

August 7, 2022

Dear Cornell Elementary Families,

It is with deep sadness and a heavy heart that I must inform our Cornell Elementary families of the passing of a beloved educator, Dr. Margaret (Peggy) Baldwin. Dr. Baldwin passed away on August 5, 2022, as a result of injuries sustained in an automobile accident.

In January, Dr. Baldwin answered our call to step in as the Interim Principal Cornell Elementary School for the remainder of the 21-22 school year. Previous to her commitment to our school family, Dr. Baldwin served staff and students in Waverly Community Schools, where she was highly respected in her role as a school leader, mentor and educator. Dr. Baldwin has also been a longtime support for others in the Okemos Community, her leadership and guidance impacting those at Hiawatha, Bennett Woods and Okemos Public Montessori. She will be deeply missed by everyone who knew and loved her.

Dr. Baldwin will be remembered for her bright smile, her kind and patient heart, and her passion for working with children. During her time at Cornell Elementary, it was evident that Peggy cared very deeply for the staff and students. Her calm and nurturing personality brought peace and love into the lives of our entire Cornell Elementary family. She loved every student who walked through our school and classroom doors. She was exactly who we needed, at exactly the time we needed her. Our school community lost an outstanding leader, educator and more importantly an amazing human.

A team of experienced school social workers and counselors will be available August 9 (9-11am), August 10 (1-3pm) and August 11 (9-11am) at Cornell Elementary School to provide support to students. We will continue to provide support as needed as we come together this fall. Death can be difficult for us to process and understand, especially when it is sudden or unexpected. We may feel a variety of emotions, such as shock, overwhelming sadness or confusion. What is most important is that we care for and support one another during this challenging time. Should your family need additional support, several community resources are included below. You are also welcome to contact me at tracy.ojerio@okemosk12.net with additional inquiries of support for your child(ren).

We do not have details regarding services for Dr. Baldwin at this time. Please keep Dr. Baldwin's family and those who were blessed to have known and loved her in your thoughts and prayers. As we navigate through this devastating loss, we will lean on one another and know that as a family, we will move through this difficult time together.

Warmest Regards,
Mrs. Tracy Ojerio, Principal
Cornell Elementary School

Resources for Dealing with Loss

After such a loss, it may be helpful to provide your child with an opportunity to talk about what has happened and the feelings they may be experiencing. Suggestions include:

- Sharing your own feelings of loss and sadness.
- Encouraging your child to share their thoughts, feelings and reactions. An important part of the grieving process is to allow people to experience their feelings and emotions rather than shutting them off.
- Normalizing and validating emotions expressed by your child. A wide variety of emotions may be expressed, including sadness, anger, shock, numbness and anxiety.

Additional considerations:

- Current grieving or reactions to death may be complicated by previous experiences of loss in an individual's life. A person may still be resolving an earlier loss which may result in a stronger reaction to the current death.
- Reactions may include feelings of guilt or anger; restlessness and difficulty concentrating; loss of appetite or sleep disturbances; unexpected mood changes; neglect of personal appearance; or sadness and discouragement.

If these signs become apparent and continue over time, contact one of the following community resources for consultation:

[Community Mental Health](#) - Emergency Services

Weekdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m..... 517-346-8318

[24-hour crisis services](#)..... 517-346-8460

[Ele's Place](#) - A Healing Center for Children Teens517- 482-1315

[Listening Ear](#) - Crisis Hotline..... 517-337-1717

(10am to 2 am EST)

[Child & Family Charities](#) - 24-Hour Crisis Hotline 877-833-3689

[St. Vincent Catholic Charities](#) - Counseling Services 517-323-4734

[Local Community Resources PDF](#)