



# Mansfield Elementary School Take Home Notices

## Week Ending January 16, 2026

Dear Families,

We are so excited to have students back in our classrooms at MES! It's wonderful to see them reconnecting with friends and diving into their learning goals. A reminder that Monday, January 19, school will not be in session. We encourage families to honor Dr. King's legacy by participating in a day of service, reading books about his life and impact, or having conversations about kindness, equity, and inclusion. Next week, our Grades 3 and 4 Strings students will showcase their learning in a concert, Thursday, January 22, at 5:30pm.

Warmly,  
Kate & Becky

[MES Website](#)

[MES Save the Dates](#)

[MES 6 Day Rotation](#)

[Lunch Menu](#)

[MPS District Calendar](#)

- 02 — **Temporary Change to Menu Sun Butter to Peanut Butter**
- 03 — **Invention Convention Sign Up**
- 04 — **MES Grades 3 & 4 Strings Concert January 22**
- 05 — **MES Winter Play Due February 20**
- 06 — **Are You In Need of Winter Gear?**
- 07 — **MES PTO Snow Ball Dance January 24**
- 08 — **MES PTO Snow Ball Dance Sign Up to Help**
- 09 — **MES PTO Snow Ball Dance Mitten**
- 10 — **MES Yearbook 2025-2026 Orders Due By April 25**
- 11 — **MES PTO Meeting Recap January 12**
- 15 — **MES PTO Munson's Fundraiser**
- 16 — **MES PTO UConn Women's Basketball Fundraiser February 22**

Maraiah Popeleski-Tilley

Food Service Director

Subject: **Important Update:**  
**Temporary Change to School Menu (Sun Butter to Peanut Butter)**

Dear Families,

I am writing to share an upcoming temporary change to our school meal program. Due to a national manufacturer shortage of Sun Butter (sunflower seed butter), Mansfield Elementary will be switching to peanut butter for our daily sandwich options, effective January 15, 2026.

We expect to return to serving Sun Butter sandwiches in **late February**, as soon as our regular supply chain stabilizes.

### **Our Commitment to Safety**

We understand that for families of children with peanut allergies, this news may bring concern. Please be assured that student safety remains our absolute highest priority. To protect our students, we are implementing the following enhanced protocols:

- **Strict Identification:** Our cafeteria staff has been retrained on allergy alerts to ensure students with documented peanut allergies are identified.
- **Designated Nut-Free Zones:** We will continue to maintain and strictly enforce "Nut-Free" seating areas in the cafeteria to provide a safe environment for students with sensitivities.
- **Clear Labeling:** All items containing peanut butter will be clearly labeled, wrapped and served separate from other menu items.

### **How You Can Help**

If your child has a newly developed allergy or if you have specific questions regarding their individual meal plan, please contact our school nurse (860) 423-1611, Ext.2178, or the food services department (860) 429-7824.

We appreciate your patience and partnership as we navigate this supply chain challenge. We look forward to bringing Sun Butter back to our kitchen soon.

Sincerely,

**Maraiah Popeleski-Tilley, RDN**

Food Service Director, Mansfield Public Schools



# Calling all creative inventors!



## Would you like to participate in the Mansfield Elementary School Invention Convention?

You may be wondering:

“Am I an inventor?” If you have a new way to fix a problem or improve a product, then you are an inventor!

“Am I allowed to participate?” Any PreK-4 student at Mansfield Elementary School can participate! You can even work with a partner if you would like. You will need to find some time at home to work on it.



- All inventions will be displayed during school, and they will be available for viewing during March student-led conversations and celebrations.
- A team of MES judges will decide which inventions will go on to the Connecticut Invention Convention.
- All participants must have a model of their invention, a display showing how it works, & a log with pictures showing the invention process.
- INVENTIONS DUE BY 9 AM ON MONDAY, MARCH 9TH, 2026

If you are interested, see Ms. Mather or Mrs. Irvine, return this note back to school, or have your family email them at [irvinesb@mansfieldct.org](mailto:irvinesb@mansfieldct.org) or [mathermj@mansfieldct.org](mailto:mathermj@mansfieldct.org).

Find more information on our [Invention page](#) on the MES website (take home notices for 01/09/2026)



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**I would like to participate in the MES Invention Convention!**  
**\*Return to Ms. Mather or Mrs. Irvine by Feb 12\***

Inventor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Guardian Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Inventor's Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_ I would like more information about participating in the MES Invention Convention.

\_\_\_\_\_ I need workshop time at school to work on my invention.

Coming up soon....  
Winter Concert!  
Thursday, January 22nd



**WHO:** Grades 3 and 4 Strings Students (violin and cello)

**WHEN:** Thursday, January 22nd, 2026 at 5:30pm.

**Performers and their families should arrive by 5:15.**

**WHERE:** MES Gym

**WHAT TO WEAR:** MES Blues (can be an MES shirt, but doesn't have to be).

**WHAT TO BRING:** Your instrument and binder

**Bring family and friends to fill up our audience!**

Contact Mrs. B at [berezowskyjc@mansfieldct.org](mailto:berezowskyjc@mansfieldct.org) with any questions.



# WINTER FUN FROM



FIND A CLEAR AREA TO SEE THE STARS OR MOON



LEARN TO PAINT AND OTHER FAMILY FUN AT THE COMMUNITY CTR

SPEND TIME TOGETHER THIS WINTER PLAYING INSIDE & OUTSIDE! WE INVITE FAMILIES TO TRY TO COMPLETE 3 OR MORE OF THESE ACTIVITIES.

UNDERLINED ITEMS HAVE MORE INFORMATION.

STUDENTS WHO RETURN THIS PAGE BY FEBRUARY 20TH WILL BE RECOGNIZED IN MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS.

YOU CAN EMAIL PHOTOS OF YOUR FAMILY PARTICIPATING TO IRVINESB@MANSFIELDCT.ORG. HAVE FUN!

FIND MORE MES PLAY & EXPLORE WITH THIS LINK OR SCAN THIS CODE.



STUDENT FIRST & LAST NAME \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICE: RETURN TO SUSAN IRVINE

LEARN ABOUT A WINTER HOLIDAY AND TRY A NEW FOOD, SONG, TRADITION



BUILD A SNOW CREATURE!



LEARN A NEW CARD GAME



START A CHAPTER BOOK TO READ EACH NIGHT



MAKE A FEEDER TO OBSERVE BIRDS



TRY A SNOW ANGEL



HEAD TO THE LIBRARY TO HEAR STORIES, WATCH MOVIES, DO CRAFTS!



WALK OR DRIVE TO SEE COLORFUL LIGHTS IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

CREATE A NEW POPCORN TOPPING



# Are you in need of winter wear?

If you are struggling to afford winter wear for your child, please reach out to our CAREs team for support. We are able to supply items such as coats, snow pants, snow boots, gloves, and hats.

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**Please send an email to Alissa Mahoney at [mahoneyam@mansfieldct.org](mailto:mahoneyam@mansfieldct.org) and include your child/children's name, items needed, and size information.**





2026

MES PTO

# SNOW BALL DANCE

PHOTO BOOTH | HOT COCOA & SNACKS | LIVE DJ

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 24TH @MES**

*Snow date: Saturday, January 31st*

**1:30 - 3:00 PM PRE-K - 1ST**

**3:30 - 5:00 PM 2ND - 4TH**

*Families may attend either or both waves. These times are only suggestions and ALL siblings are welcome!*

More than just a dance—it's an afternoon of fun, laughter and MES community spirit!



In the spirit of giving, we encourage attendees to bring a non-perishable food item to support the Town of Mansfield's Human Services Food Pantries



# RSVP

*RSVP is required*

*Scan to RSVP by January 20*

**Questions?** Email: [events@mansfieldtigerspto.org](mailto:events@mansfieldtigerspto.org)



**THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS!**





MES PTO

# *Snow Ball Dance* **SIGN UP TO HELP**

2026

## WHAT WE NEED:



**VOLUNTEERS!** Help needed with selling snacks, picture booth, clean up, and help needed the Friday night before for set up and decorating (Adults only!)



Water



Snacks

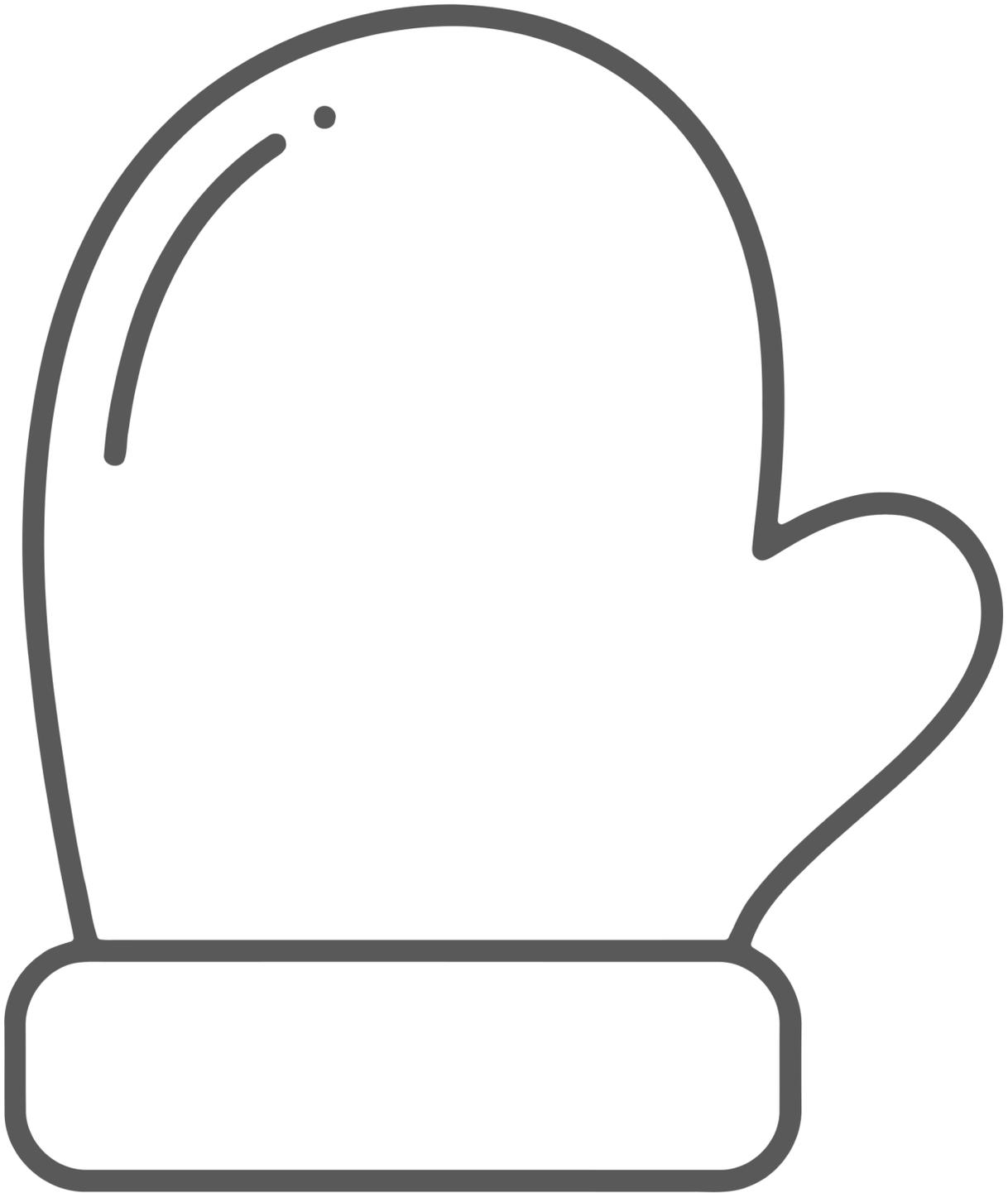


Quick individual sized refreshments



Please take a moment to review the SignUp Genius for more details!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C084AAAAD2DA3F5CE9-54679224-mespto>



Color & cut out and return this mitten to school to help get ready for the

**MES PTO Snow Ball Dance**

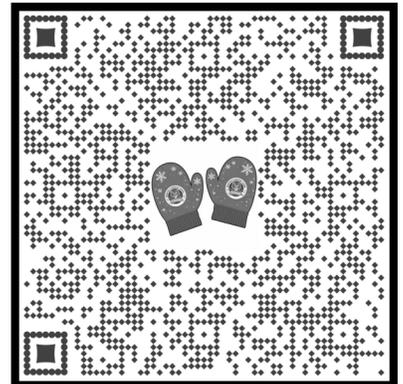
**Saturday, January 24th**

**1:30 - 3:00 PM PRE-K 1ST**

**3:30 - 5:00 PM 2ND - 4TH**

*Photo Booth Hot Cocoa & Snacks - Live DJ*

**Scan the QR code to RSVP!**



# 2025-26

## MES YEARBOOKS

ORDERS DUE BY APRIL 25TH  
DELIVERY TO STUDENTS LAST WEEK OF SCHOOL

SCAN THE QR CODE TO ORDER YOUR 2025-26  
MES YEARBOOK!

4TH GRADERS DON'T NEED TO ORDER!



No tip or extra fees  
needed. With these  
settings on, Givebutter  
covers everything and  
100% of your donation  
supports the MES  
PTO.



[HTTPS://GIVEBUTTER.COM/MESYEARBOOK](https://givebutter.com/mesyearbook)



# MES PTO MEETING RECAP

JANUARY 12th, 2026

PAGE 1

## President's Address: Lauren Valentin

- Welcome back!
- What's been going on?!
  - Winter Welcome @ Downtown Storrs - won 3rd place in the tree contest!
  - Helped out at conferences
  - Popcorn for 2nd grade team
  - Wolfpack hockey game
  - Yearbook photos are coming in, if you have any please send them to [yearbook@mansfieldtigerspto.org](mailto:yearbook@mansfieldtigerspto.org)

## Principal's Update: Kate McCoy

- New staff introduction
  - Jacob Orcutt - front office staff
- Winter-Spring look ahead
  - Jan 19 - no school
  - Jan 22 - Grades 3 & 4 string concert
  - Jan 24 - Snowball
  - Feb 11 - Grade 2 string concert
  - Feb 13 - No school (professional learning day)
  - Feb 16 & 17 - No school
- Journeys in learning
  - Empower MES students to wonder, explore, and grow engaging in hands-on experiences, discovering new ideas, and building knowledge together with and in our community.
  - K - Why to trees matter
  - 1 - How do animals survive and adapt in the arctic
  - 2 - How do plants and animals adapt to their habitats? How does our Earth change over time?
  - 3 - How do humans and their environments influence each other?
  - 4 - How do changes in Earth's surfaces affect the ecosystem?
- Club Updates
  - Early spring club signup deadline is this Wednesday at 4pm!
  - See handouts for more info or email [mes-clubs@mansfieldct.org](mailto:mes-clubs@mansfieldct.org)
- Celebration of MES Play - featured in EdWeek article: [Play-based learning yields more joy, high scores at MES](#)

## Superintendent's Report: Candace Morell



# MES PTO MEETING RECAP

JANUARY 12th, 2026

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- For more safety on Rt. 89, installation of Automated School Zone Beacons - this week!
- Next 5 year district development plan: seeking community input!
- The water system is fully operational and drinking fountains are now open!
- 2026-2027 budget
  - Presentation to BOE: 1/22, 1/29, 2/5
  - Presentation to Town Council: 4/6
  - Annual town meeting: 5/12
  - Breakdown:
    - 85% salaries/benefits
    - 13% operating expenses
    - 2% supplies/books

## Fundraisers: Emily Potz & Justina Ingerson

- Past/present fundraisers
  - Wolfpack v. Bruins: sold 12 tickets, raised \$36
  - Disney on Ice: sold 51 tickets, raised \$153
  - Swag: raised \$184
  - Papa Ginos: raised \$213
- Upcoming fundraisers/events
  - Munson's fundraiser starts this week! Pickup March 22nd at the library.
  - Snowball - Jan 24th
    - Still looking for volunteers!
    - Mittens sent home with kids for decoration
    - Split into younger/older waves, but this is flexible
    - Collecting canned goods for Mansfield Food Pantry @ the library
- Potential fundraisers:
  - Candles around Mother's Day
  - Women's UCONN basketball game
  - Yard goats
- GiveButter "Tip" does not go to PTO, so please select \$0 tip when donating

## Budget: Michelle Trevino-Talbot

- Current bank account balance: \$5842
- Key expenses since last meeting
  - Winter welcome
  - Sunshine committee donation
  - Snowball: ~\$1000 mostly DJ

## Open Floor:



# MES PTO MEETING RECAP

JANUARY 12th, 2026

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- 4th grade ice skating trip not happening?
  - A: PE teachers are looking into whether they can do this. 2 broken legs have led to questions whether these physical activities are appropriate. In addition, 4th graders have the most field trips already.
- Concerns about lunch: cleanliness of lunch trays, smaller portion sizes, having hand sanitizer available on lunch tables
  - Chef Maraiah can join at the next PTO meeting to answer these questions.
- Pre-k concerns about substitute teachers not having
  - Some substitutes just don't work out in certain grades, it's something that is trial & error until a good sub is found.
- Are there ways to ask questions anonymously or without attending the PTO meetings?
  - Email PTO and they can forward the concern. Can also reach out to Kate and request confidentiality and she will respect it.
- Is there an assessment process for pre-k kids going into Kindergarten to inform future teachers about their needs?
  - Yes, for kids already in MES preK there is. Kate will look into ways to do this for kids not in MES preK.

## Coming Up:

- January 24th: Snowball
- January 16th - February 20th: Munsons Fundraiser
- March 30th: PTO Meeting



# MES PTO MEETING RECAP

JANUARY 12th, 2026

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## Next Meeting:



Monday, March 30th, 2026 @ 6:30 PM



MES Great Hall



Free pizza & childcare – bring a friend!



Everyone is welcome – your voice matters!



## Stay Connected with MES PTO



Facebook

[Mansfield Elementary School PTO](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2874156259541372>

*Private group* – answers to membership questions are **required**:

- To ensure that only parents, guardians, and staff from our school community are granted access
- Minimize the risk of unauthorized individuals joining the group
- Maintain a safe and respectful environment for sharing school-related news, events, and photos



Instagram

[@mansfieldtigerspto](#)



Website

[mansfieldtigerspto.org](https://mansfieldtigerspto.org)



Email

{info@MansfieldTigersPTO.org}

MES PTO Presents:

# MUNSON FUNDRAISER

**Starts Friday, January 16, 2026**  
**Ends Friday, February 20, 2026 at 11:59pm**

Support Mansfield Elementary School by selling  
Munson's chocolate and Easter Candy!

## Option 1: Sign UP to Sell

Sign up to start selling  
Munson's chocolates online.  
Class/team with the most  
sales/donations wins  
**EXTRA RECESS!**

**Sign UP to Sell**

<https://givebutter.com/MES-Munsons/join>

## Scan to Order/Donate



**Scan to Order & Donate**

<https://givebutter.com/MES-Munsons>

## A Note About Givebutter Fees

**No need** to tip or cover processing fees!



**Sign UP to Sell**

<https://givebutter.com/MES-Munsons/join>

- Click **Edit**, uncheck "I want to cover fees"
- Click the down arrow select "Other", and enter \$0

Givebutter covers all fees and 100% of your donation goes to the PTO

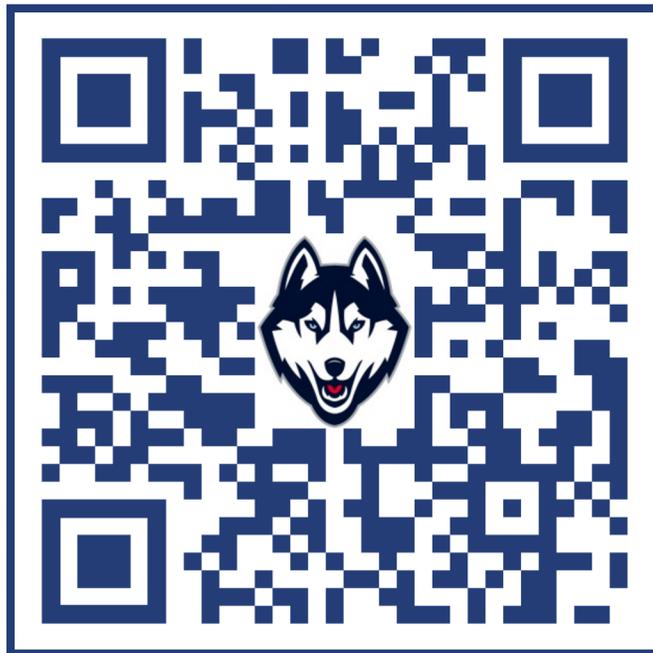
Any questions, please email  
[fundraising@mansfieldtigerspto.org](mailto:fundraising@mansfieldtigerspto.org)

# MES WITH UCONN WOMEN'S BASKETBALL & HUSKIES SENIOR NIGHT!



UCONN WOMEN'S BASKETBALL  
VS. PROVIDENCE  
SUN. FEB. 22ND | 12:00 PM  
GAMPEL PAVILION

 **A Quick Note About Givebutter Fees**  
*It is **NOT** necessary for you to **tip** or cover processing fees.*



Deadline to Purchase Tickets: Feb 15, 2026  
<https://givebutter.com/UConnWBB>

# MES PTO FLYERS

AVAILABLE IN:



English



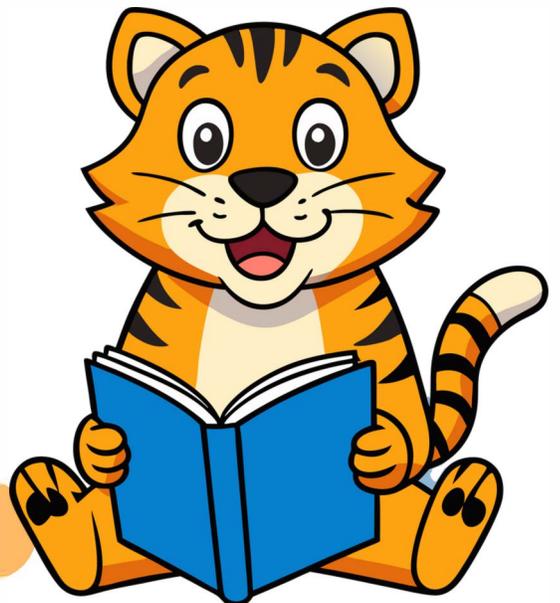
Español



中文



Visit the PTO website to find Mandarin and Spanish versions of all our PTO flyers



<https://mansfieldtigerspto.org/flyers/>