

Volume 5 Issue 1
Fall, 2010-2011

District Events:

Nov 3

1:00 Early Dismissal

Nov 15

School Board Meeting -
 Rowley 6:30 p.m.

Nov 17

1:00 Early Dismissal

Nov 22 & 23

1:00 Early Dismissal

Nov 24-26

No School;
 Thanksgiving Break

Dec 1

1:00 Early Dismissal

Dec 15

1:00 Early Dismissal

Dec 20

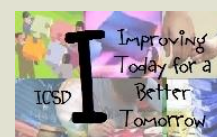
School Board Meeting -
 Independence 6:30 p.m.

Dec 23 - Jan 2nd

Winter Break

Jan 3

School Resumes



From the Desk of Jean Peterson, Superintendent

It is a tremendous honor to become the Superintendent for the Independence Community School District. I have been spending the first ninety days of my employment with this school district getting to know as much as I can about what people expect of our school, what people think we do well and what areas are in need of improvement. It is my goal to get to know the entire community and have the community get to know me. From there, we will craft a strategic plan to make our school second to none.



**Jean Peterson,
 Superintendent**

There is a quote by Stephen Covey that I like and that is appropriate to creating a plan of entry for a superintendent. It is: "First seek to understand, then be understood." Developing a trusting, collegial relationship with school district stakeholders is of utmost importance.

I have set the following goals for myself:

- ❖ Begin to develop key relationships with the school district and community stakeholders
- ❖ Assess current school district issues and concerns with the School Board
- ❖ Identify issues to be addressed, establish a list of priorities and develop an action plan with the School Board
- ❖ Study the District's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan-District Learning Goals which focus on student achievement and identify gaps in achievement
- ❖ Study the Department of Education's Site Visit Report-work with Administrative Team and School Improvement Advisory Committee to develop an action plan to address the recommendations listed in the report
- ❖ Study all financial reports
- ❖ Study Board Policies and create a plan to get them updated in a timely fashion
- ❖ Study Master Contracts
- ❖ Study all staff and student handbooks
- ❖ Study all facilities information and planning
- ❖ Listen for what the culture of the district and community value in their schools
- ❖ Be visible and accessible to members of the school community-attend as many school events, athletic contests, community functions as possible

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Food Service Employees from Independence Community School District Complete Food Safety Training

Eighteen school food service employees from Independence Community School District completed a 2½ hour SafeFood training on August 19 led by certified ServSafe instructor Cindy Baumgartner, Iowa State University Extension Nutrition and Health Specialist.

Participants learned practical information and specific food handling practices in order to keep food safe in their school buildings. Topics covered included: How food becomes unsafe; Good personal hygiene practices; Monitoring time and temperature; Preventing cross contamination; Cleaning and sanitizing basics; Food allergens; and Job-specific guidelines-such as how to calibrate a thermometer and safe ways to thaw, cook, cool and reheat certain foods.

Baumgartner states, *"It has been awesome to partner with Kelly Crossley, Food Services Director, on various initiatives related to food safety, nutrition education, and school meals over the past three years. Because of her awareness of the prevalence of many food safety hazards, she is proactive in her approach to food safety education and recognizes the importance of ongoing professional development for her employees. Independence Schools' food service staff is committed to not only serving nutritious meals for students, but also safe meals. The 'SafeFood' class was fun to teach because participants were attentive and eager to learn."*

Crossley felt the training was beneficial to her staff, saying *"I love having my employees attend this class! Cindy always has a lot of great, hands-on activities that really drive home the importance of food safety, in addition to the basic facts of food safety in a school kitchen."*

Tori Joblinske, also added, *"I like all of the different activities we did and that it wasn't just a lecture. Having to identify unmarked white powders was difficult and really emphasized the importance of labeling all of your food items and chemicals clearly."*

Baumgartner will be teaching upcoming ServSafe food safety and sanitation classes on September 29 in Waterloo, October 26 in Dubuque, and December 8 in Waterloo. For more information on these classes or to schedule a SafeFood program, contact Baumgartner at cbaum@iastate.edu or at (563) 608-0860 (cell) or (563) 927-4201 (office).



Baumgartner uses an ultraviolet light to check the cleanliness of Wanda Standridge's hands following a hand-washing demonstration. Looking on are (from left) Angie Williams and Angie Tournier



Kelly Crossley,
Food Service Director



Independence Schools' Food Service Employees Complete Food Safety Training (Left to right) 6
Front Row- Angie Williams, Angie Tournier, Tori Joblinske, Jessi Dorsey
Middle Row- Kelly Crossley (Food Services Director), Carol Fratzke, Pam Shannon, Betty Hare, Linda Hanna, Melynda Tegler
Back Row- Lila Givens, Wanda Standridge, Wendy Schoenfield, Gloria Pullin, Brenda Zimmerly
Absent from the photo: Christine Bagley, Lanette Frye, and Galina Wright

Principal's Corner

by Mary Jean Blaisdell

It's hard to believe that the holidays are nearly upon us! We are looking forward to sharing student successes at school with parents at conference time this month.

In-service time in October was spent learning more about the writing process and studying how to reach students at all levels. This is important time for faculty and we thank you for your continued support in our efforts to improve the educational experience of your children.

Parent/Teacher Conferences are scheduled for Monday-Tuesday, November 22 & 23, 1:30-8:00pm. Conference time is crucial to the educational development of your child. It is a chance to learn more about your child's academic progress and to share information with the teacher who can help him/her to best meet your child's needs.



Mary Jean Blaisdell, Principal

Preschool Press

The Independence Firefighters came to visit the Early Childhood Center on Friday, October 8th. They talked about fire safety and showed us what they look like when they go to fight a fire. They brought the ladder truck with them and we were very excited to see them climb the ladder and move around. We learned a lot about their job and how to be safe with fire.



WANTED!

Mileage Club Volunteers Needed!

If you would like to devote 15-30 minutes each week outside at recess to help students reach their goals in the Mileage Club, please call the PE teacher, Brian Loughren at East Elementary to volunteer your time!

Mentors Needed!

If you are interested in being a mentor and volunteering your time to work with a child for approximately 30 minutes each week on a regular basis, please call and let us know!

Wanted: Substitute Associates

If you are available to substitute occasionally as a classroom, office, or library associate (duties vary), please call 334-7425.

We need YOU!

Box tops for Education/ Pop Can Tabs/Milk Moola for Schoola

We continue to collect General Mills Box Tops, Pop Can Tabs & bottle caps and bag tops from Kwik Star products.

This is a good way to help us earn extra money for things we need. Thanks!

If you are interested in spending time at school or at home sorting/cutting and redeeming these items for our school, please call 334-7425.

Kindergartners Give Thanks

November will include a study of Thanksgiving and things we are thankful for as kindergartners. A highlight of our unit will be a Charlie Brown Thanksgiving Feast. We will also be holding Parent/Teacher conferences November 22 & 23. We look forward to sharing your child's progress with you! Kindergartners continue to develop their alphabet and number skills, as well as the practice of line basics and body basics.



First Grade Focus

Our first grade classes finished the unit on insects and then studied spiders comparing the characteristics of the two groups. Along with our fall activities, we also learned about echolocation and other traits of bats from a very informative presentation, given by the Buchanan County Naturalist. In math, we are finishing our graphing units and are working on addition and patterning.

November will bring the Symbols of Our Nation unit as we prepare to celebrate Veteran's Day. We will learn about the first Thanksgiving and think about things that we are thankful for. We will also be focusing on Fontana Park as we begin our annual "Adopt-An-Animal" project. East Elementary families have always been very generous and we look forward to meeting (and exceeding) our goal again this year!



First Graders Explore With Pattern Blocks

Scholastic Book Fair is Coming!

East Elementary will host a **Scholastic Book Fair** from Monday, **November 15th** to **Tuesday, November 22nd**. Book fair hours are from **8:00-3:00**. The book fair will be open with extended hours during parent-teacher conferences on November 22nd and 23rd from 4:00-8:00. Families, teachers, and the community are invited to purchase books during these fair dates. Book Fair proceeds will benefit our school's media center. Those attending also can help teachers build classroom libraries by purchasing books for classrooms through the **Classroom Wish List** program. We hope to see you there!

Second Grade Scene

In each 2nd grade classroom, we have been developing student learner skills. Our grade level student expectations include:

- Transition quietly between activities
- Complete work on time
- Line Basics in the hallways
- Body Basics when seated
- Self Control and Manners
- Treat each other with kindness and respect

During Read to Self time students are taking on a great deal of personal responsibility. Student jobs include:

- É start right away
- É stay in 1 spot
- É read the whole time
- É select an I-PICK book
 - I - I choose a book
 - P - what is the Purpose of the book
 - I - am I Interested in the book
 - C - do I Comprehend the story (or information)
 - K - do I Know most of the words
- É build stamina (how long we keep on reading)



Second Grade Teachers also visited another school district to collect additional ideas on how the Daily 5 can be used.

Also in October, Sondra Cabbell, Fontana Naturalist, came to the Second Grade classrooms. She shared a book and brought live frogs and toads for us to observe.

In math the students continue to work on number patterns and addition strategies. These skills will be the basis for many other math functions.

In honor of October being Breast Cancer Awareness month, Mrs. Miller's class wore "Fight Like A Girl" T-shirts.

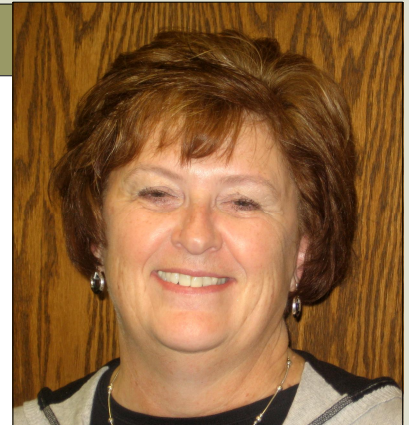
STAR Students at East

Students at East Elementary participate in the STARS incentive program to help reward positive school behaviors. We focus on Self-control, Teamwork, Attitude, Respect and Safety (STARS) behaviors and reward classes when they earn enough stars for these positive actions. In addition, STARS assemblies are held five times a year to recognize individual students who exhibit certain STARS behaviors. Two students from each class were recognized for the STARS behavior of Self-Control through the end of September in an assembly in early October. These students were given a certificate, a STAR Student medal, and their photo in the newspaper. At the assembly, Mrs. Rawlins helped students perform a Charlie Brown and friends skit demonstrating the next STARS emphasis behavior: teamwork.



News From West Elementary by Sandy Merritt, Principal

We started our year with two family events, an open house on Friday, August 20th and a ribbon cutting ceremony on the morning of our first day of school, August 23rd. The building was full of families and friends exploring the building, meeting staff, and enjoying refreshments. These events would not have been possible without the wonderful help of our Parent Advisory Council and our greeters, the Shysters.



Sandy Merritt, Principal

Third Grade News

Rocks Rock in Miss Becker's 3rd Grade Classroom

The first science unit in 3rd grade is rocks! The students were absolutely thrilled to check out rocks in our room or bring in rocks that they found at home. We learned that rocks are made of minerals and about the three types of rocks: sedimentary, metamorphic, and igneous. We also learned about the four layers of the earth and the properties of minerals. Students even made salt crystals. They are definitely "Rock on!" The students loved seeing them grow.

Fire Prevention Week

In honor of Fire Prevention Week, local firefighters Blake Hayward and Mike Zimmerly spoke to the third grade students. They discussed fire safety and stressed the importance of not being afraid of a firefighter when in uniform. The third graders were able to see the tools that firefighters use to fight fires. Mike Zimmerly also showed the students how high the ladder can go when needed. It was an exciting experience for the third graders!



Soldier Care Packages

In honor of Character Counts and Red Ribbon Weeks, West Elementary participated in a service learning project. We collected items for soldier care packages and money to help with shipping costs October 13th ó 22nd.



Learning in Fourth Grade

This fall, fourth graders have been busy learning all about animals and their characteristics. We have explored the five classes of vertebrates and invertebrates. We had the opportunity to visit Fontana, where the naturalists showed us some of the critters we've been studying. We were excited to see a few reptiles and amphibians as well as several birds and mammals. We had another field trip opportunity when we traveled to the Waterloo Children's Theater for a performance of The BFG, a Roald Dahl classic. In Social Studies, our yearlong focus is on the regions of the United States. We began the year learning about the Northeast and will work our way West in our explorations just like Lewis and Clark! In Math, the students are completing a review unit on place value. Next, we will expand the multiplication skills learned in third grade as we work toward multiplying bigger numbers. Fourth graders spend time in class working on improving fluency with basic facts and are encouraged to practice facts at home as well. We've been doing a genre study in reading and students are focusing on the realistic fiction genre. We continue to build upon and expand students' reading and writing skills. Students will have the opportunity to read and explore many genres and styles of writing throughout the year. The fourth graders continue to shine in their reading and are all encouraged to read at least 100 minutes each week outside of school.

School Counseling At West

There is a School Counselor available every day at West this year. Classroom guidance, group counseling, individual counseling, and parent consultation are available. Students may see the counselor to discuss issues such as: troubled friendships, academic difficulties, inappropriate behavior, death/loss, family conflicts/concerns, low and self-confidence. Counseling groups that include Changing Families, Anger Management, and Friends.

Students may see the counselor by self-referral, teacher referral, or parent referral. Feel free to call us if you have any questions or wish to discuss your child's needs.

Julie Rouse and Greg Moen

West Elementary Guidance Counselors

Fifth Grade Studies Iowa History

The fifth graders have been very busy already this school year. We have been involved in an in-depth study of Iowa history and the prairie. To see history in action, the fifth graders have been on several field trips that are an extension to what they have been learning in the classroom. First, we had a beautiful day at Fontana where the kids got to participate in several Iowa recreational past-times such as canoeing, fishing bird watching and many other things. Next, we explored Jakway and experienced a piece of history that is close to home. Our big field trip was to Living History Farms, which is always a favorite. The fifth graders got to see a 1875 Iowa town, visit the shops and the people. They also got to experience 300 years of history on a walking tour, and compare how farm life in Iowa changed over all those years.



Sixth Grade Visits EWALU

On a beautiful late September day, the sounds of 6th graders cheering and laughing could be heard on the grounds at Camp EWALU as they worked through several activities that are part of the low and high Ropes Challenge Course. The activities included Helium, Spider Web, Dots, Marbles, Blindfold, and the Tower.

The focus of this adventure was on team building, creative problem solving, interdependence, communication, respect, and trust. Each activity encouraged listening and leadership skills as they drew upon the strengths of each member of the group. By the end of the day, individuals transformed into a team of caring students providing and receiving support and encouragement from each other. The benefits of Camp EWALU carry on throughout the school year.

This tremendous opportunity for our students is part of our Character Counts program. As one student said, "This was the best school day ever. I don't know what would make it better!" The activities at Camp EWALU were the vehicle for our students to learn and demonstrate the pillars of Character Counts! It was a real "memory maker!"



Jr High News

By Dave Jacobson, Assistant Principal



Dave Jacobson, Assistant Principal

Greetings!

What a FAAAAAAAAAST start to the school year?! It's hard to believe we're almost at the end of the first quarter. A few things I need to mention that we can toot our horns about since we're off to a great start:

- A special thank you to the students and staff for being willing to work through all of the minor details that were overlooked in our move from the old Middle School to the new Junior-Senior High School. The transition has gone very well and with a couple of exceptions, things are progressing nicely for our students.
- Our Meet the Teachers Night on August 24 went well but we are planning to improve this considerably next fall. Thank you to those who attended plus for dealing with the heat and humidity.
- The NWEA/MAP testing for the 7th & 8th grade students went very well with the help of Steve Noyes and most of the faculty. Due to our limited facilities we had to set up a computer lab in the language arts classrooms for a week so all students could take the tests.
- Once again Greg Moen did a masterful job in overseeing our field trips to Camp EWALU. We had great weather, the students were able to benefit from some outstanding team building sessions and we're very pleased to be able to provide an off campus educational experience like this for our students. A reminder that this is funded through our yearly Magazine Sales fundraiser.
- During my classroom walk-throughs, the quality of instruction that our faculty and associates provide our students is wonderful to see.

As we look forward to the rest of the school year I want to get you up to speed on things we're moving forward with to help our students:

- Every 7th & 8th grade student, with 2 exceptions, has at least 1 Guided Study class every-other-day. We are using these to help students with their homework completion and as pull-out time for additional instruction.
- Our after-school program that used to be SIMS, is now called GAP (Guided Achievement Program). Mrs. Victoria Reinkoester oversees this 1 hour a day from 3:15-4:15, 3 days a week on M-T-TH tutorial program we refer students into for 2 week sessions. We have moved the philosophy of this program from a homework completion room to one that provides additional instruction and tutorial assistance for all students. A new student to our district recently described GAP as "An opportunity to get additional help and improve my grades."
- Our faculty will be posting assignments and updating grades weekly on Power School. If you forgot your password feel free to call Beth Conklin in the office and she can provide you with it. This is a quick and easy tool for parents to use to keep track of their son(s) or daughter(s) academic progress. Please feel free to e-mail or call any faculty members with questions you may have.

Our very popular Junior High student led conferences will be here soon. They will be held on Monday November 22 and Tuesday November 23 from 1:30 until 8:00 PM. Information will be coming home soon with our students through their ADVISOR teachers. We look forward to seeing you then.

Dave Jacobson
Assistant Junior-Senior High School Principal

7th Grade World Geography

By Rachel Hurley, Geography Teacher

Seventh grade World Geography students have been very busy exploring the five themes of geography and applying their knowledge about these themes to the Eastern Hemisphere. The students have also been working on creating topographic and climate maps, developing pie charts that represent population and land mass, and analyzing online maps and graphs to understand specific features of regional areas in the Eastern Hemisphere.

I have been very impressed by the students' willingness to try new things. We have many more exciting and challenging projects ahead of us!



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Extra! Extra! Man Eats Own Children!

By Ms. Dietzenbach and Mrs. Henkes

The above headline applies to Cronos, a mythological Titan who swallowed five of his own children. Many students are not sure what to think when they hear we are starting a unit on mythology, but where else do you hear about women with snakes for hair, a magical jar that holds evils and just a little bit of hope, a baby that steals cattle, and a family tree that would make Jerry Springer cringe? Greek and Roman mythology of course! Please ask your seventh grader about some of the weird stories we have read. And a special thanks to Miss Dietz and several students who tutored Mrs. Henkes in this new unit this year.

New this year is something called sentence combining. This daily activity forces students to combine several separate sentences into one sensible sentence. The idea is to get students thinking about language beyond capitalization and spelling and to make them better, more sophisticated writers.

Please encourage your student to read at home. They are not too old to be read to either. Besides encouraging reading, you can get your son or daughter to think deeper. Working on thinking skills can be as simple as asking, "Why do you think that is?" Answers don't always need to be right; interesting theories are great too!



Students show off their puppets during the mythology puppet show.

8th Grade Language Arts By Rachel Thomsen, Language Arts Teacher

Greetings! My name is Rachel Thomsen, and I teach 8th grade language arts. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself, as this is my first year in this position. Last year I taught at the Buchanan County Success Center here in Independence. Before that, I taught for two years at Linn-Mar High School in Marion. I earned my Bachelor's degree in English Teaching from UNI in 2006. Then in 2009 I earned a Master's in Education from Viterbo University with a Secondary Reading Endorsement. I live in Center Point with my husband, Rob, and our 8-month-old daughter, Ella.



So far, this has been a very busy school year! The 8th grade students just completed a unit on short stories and we are moving on to demonstration speeches. Each student is required to read at least one novel every four weeks. If they finish a book early, it is their responsibility to have another book to read. Each novel should have at least 150 pages.

I really like teaching 8th grade language arts. We have had a good start to the year, and I look forward to the rest of the year. Go Mustangs!

Don't Drive Intoxicated

As of July 1st 2010 Iowa became the 21st state to ban text messaging while driving. Driving while distracted used to include distractions such as eating behind the wheel, talking with passengers or changing the radio station. Now an even more dangerous distraction includes using a cell phone or sending and receiving text messages.



Nationwide nearly 6000 people died in 2008 in crashes involving a distracted driver and more than half a million were injured. Using a cell phone or electronic device while driving delays a driver's reaction time as much as having a blood alcohol concentration at the legal limit of .08 percent.

High school students have grown up using cell phones. They started sending and reading text messages long before they learned to drive. As a result, they mistakenly think they can safely use hand held devices while driving.

Under the new law a student with an instruction permit, school permit or intermediate license shall not use an electronic communication device or entertainment device while driving unless the motor vehicle is at a complete stop and off the traveled portion of the road. That means no cell phones, no texting, and no ipods. The Iowa State Patrol will be enforcing this new law as you go to school in the mornings and return home in the afternoons. The fine associated with driving while using an electronic device is \$50.00.

A good tip to follow is to turn your ringer and alerts to silent when ever you get behind the wheel. This way you won't find yourself reaching for the phone and having a collision that might change your life forever.

Submitted by Trooper Brian Senne #317 Iowa State Patrol

Understanding Schools in Need of Assistance

by Jean Peterson, Superintendent

and

Sandy Merritt, Director of Curriculum and School Improvement

As you may be aware, West Elementary and the Independence Junior High are on the list for Schools in Need of Assistance. This is based on the No Child Left Behind legislative law that monitors the academic progress of all students in regards to reading and math. A timeline has been established under which schools must raise all students to 100% proficiency level by 2014. This proficiency level is based on scores obtained on a common test determined by each state. In Iowa, scores on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and the Iowa Test of Educational Development determine proficiency levels. Each state was allowed to set its own proficiency level. Iowa chose 41% as its target while some other states are as low as 25%.

When the law was established in 2001, it set goals to reach each year. For the first 8 years, the targets gradually increased from 64% to 82%. Beginning in 2010, the target jumps up 6 percentage points each year until it reaches 100%. In 2010, 82% of our students were expected to be proficient.

As we move closer to the 100% mark, more schools are being identified as Schools in Need of Assistance. For the year 2010, there are 415 buildings identified as Schools in Need of Assistance and another 197 buildings on the Watch List. Clearly, many districts in the state are facing this challenge.

Our student achievement data indicates that we have some subgroups of students who are not making enough progress based on federal guidelines. Our students in special education and our low socio economic students make up our subgroups. Because our sub groups are not reaching the federal goals, our intent is to give them intensive help in small group settings.

This does not mean that our students are not learning. The majority of our students are doing well and making good growth each year. ACT (American College Test) scores for 2010 indicate that our students are performing better than the state average. ACT is a test that students must take in order to enter a four-year college. The test provides information of how prepared our students are for college and work. The following information compares our school average score to the state indicator for success in multiple content areas. English-Independence, 22.9 and the state, 21.8. Math-Independence 21.9 and the state 21.8. Reading-Independence 23.4 and the state 22.6. Science-Independence 22.9 and the state 22.3. Putting all the content areas together, the state is looking for a composite score of 22.2 as an indicator of success after high school. Our student's average score was 22.9.

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact either of us.

Jean Peterson, Superintendent

Sandy Merritt, Director of Curriculum and School Improvement

Iowa law now requires that all children entering kindergarten and ninth grade provide their child's school a certificate of dental screening. If you haven't turned this form into the school yet, please do so as soon as possible.

Also, if you have been sent a health history form for your child, please fill it out promptly and return it to school.

Our schools work with the Iowa Department of Public Health each year to track influenza within our state. When you call school to notify them of your child's absence due to illness, please provide some basic symptoms that they are experiencing. No identifying information is ever given to the Iowa Department of Public Health, only number of students absent and symptoms of illnesses. Influenza symptoms include but are not limited to: fever, exhaustion, headache, cough, and body aches. These symptoms usually come on rather quickly. Other reasons to keep your child home from school are listed below.

Fever ó If your child's temperature is 100.0 degrees or higher, keep them home. Children need to be fever free, without the use of fever reducing medicines such as Tylenol, for 24 hours before returning to school.

Diarrhea or vomiting ó Keep your child home for 24 hours after the last episode. If your child has been vomiting, do not send them back to school until they have eaten a regular meal and not vomited.

Sore throat ó A minor sore throat without fever is usually not a problem at school. A severe sore throat, even without fever could be contagious. Strep throat can also cause headache and stomachache. If your child is placed on antibiotics, they may return to school 24 hours after treatment begins. We no longer provide cough drops at school. Parents may provide cough drops with written permission.

Mild cough or runny nose ó If there is no fever, the child may remain at school. Children with bad coughs should stay home and may need to see a health care provider for treatment.

Rash ó Many contagious diseases can cause a rash. Children with rashes from an unknown cause should remain home until the rash clears or they are seen and found to not be contagious by a health care provider.

Pink Eye ó If your child has red eyes which are draining pus, they must remain at home. Pink eye can be viral, bacterial, or caused from allergies or irritation. Until we know that they are not contagious or the redness and drainage are gone, your child must remain at home.

Head lice ó If your child is found to have live head lice while they are at school, they will be sent home for treatment. Children must be checked by school health staff prior to entering their classroom when they return to school. Children with nits may be allowed to stay in school.

Please do not send your child to school to have the nurse "check them out". We cannot diagnose or prescribe medication for your child.

There have been reported cases of pertussis (whooping cough) in Iowa recently. Now is a good time to check your child's immunization and update them as needed. Most children receive vaccinations before entering kindergarten. Please check with your health care provider regarding updating their vaccinations against tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, chickenpox, mumps, measles, rubella, meningitis, and HPV. Many physicians are now also offering immunizations against Hepatitis A. When your child receives an immunization, please bring the updated immunization record to school so we can keep the records up-to-date.

Remember to keep your emergency phone numbers up-to-date at school.

Teri Schloss, RN
Rhonda Jasper, RN
School Nurses

Opportunity



Jennifer Sornson,
Jr/Sr High School Principal

Many people realize that I am a big fan of President Lyndon Johnson. I have studied his life and career. The main reason I have great respect for him is that he knew personally that education could change the life of each person. Lyndon Johnson, did not just talk about the importance of education or how to fund education, he was a teacher. He knew all the difficulties that have to be overcome to educate all children.

*"We must open the doors of opportunity. But we must also equip people to walk through those doors."
-President Lyndon Johnson*

We are in the job of educating and opening opportunities to all students. Recent studies estimate that the average adult will change occupations eight times during their working life. Some of those occupations have not even been created yet. So the question is how to best prepare for the unknown. How do we help students to see the doors of opportunity and to have the confidence in their skills to walk through the door?

As educators we are constantly challenging ourselves to try new strategies to insure that students achieve. Students are challenged to read, write, and talk to each other more. The world will continue to change but as educators we still must assist the most elaborate organism, the developing human being. We must help each student answer the most important questions, "What are the ways I best learn?" "How do I bring in information?" "How do I best communicate my thoughts?" If students can acquire information, synthesis and process information, and clearly communicate their thoughts and ideas, then they can continue to walk through doors of opportunity and be prepared for the unknown.

Jennifer Sornson, Principal - Independence Junior-Senior High

GUIDANCE NEWS & NOTES

Greg Moen, Counselor Grades 5-8

The Joys and Challenges of Raising A Teenager

Does it seem to you that aliens kidnapped your sweet son/daughter and left you with a moody replacement? What other explanation could there be? Yesterday, he/she was charming, capable, and loving. Today, he is contrary, forgetful, and grumpy. If you feel overwhelmed by the changes you see, imagine what your child feels! To appreciate what he or she is going through, and to see how you can help, read on.

A Wild Ride

Every day can seem like a roller coaster ride during the middle years. Teens and preteens are forced to deal with new bodies, new feelings, new interests, and new ways of thinking. One minute, they are on top of the world, and the next, they feel miserable. They crave independence, but they definitely need their parents' support and guidance.

Be a Good Listener

Although busy schedules make it difficult, make time to talk with your child everyday. It is essential that the conversations go beyond the topics of household chores and plans. She needs to feel heard, so go light on the advice and criticism. They hear your tone of voice as well as the words. *Example:* You hear your child make several nasty comments to a friend. Instead of saying, "I can't believe you said that," say, "It sounds like you two aren't getting along today."

Pick Your Battles

Are your family rules still reasonable now that your child is older? If constant arguing is a problem, decide which issues really matter and let the others go. *Example:* If your child wants to listen to music while doing homework, and he's completing his assignments accurately, must he turn off the radio?

Show Respect For Your Child

Teens often feel that parents are too controlling. Give your child reasonable choices and allow her to learn from her mistakes. Even kids this age need to know they are loved-- it's the safety net that allows them to make the most of their roller coaster ride!

Continued on page 15

GUIDANCE NEWS & NOTES continued Greg Moen, Counselor Grades 5-8

Continued from page 14

7th & 8th Grade Homerooms Take on the Ropes Courses at EWALU!

On two bright and beautiful fall days the students in the two grades worked as a team with their homeroom through several teambuilding challenges at Camp EWALU. Trust, communication, cooperation, responsibility, and respect were key to their success as they worked together on activities by the names of Mountain, Balance, Zip Line, Tower, River Walk, Leap of Faith, Atomic Waste, Aboard & Weave, and The Wall. By the end of the day, the students gained greater appreciation of each other and the values of Character Counts.



8th Grade Students & Career Exploration

Parents, during the next couple of months all 8th graders will be working with career exploration website entitled *Ihaveaplaniowa*. *Ihaveaplaniowa* helps teens not only to be more prepared to register for their 9th grade classes but to also map out a four year plan of the classes they would like to take during high school. Based upon their educational and career goals.

Ihaveaplaniowa is an outstanding website that the students will use throughout high school and beyond. Each student will establish their own career portfolio and go through several career exploration checklists and surveys to help them to determine what type of occupations may interest them. Some of the items that are included in the website are: free practice ACT college admission tests, college financial aid applications, college admission applications, and resume builders. At the conclusion of their work, your son/daughter should be able to show you a ton of information about themselves and their occupational interests.

Counseling Is For All Children

Adolescence is a time of many changes: physical, social, intellectual, and personal. Adjustment to these changes can be challenging at times for the child, sometimes to the point that it interferes with learning. One goal is to assist those students to make the appropriate adjustments.

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GUIDANCE NEWS & NOTES *continued*

Greg Moen, Counselor Grades 5-8

Continued from page 15

Counseling services available at the Jr. High School include: individual and group counseling, parent consultation, and career exploration. Students may see the counselor to discuss issues such as: troubled friendships, academic difficulties, inappropriate behavior, family conflicts/concerns, death/loss, low self-confidence, and vocational planning. Group counseling may include Changing Families, Anger Management, and Stress Management.

Students may see the counselor by self-referral, teacher referral, or parent referral. Feel free to call me if you have any questions or wish to discuss your child's needs.

Melissa Knight & Greg Moen,
School Counselors
332-0706 & 332-0611

Worth Quoting

The greatest gifts you can give your children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence.

From the Desk of Jean Peterson, Superintendent

Continued from page 1

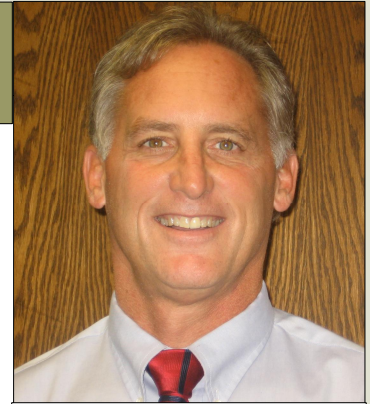
Tony Wagner, the education expert, who wrote the book, The Global Achievement Gap, conducted scores of interviews with business leaders and observed hundreds of classes in some of the nation's most highly regarded school districts. He discovered a profound disconnect between what our schools are teaching and what potential employers are looking for in our young people today. Mr. Wagner developed a list of Seven Survival Skills that our students need to be successful in all of their post secondary endeavors. They are:

- ❖ Critical thinking and problem-solving
- ❖ Collaboration across networks
- ❖ Agility and adaptability
- ❖ Initiative and entrepreneurialism
- ❖ Effective oral and written communication
- ❖ Accessing and analyzing information
- ❖ Curiosity and imagination

As we look to the future, we need to set clearly defined goals and measure how well we are meeting those goals. Great organizations have clarity of purpose, common goals, shared commitment and are results-oriented. From everything I have learned so far, Independence really does have a dedicated and caring staff, a strong parent connection and a community who is extremely supportive. Our work needs to be guided by the premise that every single student is capable of meeting the demands and the learning skill sets for the 21st Century.

I would also like to take this time to thank everyone for helping us have an incredibly smooth start to our school year despite all of the effects the building moves have had on everyone. I want to especially thank our teachers for all of their efforts. They put in a lot of extra time and energy to make sure our students transitioned easily back into the learning atmosphere. Many, many thanks go to our secretaries, our associates, our cooks, our custodians, our bus drivers and all of our volunteers as well. Our educational facility could not operate efficiently and effectively without all of their valuable assistance!

Activities Newsletter by Activities Director Dave Jacobson

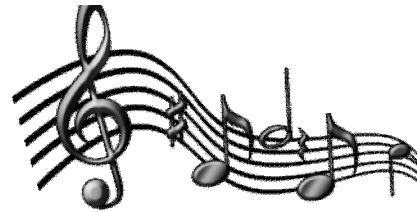


Dave Jacobson, Activities Director

I hope you've had the opportunity to get out and show your support for a few of our Independence activities this fall. With a couple of exceptions, the weather has been outstanding, great for our students and fan friendly. Due to our budget cuts last year and the loss of Steve Kallous, I have taken over the leadership of our 9-12 Activities Programs and Casey Reinkoester has taken over as the Junior High, 7th & 8th grade, Activities Director for the retired Paul Brown. We both have tough shoes to fill and certainly thank Steve and Paul for their past efforts and the quality work they did to help our students.

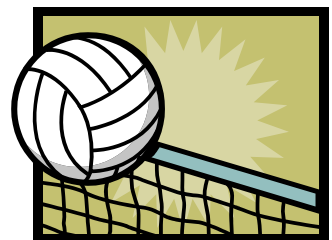
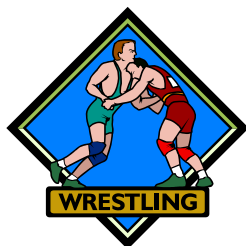
As we look ahead and make plans to improve the level of success of all of our programs, I have met with each head coach/director asking them to re-focus their efforts around a few building blocks to establish within their programs. It is possible to have a good or great team but it's very difficult to build a successful program without a solid foundation. The building blocks we are emphasizing are:

1. Academics.
2. Multi-sport/activity participation.
3. Participation in a year round strength training program.
4. A quality staff.



Building and improving our programs to be of conference championship caliber will unfortunately probably not happen in one season. In many of our programs here we will need to change our culture and way of thinking. The students and parents will need to pull together with the coaches with their support for being a quality student, participating in more than one sport and strength training at least twice a week year round. On a side note, our athletes MUST get involved with boys and girls track. Every sport involves movement; be it straight ahead, backwards, sideways or at an angle. As I watch our athletes move on their fields and courts of competition, as an ex-head track coach, I see so many improvements we can help them make. There will be the; "I don't like it, I don't want to, I hate running, etc." excuses but in the end if you want the "gravy on your taters" or the "pot of gold" at the end of the rainbow "this is what it will take. Combining strength training with a quality track program will make a huge difference for every athlete that is willing to make the commitment!

A special thank you to David Lang and the band program for their quality performances and the support they have provided at our home football games. They have been "instrumental" in improving the atmosphere, spirit, excitement and fun for all in attendance. GO MUSTANGS!



Volunteer Mentor Program

What's Happening with the Volunteer Mentor Program? It's off and running again this year! We have the usual need for mentors as we have many students on the waiting list! So don't be afraid to call or come by West Elementary and tell us you are ready to mentor! It's only 30 minutes a week, during the school day, during the school year to make a difference in the life of a child! Or call 334-334-7415 ext 626 or email vmaximovich@independence.k12.ia.us or go to the web site and download the "volunteer interest form" that will start the process for you.

The volunteer program that is now one year old in the district is growing all over the place! Have you seen the morning door greeters at every school?? We now have the "Shysters Coffee Club" greeting at East and West Elementary and "The Other Coffee Guys" greeting at the Junior/Senior High School doors every morning. They greet every student with a good morning or have a good day! Principals and staff really appreciate this jump start to the day!

We also have our "Lunch Greeter" at East Elementary, sometimes she is the cookie lady, sometimes she is the ketchup lady, but never the less, she is always there ready to greet the K-2nd graders each and every day when it's time to eat lunch!

That is just a few of the many volunteers that show up every week in our schools. That doesn't count the volunteers on the field for a football game, or the parents that help the band members get ready to march, or the many parents and staff that recently helped during Homecoming Week! We are all working together to build community one step at a time!

We are currently looking for volunteers to read for students for NWEA testing, Book Fair volunteers for ½ to 1 to 2 hours per day at all buildings Nov. 15-23, and Speech Contest in February.

There is a donation opportunity that we have just become aware of. The Independence Community Schools is a partner with United Way. So if your business is a payroll partner through United Way, as an employee you can make a pre-tax donation through your payroll to benefit our schools. Don't know if your employer is a partner with United Way? Contact your business payroll department.

Thank you to everyone for your dedication to the volunteer mentor program. If you have questions or comments call Val Maximovich, 319-334-7415, or email vmaximovich@independence.k12.ia.us



INDEPENDENCE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS VOLUNTEER MENTOR PROGRAM VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION FORM

Volunteers are an important resource to the educational process in the Independence Community Schools. Please complete the information below and on the back so that we may best utilize your time and talent. Regular, ongoing help is not necessary. If you have questions, please call (319) 334-7400 Ext. 626 or email Val at vmaximovich@independence.k12.ia.us Thank you!

RETURN THIS FORM TO: Independence Community School District
Attn: Volunteer Mentor Program
1301 First Street West
Independence, Iowa 50644

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ - _____ - _____ Cell phone _____ - _____ - _____ E-mail _____

Employer _____ Business Phone _____

Current Occupation _____

Other occupational experiences _____

Retired? _____ yes _____ no Names and grades of any children in school _____

Do you have any health or physical limitations that might affect certain types of volunteer positions? ____ yes ____ no

If yes, please list: _____

In case of emergency, contact: _____
Name Phone Relationship

Where and when are you available?

____ District (anywhere needed) ____ ECC (PK) ____ East Elem (K-2) ____ West Elem (3-6) ____ Jr/Sr High School (7-12)

Time(s) available: ____ Daily ____ Weekly ____ Variable, Occasional Other: _____

If you have specific hours on specific days, please list here: (Example, 8:00-9:30 on Tuesdays)

Monday _____

Tuesday _____

Wednesday _____

Thursday _____

Friday _____

Do you have a specific class or teacher request? _____

**PLEASE FILL OUT THE BACKSIDE TO LET US KNOW YOUR
INTERESTS/TALENTS.**



Independence Community School District

1207 First Street West
Independence, Iowa 50644



Non Profit Org.
PAID
Permit 197
Independence, Iowa

We're on the Web

<http://www.independence.k12.ia.us>

VOLUNTEER PREFERENCE CHECKLIST - Please check any and all areas you would help in.

Name _____ Today's date _____

Phone _____ Start date _____

Teacher Support

- ☐ Small group(s)
- ☐ Any in-class assistance
- ☐ Assist handicapped
- ☐ Clerical support
- ☐ Field trip chaperone
- ☐ Media center/library
- Specific grade request _____
- Specific teacher request _____
- Other: _____

Special Projects/Programs

- ☐ Classroom special events
- ☐ Volunteer bulletin board help
- ☐ Mentoring (lunchtime)
- ☐ After-school homework help
- ☐ Career exploration speaker
- ☐ Camp Ewalu (Junior High)
- ☐ Book fair help
- ☐ Music program help
- ☐ Athletic program help

At Home Help

- ☐ Computer work
- ☐ Material preparation
- ☐ Food/treats preparation
- ☐ Telephoning parents
about events, reminders
- ☐ Grade papers
- ☐ Assemble projects
- ☐ Make costumes (sew)
- Other: _____

Skills/Knowledge You Could Share Not Listed In Above Categories: _____
