your family and our school to give back to the community.

**Email List:** If you are interested in receiving school information from the PTO please consider joining our email list. Please call or send in your email addresses to Margie Foreman.

For more information contact Margie Foreman @ 863-534-7455

Happy Holidays!

*The staff of Stephens Elementary wishes all of our families a happy and safe holiday season!*