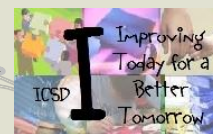


Volume 3 Issue 3
Feb/Mar, 2008-09**District Events:****Feb 3**

Tips and Tools Night
6:00 - 7:30 pm
Middle School

Feb 9

Public Hearing 7:00 pm
Middle School Commons

Feb 11

1:00 Early Dismissal

Feb 19

Kindergarten Registration
1:30-7:30 pm
East Elementary

Feb 23

School Board Meeting
Public Hearing 6:00 pm
Regular Meeting 7:00 pm
Middle School Commons

Feb 25

1:00 Early Dismissal

Mar 9

No School
K-8 Parent/Teacher
Conferences
12:00 - 8:00 pm

Mar 10

2 Hour Late Start K-12
K-8 Parent/Teacher
Conferences 3:30-6:00 pm

Mar 25

1:00 Dismissal

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**Security Systems Installed***By Devin Embray, Superintendent*

Due to the number of break-ins we have experienced over the past two years, that has cost us in repairing acts of vandalism as well as losing school and personal property due to theft, we have decided to install security systems within our buildings. The work is still continuing, but should be completed soon. These systems will detect motion and send a direct alert to our law enforcement. It is our hope that these systems will deter further incidents from happening. Should that not be the case we will be upgrading our systems to include photo and video capabilities.

**Hawaii Trip Refund***By Devin Embray, Superintendent*

When the Hawaii trip was canceled and the dollars refunded to the parents, many folks were upset that the dollars that were paid to the parents were going to place the district in a bad financial position. I want to assure you that that is not the case. Once the trip was canceled and we paid the parents back we also set up a repayment plan with the travel agency that originally booked the trip. To date they have not missed a repayment to the district. In total we have received \$55,000 dollars and the travel agency is on track and current with their repayments. We expect to receive close to \$156,000 in repayment over the next 12 months.

Snow Make-Up Days *By Devin Embray, Superintendent*

As I sit and write this we have just canceled school for January 16th, 2009. To date this makes our sixth day missed due to inclement weather. Our current plan to make these days up will be as follows:

*April 13th; snow make up day

*May 21st; snow make up day

*May 22nd; snow make up day



*May 26th; snow make up day

*May 27th; snow make up day

*May 28th; snow make up day

IF we continue to miss days we will add them to the end of the school year. Our proposed school calendar for 2009-2010, which goes to a public hearing on February 23rd at 6:00 P.M. preceding our regular Board of Education meeting, has a shorter Christmas break and one additional possible snow make up day included in the calendar. This action by the calendar committee was to address the possibility of going into June due to inclement weather.

Independence Schools Tips and Tools Night
February 3rd 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
Middle School Commons



Budget Reductions Needed by Devin Embray, Superintendent

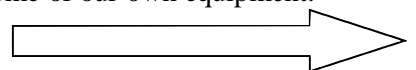
Securing the future of the Independence Community School District is not an easy task. However, it is a task that the administration and the Board of Education take very seriously and with personal trepidation. School finance is difficult to understand to say the least. Often times our hands are tied by state regulations, taking away some of the local control to help manage the budget.

There are no easy answers. Each solution may create new issues and questions. Our goal is to continue providing effective instruction and learning opportunities for all students. Our challenge is to provide these opportunities in a cost-effective manner that allows the district to maintain financial solvency and stability. Unfortunately, the plan must include a reduction of many valuable programs. Our hope is that some day in the future, when the district is on more solid will be brought back to enrich the education of our students. We are not alone as many school districts across the state of Iowa are experiencing similar challenges. With these goals in mind, we present the current plan for reductions for your consideration and how we anticipate moving forward in a very difficult time.

How did we get here? This seems to be a common question in our communities. This did not happen overnight, but has mushroomed over the past few years in terms of staying within a workable budget.

- ◆ One of the main reasons is declining enrollment. Since 1997, enrollment in the Independence School District declined by 317 students. Enrollment has declined by 29 students in the last year. Enrollment drives school funding. As enrollment declines, we receive less money for educational programs. A decline of 29 students means a loss of more than \$160,000 in funding for next year (Fiscal Year (FY) 2010). Based on the number of high school students graduating over the next four years, and the number of kindergarten students expected during that same period, we anticipate a further decline of 50-60 additional students by 2012.
- ◆ We were once part of a program called the Budget Guarantee. Under this program the State allowed us to tax back our local communities for the tuition per student for declining enrollment. Four years ago, due to us only losing 1.5 students, we were not allowed to participate in this program anymore and had to survive based on our actual enrollments. We absorbed this cost within our Unspent Balance instead of reducing programming.
- ◆ Recently, Governor Culver announced "across-the-board" cuts for most state-funded programs. As one of the largest segments of the state's budget, education funding was reduced by a significant amount. The 1.5 percent across-the-board reduction in funding for education equals more than \$101,000 in lost revenues for the Independence School District for the current school year. This money will not be replaced. In addition, the Governor has indicated that there may be another across the board cut for the next school year.
- ◆ Roughly 80% of our expenditures are committed to contracted salaries, wages, and benefits. Personnel costs for FY 2009 (wages, salaries, benefits) are approximately \$425,000 greater than for FY 2008. These increases are the result of increasing health insurance premiums and higher salaries resulting through the contract negotiations process. A similar increase for FY 2010 will result in an increase in the number of personnel reductions the board will need to make next year.
- ◆ When reducing personnel, it is easier to reduce through attrition (by not replacing employees who voluntarily resign or retire). Even though some teachers will retire or resign, we are not going to be able to reach the budget-reduction target established by the administration through attrition.
- ◆ In an effort to keep programming as long as possible, we have not reduced the entire recommended reductions for each year that we have had declining enrollment. This has negatively affected our unspent balance and caused a major strain on our cash balance. Keeping staff when we had no long term way of funding their salary has contributed to the deficit.
- ◆ Utilities, fuel costs, and snow removal have been extreme. In an effort to reduce these costs we have installed high efficiency lighting in our K-8 facilities and have tried to lock in fuel prices wherever we can. In an effort to reduce the amount of dollars we spend on snow removal, we have purchased some of our own equipment.

Continued on page 3



Budget Reductions Needed by Devin Embray, Superintendent

Continued from page 2

- ◆ Our district's use of technology continues to increase with the demands placed on student learning and teacher accountability. While we have dollars from other funds that may be used to purchase hardware, the software is a general fund expense.
- ◆ The state has enacted more accountability in the area of At-Risk and the funding that goes with it. We currently use this money to fund our guidance counselors across the district. With the change in state reporting, we will only be able to account for partial funding from At-Risk for our counselors.
- ◆ Unfunded state mandates in the area of financial reporting have forced our district to hire services to stay within compliance.

Why can't we just use our Unspent Balance and tax back to our community? This is another common question. To help our stakeholders understand how the unspent balance works within our district, we would like to illustrate using the analogy of a credit card.

Let's say you have a credit card with a credit limit of \$2,000. You make a purchase on that card of \$200. (Similar to the district making a purchase to keep programming at a certain level) Your new limit is \$1,800 until you pay off your card's balance. If you had to follow the rules that a school must follow, you could only pay off your balance and have your credit limit restored if you were under your family budget for the entire year. Whatever that amount is would be what you could pay off on your card and add back to your limit. For example, if you stayed \$50 under budget for the entire year, your new credit limit would be \$1,850. If you went over budget by \$50, that amount would be taken away from your credit card limit and your new credit limit would be \$1,750. The only way you can pay off your original \$200 purchase is to stay under budget for the entire year by at least \$200.

The school does not have the ability to "pay off" the purchase without taxing back the community due to our projected negative cash balance. Even if they do tax back the community for the purchase, the purchase should never be for costs that are recurring, such as salaries and benefits. If done for salaries and benefits, the cash balance is depleted and the "Credit Card" limit goes to zero within a few years causing the state to take over the district. In order to place our district back within a fiscally responsible setting and not operate in a deficit which may lead to a state-run situation in a few short years, we are seeking a large reduction for the 2009-10 school-year.

Below is a list of the recommended reductions for the Board of Education's consideration. Under each one is how the district would move forward with these reductions implemented. These decisions were very difficult to come to consensus on, and were made with great consideration for the district as a whole. These programs are considered valuable within our district, but in order to remain fiscally responsible, we must reduce our programming.

1 Administrator

The reduction could consist of a variety of possible scenarios to facilitate programming and initiatives within the district to the degree possible to support the vision, mission and improvement goals set in the CSIP. The configuration of this reduction would be finalized and presented to the Board of Education for approval at the February 23, 2009 regular board meeting where final reductions will be approved.

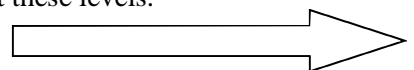
1 Kindergarten Teacher

The reduction of one Kindergarten teacher means that class sizes will increase from 15/16 in Kindergarten to 18/19. Enrollment continues to decline and we have operated in the past with class sizes at these levels.

1 First Grade Teacher

The reduction of one First Grade teacher means that class sizes will increase from 16/17 in First Grade to 18/19. Enrollment continues to decline and we have operated in the past with class sizes at these levels.

Continued on page 4



Budget Reductions Needed by Devin Embray, Superintendent

Continued from page 3

1 Third Grade Teacher

This reduction will mean that the 3rd grade will have the same number of sections as both 4th and 5th grades, 4 sections. Class sizes are estimated to be 25 students for each section in 3rd grade for the 09-10 school year.

2 Title One Teachers

The reduction of 2 teachers in Title I means that Title I services will no longer be made available for students at West Elementary. All remaining Title I services will be provided to students at East Elementary. Reading Recovery services will remain in tact for East Elementary. To address the need of students reading below grade level at West Elementary the mode of reading instruction will become Guided Reading through out all grade levels. This change will assure that all West Elementary students will receive reading instruction at an appropriate instructional level based on a student's individual reading needs. Implementing a Guided Reading approach at each grade level will assure that we can continue to address the needs of all students at their correct level of reading instruction for three years.

1 Industrial Technology (IT) Teacher

The reduction will cause some major changes within the department. We will continue to offer a comprehensive strand in the area of Metals as one of the four strands that are required by the State of Iowa. It is likely that the Metals strand would take precedence over the Woods strand because of the needs of our local industry. However, we will do everything we can to maintain the current Woods and Autos programming. We will continue to offer Project Lead the Way (PLTW) courses, and will look at the possibility of training any teacher outside the IT department in PLTW, to help increase the course offerings that are available in Industrial Technology. We will also limit the number of photography classes, which will free up Industrial Technology for another section. We may be forced to change the Woods and Autos opportunities that are available to our students, but we would help students interested in this career area to obtain internships that would give them the opportunity to gain valuable experiences.

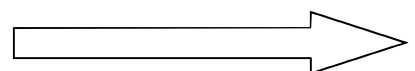
1 Family Consumer Sciences (FCS) Teacher

The reduction in FCS will cause major changes within the department. We will continue to offer a comprehensive strand that is one of the four strands that are required by the State of Iowa, but after the strand is offered we will have some challenging decisions to make. One huge consideration will be whether to continue to require Real Living as a graduation requirement. If we require Real Living as a graduation requirement, then the number of other course offerings will be limited. However, if we do not require Real Living, some of our students will not have access to the valuable life skills and concepts shared as part of this class. It has not been determined how we will proceed at this point.

1 Language Arts Teacher

In reality, this will be a .5 FTE reduction in Language Arts and a .5 FTE in Social Studies. We have a teacher on staff that is certified in both English and Social Studies. So, we will use the dual certification to help cover most of the Language Arts courses that are currently offered. We also have the potential to use another staff member to help fill in on the Social Studies side. We will also examine the possibility of more Juniors and Seniors taking advantage of college courses that are currently offered through Hawkeye Community College. It is our belief that with some creativity in organizing the master schedule and increased efficiency in teaching assignments, we will still be able to offer a comprehensive program in Language Arts and Social Studies. However, it is likely that class sizes will increase in both English and Social Studies, but the overall class sizes will still be within the acceptable range for high school courses.

Continued on page 5



Budget Reductions Needed by Devin Embray, Superintendent

Continued from page 4

2 Guidance Counselors

East: A half-time guidance counselor will be available every other day to teach the guidance curriculum and to provide counseling services for students as in 07-08. Meetings with individuals/groups and recess group reinforcement will be reduced in number/frequency as in 07-08.

West: This reduction will mean that the guidance services will return to what they were in 07-08 school year. A half-time guidance counselor will be available every other day to teach the guidance curriculum and to provide counseling services for students.

Middle School: Meeting the needs of this position while implementing this reduction can be achieved through having the current student liaison and the principal handle the day-to-day needs as they arise when the counselor is out of the building.

High School: Independence High School will continue to receive 1.5 Guidance counselors.

Buchanan County Success Center: The reduction of Guidance will result in counseling services no longer being consistently available to our at-risk students at the Buchanan County Success Center.

1.5 Media Specialist

K-12 The reduction in media specialist will result in a .25 certified media specialist at each building. The library would still be open for use through regular education associates. Instructional content related to information literacy would be delivered in a limited amount by the classroom teacher. Technology issues would be addressed by building principals, technology director, district media specialist and/or contracted service. Efforts will be made to help lessen the burden in the media centers through community volunteers. Purchased services may need to be considered on a case by case or situational basis.

1 Art Teacher (K-5)

This reduction will mean that teachers at East and West Elementary will teach a limited Elementary Art curriculum. The art room will be maintained in both buildings in order to provide supplies, material, and a place for art instruction to take place without creating a need to bring art supplies into the regular classroom.

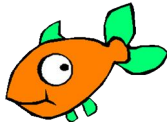
The administrative team and the Board of Education continue to examine ways to reduce expenditures while maintaining learning opportunities for students. At this time, no official decisions have been made. The next step in the process is a second public hearing scheduled for February 9th at 7:00 p.m. at the Middle School Commons. The final recommendation will be presented to the Board of Education for approval at the regular board meeting on February 23rd at 7:00 p.m. at the Middle School Commons.

In addition to the proposed plan the administrative team will investigate the following as potential cost saving measures.

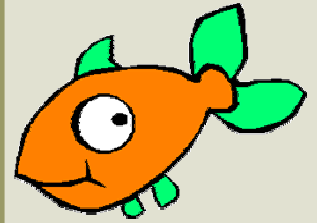
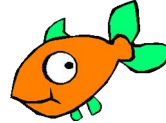
- Alternative building schedules for greater efficiency
- Four day school week
- Possible reduction of Special Needs staff due to numbers for partial General Fund savings
- Cost savings through attrition of staff
- Re-opening of severance package with different proposal

November & December Fish Recognition

Teresa Nennig
Loren Pink
Mindy Voss
Paul Brown
Casey Reinkoester
Corrine Love
Julie Spece
Dennis Corkery
Sue Knott
Kathy Meyer
Audrey Hill
Carole Franz
Jami Tekippe
Melissa Spading
Charlie McCardle
Holly Mueller
Chrissy Snyder
Erin Maurer
Leah Martinson
Marilyn Oline
Judy Olsen
Amanda Sedlacek
Linda Hanna
Stephanie Funke
Lori Flaherty
Rick Alber
Cathy Butler
Kari Schwartz
Kim See
Marcia Kreutner
Burt Van Horn
Garry Anderson
Carol Franz
Robin Crawford
Melody Malek
Brian Loughren



Brandon Drew
Rhonda Jasper
Joan Goedken
Mary Beth Brinkema
Renita Wieland
Virginia Lake
Sarah Crawford
Rudi Hameister
Melissa Spading
Stephanie Funke
East Elementary Teachers
West Elementary Teachers
Middle School Teachers
High School Teachers
High School Kitchen Staff
Middle School Kitchen Staff
West Kitchen Staff
East Kitchen Staff
Lori Kurt
Judy Olsen
Mary Ann Crawford
Mindy Maas
Nancy Bailey
Emily Nelson
Lori Dietzenbach
Ronda Hilbert
Sandy Hood
Beth Conklin
Corinne Love
Karl Kurt
Paul Brown
Tracy Curtis
Kirby Bantz
Sue Henkes
Erin Blasberg
Jeanne Bachman



**Nominate your
child's teacher
or ICSD
colleague for
membership
in the
Fish! Philosophy
Community!**

**Watch your
e-mail for
more
information
or
call Devin
at 334-7400!**

Fish Philosophy Principles

**Choose
Your
Attitude**

**Play
Be There**

**Make
Their Day**

Tips and Tools Q & A

by Sandy Merritt, Director of Curriculum and School Improvement



Tips and Tools “TnT” Night
February 3rd 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
At the Middle School Commons
Food & Childcare Provided
Door Prizes!!!

BONUS: Bring a friend & receive a \$5 gift card to Wal-Mart



Sandy Merritt, Director of Curriculum and School Improvement

What is Tips and Tools Night?

Tips and Tools is a grant-funded program through the school that provides opportunities for parents to get information about various topics that are of importance to families. It also provides support for families as they deal with different parenting issues and concerns. The presenters are from the school staff and the community, depending on the topic being presented.

This is the second year for Tips and Tools. There are three sessions scheduled this year, the same as last year. Topics covered in the past include: transitioning to a new building, understanding ITBS/ITED test scores, understanding our Respect and Protect program, internet safety, setting up an account for college expenses, healthy snacks, using a digital camera, discipline, etc.

What will the sessions be for the February 3rd Tips and Tools Night?

Our February session will focus on what parents can do at home to help their children be more successful in school. We will have small group sessions on reading, math, writing, using the town library, hints for the middle school parents with a panel of middle school teachers to answer any parent questions, and viewing educational videos that discuss today's students and their needs followed by discussion.

What happens at Tips and Tools night?

Parents drop their children off at the childcare location, sign up for the door prizes, and then get something to eat. There is a large group general session of about 15 minutes that includes a summary of the evening's sessions and where the sessions will be held in the building. Following the large group session, parents may attend 2 different 30-minute sessions on topics of their choice. At the end of the second session, winners of the door prizes are announced and parents pick up their children to go home.

What do our children do?

The children are fed, play games, and do activities with members of our high school student council.

When and where is the next Tips and Tools?

February 3rd from 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. in the Middle School Commons area.

Do I have to register to attend? Is there a cost?

NO and NO

What are the door prizes?

We will have gift certificates for gas and food from local businesses, clothing, etc.

Bonus prize - Bring a friend and receive a \$5 gift card to Wal-Mart!!



We hope to see you at Tips and Tools in February and April!!!

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Iowa by Val Maximovich, Mentor Coordinator

January is National Mentoring Month!

Across the nation mentors are honored by their ðLittleð, as well as by their supporting organizations. Locally, we will have Movie day on Sat., Jan. 24, at the local Starlight Cinema for the Bigs and Littles to enjoy, sponsored by many local businesses and individuals that contributed to the Bowl for Kids Sake.

The Littles will also write a thank you to their mentors, to let them know how much they are appreciated.



Other news...

We have approximately 35 children waiting for mentors. Of that, many are boys.

We still have a need for male mentors. If you have thought about mentoring, but just haven't made the call to sign up... now is a great time to do that! Start the year off by spending 30-45 minutes a week as a mentor and *make a difference in the life of a child!* Call Val Maximovich, Mentor Coordinator at 334-3353.



BIG GIVE

The ðBig Giveð celebration party was held back in October at the new community room at the Independence Public Library. As you may remember, this was a community service event for Bigs and Littles sponsored by a grant received from BankIowa. They provided seed money of \$25 for each Big and Little to ðseedð and make more money for the new library to buy books. Several Bigs and Littles accepted the challenge and had various fundraisers including homemade English muffins and jams & jellies, cake balls, homemade apple pies, cookies and bars, horse and buggy rides, pop ring toss and more! The library director, Laura Blaker was presented ðBIG Giveð checks in the amount of \$1,892.32 and some pairs are still raising money! (All funds donated were given directly to the library fund). This was an opportunity for the Littles to give back to their community and have quality time with their Big. It also was great community awareness about the BBBS program. January will be *the book signing* event for those participants following lunch and the movie.

Bowl for Kids Sake

Bowl for Kids Sake ðBe a Hero Bowlð was held on Sun., Nov. 2 at the Lucky 10 Lanes right here in Independence. Over 80 Bigs, Littles, families, business employees and members of the community came out to have fun, free t-shirts, bowling, pizza and prizes!!! Many thanks to everyone who raised money, was a team captain, donated prizes and who came to join us for the afternoon! Over \$9,000 was raised for this program!

New Staff

We would like to welcome Mary Ellen Earles to the Big Brothers Big Sisters of NE Iowa mentoring program in Independence. She will be a part-time mentor coordinator and focus on enrollment of new mentors and match support for all matches. She recently retired from her position of 30 years at Mental Health Institute and brings many years of experience. She is currently a mentor, a member on the BBBS Advisory Committee, and involved with many church activities and community events. Together with Val Maximovich, they will recruit mentors and continue to expand the current mentoring program.

There is 35 Littles waiting for a mentor, so call today 319-334-3353 or email val@iowabigs.org or maryellen@iowabigs.org and "*Make a difference today, in the life of a child*".

Val Maximovich, Mentor Coordinator
Independence, 319-334-3353

Principal's Corner - Mary Jean Blaisdell

The school year seems to be flying! Amazingly, we will soon actually be thinking about the 2009-10 school year and incoming Kindergartners! There are two important dates to remember this spring:

Kindergarten Registration at East Elementary
1:30-7:30 Thursday, February 19

At Kindergarten registration, you will have an opportunity to provide information about your child to the school, talk to a nurse about any health concerns you may have and important information regarding immunization will be available as well.

Kindergarten Roundup at East Elementary
Monday/Tuesday, March 16-17 8:30 - 11:00; 12:30 - 3:00

Kindergarten Roundup is designed to give teachers a chance to get to know your child and make recommendations regarding readiness for Kindergarten. If you know of any child who will be five years old on or before September 15, 2009, please fill out the form included in this newsletter and return it to the principal's office at East or West Elementary Schools.

Winter weather continues to make it necessary for students to dress warmly. Even though our buildings are heated, children should be wearing warm clothing such as long sleeved shirts and/or sweaters or sweatshirts to keep them warm inside. This will serve as an extra layer to help them when they are playing outside as well! Just a reminder: if there is wet or snowy weather, students will be required to wear boots, coats, hats, mittens and snow pants to help keep them warm and dry. Students do not go outside for recess if the temperature and/or wind chill is below 0 degrees.

Thanks,
Mary Jean Blaisdell



Mary Jean Blaisdell,
Principal

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February

Feb 5-13 Testing

Feb 11 1:00 Dismissal
In-Service

Feb 19 1:00-7:30 East
Elementary
Kindergarten
Registration

Feb 23 ECC Spring
Pictures

Feb 25 1:00 Dismissal
In-Service

Feb 27 East Spring
Pictures

March

Mar 9 No School
12:00-8:00 pm
Parent/Teacher
Conferences

Mar 10 2 Hour Late
Start
3:30-6:00
Parent/Teacher
Conferences

Mar 16-17 No School
for ECC &
Kindergarten

Mar 16-17
Kindergarten
Roundup

Mar 25 1:00 Dismissal
In-Service

Fun With Friends in February!

February is a friendship month in kindergarten. We will celebrate by giving cards to our classmates during our Valentine's Day party. February is also Dental Health Month and we will be learning about good dental health habits.

Thanks for practicing your child's address, phone number, birth date, and how to tie shoes during these winter months.

We look forward to celebrating the 100th day of school on February 2nd! We hope the groundhog doesn't see his shadow so spring will arrive early.



First Grade Focus

The end of January brought us the hundredth day of school with a variety of activities centered on the number 100. We are hoping the groundhog does not see his shadow and that some better weather is on the way! Valentine's Day will bring an emphasis on friendship and kindness to our classmates.



President's Day will bring a focus on our current and past presidents. After having watched the historic inauguration, we will learn about the duties of the president as well as some interesting facts about presidential families and their time in the White House.



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.



Calling All 2009-2010 Kindergarteners!

We are trying to locate all children in the Independence Community School District who will be five years old on or before September 15, 2009 for entrance into Kindergarten in the fall of 2009. If you have a child who is of this age or know of a child of this age, please fill out the form below and return it to the Principal's Office at East or West Elementary School by February 9, 2009.

Child's Name: _____

Birth Date: _____

Parent/Guardian's Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____



Mr. Embray reading to Mrs. Kress & Mrs. Meyer's Kindergarten classes.

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!

Fever Free for 24 Hours

If your child has a fever or is sent home with a fever, he/she must be fever-free (below 100) for 24 hours without medication (and not vomiting) before returning to school.

From West Elementary by Rudi Hameister, Principal

A new reading program is coming to West Elementary, "At Home Reading." This new reading program will focus on increasing student reading at home, increasing parent involvement, as well as providing the opportunity for West Elementary to celebrate reading at the end of each trimester. Details will be coming home in the near future.

Don't forget that, January is National Mentoring Month. The staff and students at West would like to say, "Thank You!" to all of our mentors who come faithfully each and every week. The mentors (Big Brother or Big Sister) come into our school and meet with their mentee (Little). This gives the mentor the opportunity to make a difference in the life of a child. Our mentors do make a difference!



Rudi Hameister, Principal

News from 3rd Grade

Third graders are well rested and eager to learn after a nice holiday break. Many of us have set goals to work to improve our academic successes and behavior and we hope you will support your child as he or she strives to meet a set goal.

We are nearly finished with the first book of our reading series. We are enjoying stories in the last unit called "Incredible Stories." We will continue to emphasize the reading strategies that we have learned in the first half of the year. Since we have learned to read, now we will **read to learn**. Please keep encouraging your child to read 15 to 20 minutes every night and keep bringing those "Book It" slips in.

In Math we continue to work on renaming in addition and subtraction. We will also be working on a geometry and money units in the coming weeks. Keep practicing the subtraction rocket math sheets so we can move on to multiplication in February. Please check your child's agenda to be sure they have finished their work for the day.

Most of the third grade classes will work on maps for Social Studies during January. They will learn the names of the continents and oceans of the world, and will be tested on the proper placement on a world map.

Just a reminder that in January we will be taking the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. Talk to your son or daughter about the importance of trying to do his or her best. Be sure your child gets a good night's rest and has a nutritious breakfast in the morning.

With the temperatures dropping and snow on the ground, please check and be sure your son or daughter is wearing boots, hats, snow pants, warm coats, mittens or gloves. Also have your child check the lost and found for any of these items that are missing.

Third Grade Teachers



Music in the News

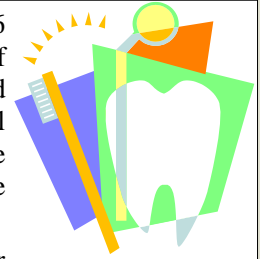
Music at West elementary is a continuous exploration of instruments, singing, dance, world culture, and literacy. Third grade students have studied North American, African-American, and African folk music this year, while reviewing melody and rhythm skills from previous years. Fourth grade students just completed their Winter Concert, where they demonstrated singing, xylophone, recorder, and percussion skills while acting out a story about a snowman. Fourth grade will now be focusing on folk music from Europe and Australia. Fifth grade students are exploring songs, games, and dances from South America and Asia, while learning advanced rhythmic and melodic skills. Once every six days, fifth graders also have choir, where we gather all together to sing rounds and part-songs. All students at West Elementary engage in a creative process of not just reading and performing music, but also creating their own improvised and composed patterns.

The East Meets West Spring Concert will take place March 26th, and this will involve all 3rd and 5th grade students, as well as 1st grade from East. Hope to see you there!

Tim Purdum

News from the School Nurse

Effective July 1, 2008, the Iowa Legislature has in effect a new school health ruling. House File 906 requires all children entering kindergarten and high school to have a dental screening. The purpose of the dental screening requirement is to improve the oral health of Iowa's children. If your child started kindergarten or is a high school freshman, please make sure that you have submitted to your school nurse, a dental screening form. Most of the dentists in the area have these forms and all should be aware of the new screening law. If you have not submitted this form to your school nurse, she will be contacting you soon.



The Iowa Department of Public Health has issued a revised treatment schedule for head lice. If your child is found to have live lice while at school, they will be sent home with these instructions. Please make sure that the recommended treatment is followed properly. Head lice can be difficult to get rid of if proper treatment is not completed.

Currently the state of Iowa has not seen many confirmed cases of influenza. The peak for this respiratory disease can be as late as February and March. The symptoms for influenza include, but are not limited to: Fever, usually high, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose and muscle aches. These symptoms often have a very rapid onset. If you suspect that you or your child has influenza, see your health care provider. The Independence Community Schools is assisting with the Iowa Department of Public Health in influenza surveillance again this year. If your child is ill and unable to come to school, you may be asked to describe your child's symptoms to the attendance secretary. No identifying information is given the IDPH, only the number of students gone and a brief description of the symptoms.

If you have any questions regarding these or other health concerns, please do not hesitate to call your school nurse or health care provider.

Teri Schloss RN & Rhonda Jasper RN

Mini Mu\$tang News

On December 6th the Mini Mu\$tang Bank board members hosted an open house at Security State Bank to celebrate 10 years being in operation at West Elementary.. Former and current tellers, board members, and depositors were invited to stop by for punch, cake, and cookies. They had fun visiting and sharing stories of what they remembered and how the experience has helped them.

The December promotion was a chance to win one of three \$50 Savings Bonds, donated by Security State Bank. Each Thursday that students and staff deposited \$2 or more in MMB, they could put their name in for the drawing.

Winners were: Brenda Hearn, Jenny Bloom, Cy Hearn, and Tucker Chorpeneing.

In January, MMB Board members voted to continue a traditional promotion. Students and staff members who deposit \$2 or more will get a cup of hot chocolate with marshmallows. With the cold, snowy weather, it is very popular.

It is not too late to open an MMB account. Students who are interested can stop in the library any Thursday morning and ask Mrs. Short for account application papers.

On January 21st, MMB Board Members will attend the SSB monthly board meeting to give their annual report on how MMB is doing. They have more depositors than a year ago, but are working on ways to get students to deposit more regularly so they can see the real benefits of saving small amounts weekly. This will be the last meeting for Clayton Thompson, Starr Johnson, Arieana Arjuloski, Kirstie Martin, Grace Bertelli, and Regan Liss. New board members starting in February will be McKenna Silver, Allie Wilkes, Jenna Price, Andrué Wright, Jamie Phelps, Erika Barloon, and Tia Whited.

Exciting news that we are looking forward to is an MMB link on the school web site. Mrs. Wieland from Middle School is doing this for us. We will be able to post current MMB news and pictures taken by MMB photographers, including ones from the MMB 10 Year Celebration. The history of MMB, albums of pictures from different years, and the video taken by KWWL newscasters in October will be on the site. There will be an announcement and directions on how to access the site when it is ready.

Harriet Short, volunteer MMB facilitator
MMB Board members



5th Grade Band Notes

Congratulations to the Fifth Grade Band who recently performed their first concert. They did a fantastic job, and are busy preparing for their next concert, which is scheduled for Thursday, March 12th. The concert will take place at 7:00 p.m. at the Middle School. The students have received four new songs to prepare. The music will benefit the students by extending their note range, building their endurance, teaching them new notes, and challenging them rhythmically. We are looking forward to performing these pieces for you at our next concert. Please plan to attend, as it will showcase the 5-8 grade bands of the Independence Schools.

Practice Times

The band students should be working hard in their lesson books, and getting their practice chart filled out and signed on a weekly basis. When the students do this, they earn a ðDoggie Dollarö and can save up to buy fun prizes. 20 minutes, five times per lesson cycle is the recommended amount of practice 5th graders should be doing.

Outstanding Lessons of the Day

At the end of each day's band lessons, Mrs. Lang chooses the outstanding lesson(s) of the day. Students are chosen on the basis of how well their lesson was prepared, keeping a steady beat by tapping the foot, correct counting, correct notes, etc. The students who are chosen receive a certificate to take home, their name is posted outside the band room door, and they get to keep the ðtraveling trophyö on their desk until the next lesson day. This is a great honorö one that all band students should strive to achieve. Here is a list of the outstanding recipients from September-December:

Day 1: Tristin Ludwig, Evelyn Gonzales, Mitch Ohl, Autumn Meiborg, Zoe Harrison, Alyssa Jensen, Melissa Dryml, Madyson Johanningmeier, Jacey Schwarting, Chloe Henderson, Jenna Price, Kara Davison.

Day 3: Arieanna Ajruloski, Allie Wilkes, Sarah VanDeWalle, Zach Fischels, Starr Johnson, Adam Goedken, Kaylee Eilers, Seth Miller, Aunna Marzen, Grace Stacy.

Day 5: Ross Thedens, Donald Backer, Clayton Thompson, Caleb Feltes, Matt Ohl, Hope Staker, Breanna Carlin, Eric Meyer.



West Elementary Tag News

Make a difference in the lives of students and families in our school – support the West Elementary yearbook! For the first time, students in our school are producing a yearbook to preserve school memories for West Elementary students and their families. Student photographers, graphic designers, and editors will strive to deliver the best possible yearbook for third, fourth, and fifth grade students this year using computer software. The completed student created pages will be submitted online to LifeTouch publishing to be professionally published.

In the yearbook, there will be 20 pages of black and white digital photos along with text to showcase students, staff, classrooms, and special activities from the 2008 -09 school year. The student team of photographers, graphic designers, editors and marketing team will try their hardest to include every student's photo in the yearbook. The yearbooks will sell for \$12.50, which we hope is a reasonable price for your family. There are only 150 copies being published so order your copy early! Look for your student to be bringing home an order form in mid-January. Project Think students will be available to collect order forms along with payment on January 21, 23, 27, and 29 outside the library between 8:00 and 8:25 a.m. Thank you for your support.

Math Olympiads students have been busy learning a variety of problem solving strategies and have used these strategies in national competition. They have successfully solved many challenging problems and are eager to see how the team ranks at the end of the five month long competition.

Math Enrichment students have been learning to organize information into tables and lists to enable them to organize their thinking and use logical reasoning to solve challenging problems.

Fourth Grade Project Think students are researching their country, region, state, and community to create an artifact box. The artifacts and clues in the box will be exchanged with another school. Students at a partner school will try to solve our box by examining the artifacts and solving clues to determine where it came from. West students will receive a box from the partner school and will try to solve the mystery of where the artifact box came from by also examining artifacts and clues. It is always an exciting project and is a favorite among students every year!

TeRRiFiCC Times By Mrs. Rouse

Character Counts News from West Elementary January 2009

Guidance Class – Mrs. Rouse

Over the course of the school year, students have participated in many activities focusing on Respect and Protect and the six pillars of character: trustworthy, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. One day a cycle students attend the encore class, which focuses on building interpersonal skills and character. Lessons are constructed to support academic, career, and personal/social development.

Third grade has recently concluded lessons regarding responsible behavior and managing necessary tasks. Fourth grade is working on a time management/homework unit. Fifth grade has been role-playing how to handle bully situations. Currently, all grades are learning test taking strategies in order to prepare for ITBS.

I look forward to the fun filled days ahead. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 334-7430.

West Elementary Food Drive

Prior to the holiday break, West Elementary students worked together to collect food and household items for the Independence Food Pantry. Their caring efforts amounted to 458.2 pounds of donations! We thank you for helping with such a worthy cause.

Respect Pillar Kids of Character



3rd Grade

Jeremiah Close, Karlie Michael,
Cole Horn, Brian Smith,
Josiah Jacobsen and
McKenna Wilson

4th Grade

Kelsey Cain, Destyne Moore,
Ashley Cappel, Tia Whited and
Darin Halstead

5th Grade

Kaylee Eilers, Evelyn Gonzales,
Zach Fischels and Seth Miller

Kids of Character winners received a certificate, a lunch with Mr. Hameister (provided by Pizza Ranch), a Mustang Pride wristband, and a pencil.

The Six Pillars of Character

Trustworthiness

e

Respect

Responsibility

i

Fairness

i

Caring

Citizenship



TeRRiFiCC Times By Mrs. Rouse continued

Responsibility Pillar Kids of Character



3rd Grade

Michael Dinger, Tom Reiff,
Chance Kahler,
McKaylah Schmelzer, Ben Kelly and
Seth Thompson

4th Grade

Megann Bohlken, Regan Liss,
Ethan Burk, Courtney Main and
Elizabeth Gonzales

5th Grade

Madi Arend, Sam Rathbun,
Matthew McMillan and Paige Stoner

Raffle Winners

West Elementary highlights one of the six pillars for approximately one month. During that time students can have their name entered into a raffle if their classmates catch them demonstrating the highlighted pillar. The raffle containers have been full of names. At the two Character Counts assemblies this year, there have been 60 raffle winners. Prizes include pencils, backpack pulls, and wristbands.



Classroom of Character

Classroom of Character winners received a free recess and a movie party. Way to go!

Respect Pillar

3rd Grade - Mrs. Black's Class

4th Grade - Mrs. Matthiesen's Class

5th grade - Mr. Buresh's Class

Responsibility Pillar

3rd Grade - Mrs. Pasker's Class

4th Grade - Mrs. Mueller's Class

5th Grade - Mrs. Havel's Class

What pillar is next?

The next pillar of character West Elementary will be striving to meet is CARING. Who have you seen showing concern for others? Be sure to write a TeRRiFiCC News to show your appreciation for that student.

Thank you again to all of the Character Counts supporters. Your support is greatly appreciated!



THE SIX
PILLARS OF
CHARACTER

Middle School News

by Dave Jacobson, Principal

School cancellations due to weather certainly impact our learning environment but some of my fondest memories of winter as a child were the fun and excitement of getting out of school early or the no school announcement. This meant we were able to sled, toboggan, build snow forts, ice skate, downhill ski, snowmobile, ice fish, hunt and so on. The reality of payback on those days is this spring but it is all part of childhood! It is the FUN part and we all need it!

On January 6th, 8th and 9th the Middle School faculty participated in professional development activities through Nancy Lockett from the AEA 267. Nancy is quality all the way and our faculty made some huge strides in learning how to analyze MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) test data, how to use DesCartes skills and the effective strategies to implement these DesCartes skills. More professional development will be scheduled this spring around our next MAP

testing phase and to improve our reading, math and science scores.

All Middle School staff members are being asked for input to build a more efficient schedule for next school year. There is a need to balance class sizes so most are in the 23-25 range, increase the length of class periods by 4 minutes which will provide for 16 more class periods in a year for the core classes and look at better ways to share faculty with other buildings in our district.

An assembly for each grade level was planned for January 15 but it was cancelled due to inclement weather. The assembly was to have a video of highlights from the EWALU trip this past fall connecting with our Respect & Protect program as well as the character counts program through our ADVISOR classes. We also planned to address issues of; respect for others, proper behavior in school outside of the classroom, respect for the learning environment



Dave Jacobson, Principal

and prep for the upcoming ITBS testing. The assembly will be re-scheduled ASAP.

Due to school being cancelled on December 19th we were unable to have our Holiday Season lunch. Many thanks to Lori Dietzenbach for organizing it and we were all looking forward to dressing up and serving our students their lunches. The infamous Joe Olson had even planned to make a visit from the NORTH!

A very sincere THANK YOU to the members of the Middle School staff that sponsored 3 families with a Holiday dinner and gift cards to Wal-Mart. **GO MUSTANGS!**

Feb/Mar Calendar

February

- 2 7th BBB vs Vinton - Shellsburg @ Indee 4:15
8th BBB @ Vinton-Shellsburg @ 4:15
- 3 Iowa Tests of Basic Skills
- 4 Iowa Tests of Basic Skills
- 5 7th BBB @ CPU 4:15
8th BBB vs CPU @ Indee 4:15
- 6 Iowa Tests of Basic Skills
- 9 7th BBB vs Dyersville Beckman @ Indee 4:15
8th BBB @ Dyersville Beckman 4:15
- 11 1:00 Early Dismissal
- 12 7th BBB @ Oelwein 4:15
8th BBB vs Oelwein @ Indee 4:15
- 13 7th BBB vs Marion @ Indee 4:15
8th BBB @ Marion 4:15
- 17 7th BBB vs Benton Comm @ Indee 4:15
8th BBB @ Benton Community 4:15
- 18 Lifetouch Pictures
- 25 1:00 Early Dismissal

March

- 9 No School - Parent/Teacher Conferences 12:00-8:00 p.m.
- 10 10:30 Late Start K-12 K-8 Parent/Teacher Conferences 3:30-6:00 p.m.
- 12 5-8 Grade Band Concert @ Middle School
- 24 6-8 Grade Vocal Concert @ Middle School
- 25 1:00 Early Dismissal

Greetings From Middle School Physical Education! By Jayme Hurley

Well, this year is certainly flying by! All of the 6th, 7th and 8th grade students have been busy in physical education. We have completed several of our units already, and are anxious for spring so that we can get back outside! We will begin our fitness testing soon, so we will be able to measure the progress that we have made in the past year. Several students have already improved on their mile times, and we are now putting a great deal of effort into improving our strength and flexibility. Our goal is to get healthier each and every day.

Have a safe and healthy spring!

6th Grade Social Studies News

The 6th graders are cruising along in Social Studies, almost literally, as in a short time, we will be heading off on our mock Caribbean Cruise!

Until that time, we have spent most of our first semester studying our neighbors to the north, Canada, and basic map skills to help us in all of our unit studies. We made Inuit sunglasses, to ward off the glare of the arctic ice (we are somewhat familiar with that around this area...) made totem poles to describe our current and future plans, and drank hot cocoa as we watched how people in Churchill, Manitoba deal with the polar bears.

Since winter break, we have moved on to Latin America. The climate and the people are much different than those to the north of us, and we are excited to think about warming up! Students are involved in reading about the land and people of the entire area now, and then we will break the area up into its three regions: Mexico and Central America, where we will host an Open Market trading day, the Caribbean, where we will "cruise" to five main islands there, and South America, where we will look at the wild life that inhabits the area.

As in all curricular areas, students must pass each of Social Studies' GLE tests. We have had two so far. Encourage your son or daughter to use the study guides provided to each of them before the tests. These contain the vital information of each unit, and help narrow their focus of study.

If you have an questions, please feel free to e-mail me at scrawford@independence.k12.ia.us, or leave a phone message for me at the Middle School.

Adios!

Mrs. Crawford



7th Grade Social Studies

By Mr. Carey



So far this year 7th grade students have had the opportunity to study world geography through a variety of enjoyable and productive activities. The focus of study has been map skills, the foundations of geography, Europe, and the eastern hemisphere. The current 7th grade class has a mix of great personalities and overall they have demonstrated very good student behavior.

Currently the students are studying African culture and participating in the national geography bee. There will be 10 students who qualify for the final round. The winner of the final round will be the geography bee champion and will receive a medal. The student will then complete and submit a geography exam to the state. If the student scores high enough they will be asked to compete in the state competition held at Des Moines. The winner of the state competition will then compete at the national competition.

Middle School Choir News

The Middle School Choirs were unfortunately unable to perform this December, due to multiple snowstorms. However, we are looking forward to our concert on March 24, where we will perform some new songs as well as the best of those we learned for the December concert. In addition, the March concert will feature several soloists, duets, and small groups, to be selected in the coming months.

We were fortunate last November to send four students to the OPUS Honor Choir in Ames, Sydney Embray, Megan Lang, Nicholas Peyton, and Makaela Schultz. These students performed in mass choirs of the best middle school students from throughout the state.

This spring, we will send a few more students to the Northeast Iowa Choral Directors Association Honor Choir in Oelwein, which will take place at the end of April and the beginning of May. The year will end with Choral Night, on May 11, where all choirs 5-12 will perform at the high school.



Eight Grade Earth Science By Paul Brown

In eighth grade Science this year the students will study topics including The Ever Changing Earth , Astronomy, and Weather. This class is very important in your child's educational development, eighth grade Earth Science is the only class offered, grades 7-12, that specifically relates to the events that have made the earth what it is today.



To date we have studied:

1. Plate Tectonics; the formation and movement of giant plates that the continents and oceans ride on.
2. Earthquakes; how stresses deep within the earth release energy as the rocks collide or pass by each other.
3. Volcanoes; the release of molten rock from the earth and the features formed from this material.
4. Minerals; the earth has thousands of different minerals, from those minerals the students learned that there are about twenty that are very common.
5. Rocks; we are at this time studying the unit on Rocks. We will discuss the three types, igneous, metamorphic and the sedimentary rocks, their formation, and uses.



8th Grade Math

By Mrs. Curtis

The year is quickly rushing by as we reach the midway point of the school year. Who would have ever imagined more snow this winter than last? Well, all the snow days make my three little ones at home happy because then they don't have to go to daycare and get to spend the day with mom. I have tried to use some of these days to make some contacts that I don't always find the time to do. Some of you have expressed concerns regarding what you can do to help your child be more successful. There are many ways to help even if you say that you were not a very good math student or the way problems are solved now are not the way you remember.

When a student is struggling they may feel that they are not very good at something. This, however, is usually not the case. This is when the most learning is happening. How a student responds to the challenge can largely be impacted by your support and encouragement. As a parent/guardian it is important to help your child understand that the challenge is part of the learning process. How they respond to this is important. The first time they tried to ride a bike, skateboard, play a sport or an instrument was probably a challenge for them. They most likely encountered some frustration. However, with time, practice, effort, and determination their progress improved. The same is true in the learning process. They must apply the same amount of persistence and it will pay off. During this time they need your support and encouragement.

Another way all parents can help increase math success regardless of student age is to continue working on basic math facts. I realize that learning multiplication facts is taught in the elementary years, however without repetition and practice these skills decline in accuracy. Often I will be working with students or checking their work and it is not that they don't know the process of how to solve the problem correctly it is that their computation is incorrect. Therefore, help your child out and take 5 minutes 3 times a week reviewing addition, subtraction, multiplication and division facts. They might be surprised at how much they have forgotten and how much it will help them be more successful and productive in class.

Bell Ringing

By Lori Dietzenbach, Special Needs Teacher

Maybe you saw us outside of Walmart in December? A teacher, one or two students, holiday music playing, ringing a bell, while accepting donations for the Salvation Army. With us, so bundled up, you may not have recognized us. We are Miss Dietzenbach's advisory group from middle school.

As a way to show that we believe in the pillars of Character Counts, members of this advisory group decided to volunteer after school to ring the bell for the Salvation Army. When the students were informed that 100% of the donations stay here in Buchanan county, they wanted to help the Salvation Army raise as much money as they could for their community. 100% of the parents agreed to let their child participate and all 100% of the students did.

These students are: Abigail Bolton, Mitchell Ciesielski, Kelsie Gall, Abigail Goedken, Matt Hilbert, Gabe Hoffman, Katelin Kremer, Brandi Michael, Saagar Patel, Renee Ratchford, Jazmine Shonka, Jesus Soto, Tanner Wegmuller, Uriah Wood, and from next door, Brier Thein.

Adults who supervised were Miss Dietzenbach, Mrs. Ciesielski, and Mrs. Cannon.

After four weeks of volunteering, we collected \$1,100.21.

The students' feedback was positive with the majority of them willing to volunteer again. The only negative feedback was in regard to the cold, snowy weather. But that's just part of the experience. I am very proud of my advisory group for showing they can be students with good character.

News From Mrs. Blasberg

Winter break is over and school has begun again! The remainder of the trimester is going to be full of fun and excitement. I want to encourage you to contact me with any concerns, comments, or questions you have about our class. You may call me at the school or email me at either address listed below. I have high hopes for the remainder of the year and I know the students do too!



What's coming up in class?

In Language Arts, we will be continuing with Daily Oral Language while adding spelling to our daily routine. The students will be working on grade level spelling words and incorporating some words that they individually misspell. We will also begin our next unit, Personal Narratives! The students will be working on writing again and will have the opportunity to create several writing pieces to show you at conferences.

In Math, we will be continuing our Factors and Multiples Unit. We will begin by working on multiples and least common multiple (LCM) and then wrap up the unit with Prime Factorization and some story problems/real world application. The students will have blue notes sheets in their folders to make it easier for you to help them at home. In Rec Reading, the students will continue to read their independent reading books. They need to have four to get an A!!

In Enrichment, we will continue to work on building our reading skills and working on vocabulary. I will be assigning vocabulary study time for homework. They will have flash cards or their notebooks to do this.

Ways to reach me:

Call the School at (319) 334-7415

Email me at: eblasberg@independence.k12.ia.us or eringail_11@hotmail.com

Extra Help: All too often we find that our children need extra help on the basics. Below is a list of websites that are great for helping out your child at home!

www.Aplusmath.com has games and flashcards to practice basic math facts for all four operations.

http://www.multiplication.com/interactive_games.htm has tons of great games that focus on multiplication facts. These are fun and entertaining too!

Family Fun in the Kitchenó Winter

From the Iowa State University Extension



Promote kitchen navigation skills

ÉAssign each child one or two tasks at a time. Give them different tasks each time they help.

ÉPractice these basic kitchen skills with your child: reading a recipe, using measuring spoons and cups; draining canned foods and pasta; mixing batters, and cutting vegetables.

Safety first

Teach children how to use the micro-wave oven safely.

ÉReview the manufacturer's instruction booklet together.

ÉDon't operate the microwave when it's empty.

ÉCover containers with waxed paper or lid to reduce clean-up.

ÉUse only microwave-safe ceramic dishes or glass containers.

ÉDo not place metal or foil in the microwave.

ÉStir food part-way through the cooking process to distribute heat evenly.

ÉDon't put disposable take-out containers in the microwave.

ÉClean up spills as they occur.

Let everyone help

All ages can have fun in the kitchen. Children who are 6 to 8 years of age can handle these tasks:

ÉBeat ingredients with a whisk.

ÉFind ingredients in a cabinet.

ÉMake a salad.

ÉBegin to learn how to use a sharp knife (with adult supervision).

ÉHelp plan the meal.

ÉRoll and shape cookies.

Recipes to try

Stuffed Potato for One

You will need:

1 medium baking potato, sweet potato or yam

1/4 cup chopped vegetables (green pepper, cooked carrot or broccoli, corn, tomato, or other choice)

2 tablespoons salsa

2 tablespoons shredded cheese

What to do:

1. Wash your hands. Wash the potato.

Poke holes in it with a fork.

2. Cook potato in microwave oven on HIGH for 3 to 4 minutes.

3. Cut potato in half and add vegetables, salsa, and cheese.

Nutrition Facts for 1 stuffed baking potato: 280 calories (45 calories from fat), 5g fat, 3g saturated fat, 15mg cholesterol, 180mg sodium, 53g total carbohydrate (6g dietary fiber, 4g sugars), 9g protein.

More topping choices: chili, baked beans, spaghetti sauce, scrambled eggs, chopped ham

Trail Mix

Makes 16 servings, 1/2 cup each

You will need:

2 cups unsweetened cereal (such as Cheerios®, Wheat Chex®, Fiber One®, Crackling Oat Bran®, or All Bran®)

2 cups sweetened cereal (such as Honey Nut Cheerios®, Frosted Mini-Wheats® or Life®)

2 cups small pretzel twists

1 cup dried fruit (raisins, dried apricots, dried cranberries, or dried pineapple, chopped into small pieces)

What to do:

1. Wash your hands.

2. Mix together all ingredients in a large bowl.

3. Measure 1/2-cup amounts into snack-size plastic bags. Store in cupboard for about 1 week or in freezer for several weeks.

Nutrition Facts per 1/2 cup: 87 calories (7 calories from fat), 0.8g total fat,

0.1g saturated fat, 0mg cholesterol, 183mg sodium, 19g total carbohydrate (2g dietary fiber, 8g sugars), 2g protein

FIND MORE RECIPES at this Web site—

www.extension.iastate.edu/food

Winter fitness ideas

Physical activity can improve your mood, increase your energy level, and help you sleep better.

ÉUse your knees, not your back when shoveling snow.

ÉExplore favorite summer walking trails; look for animal and bird tracks; practice tree identification.

ÉMake snow people.

ÉTry cross-country skiing, ice skating, broomball, or other winter sports.

Now's the time

ÉEnjoy orange, yellow, and red fruits (oranges, grapefruit, tangerines, tangelos, apples, cranberries).

ÉMake soups and stews using potatoes, yams, or winter squash.

... and justice for all The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Many materials can be made available in alternative formats for ADA clients. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964.

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N 3507-2 October 2007



Food Allergy Facts and Statistics

- ◆ Food allergy is a growing public health concern in the U.S.
- ◆ Though reasons for this are poorly understood, the prevalence of food allergies and associated anaphylaxis appears to be on the rise.
 - Peanut allergy doubled in children over a five-year period (1997-2002).
 - Research suggests that food-related anaphylaxis might be under diagnosed.
 - An increasing number of school students and staff have diagnosed life-threatening allergies.
 - A 2007 study has shown that milk allergy may persist longer in life than previously thought. Of 800 children with milk allergy, only 19 percent had outgrown their allergy by age 4, and only 79 percent had outgrown it by age 16.
- ◆ More than 12 million Americans have food allergies. That's one in 25, or 4 percent of the population.
- ◆ The incidence of food allergy is highest in young children 6 one in 17 among those under age 3.
- ◆ About 3 million children in the U.S. have food allergies.
- ◆ Food allergy is believed to be the leading cause of anaphylaxis outside the hospital setting, causing an estimated 50,000 emergency department visits each year in the U.S.
- ◆ Each year in the U.S., it is estimated that anaphylaxis caused by food results in 150 deaths. Death can be sudden, sometimes occurring within minutes.
- ◆ Eight foods account for 90 percent of all food-allergic reactions in the U.S.: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts (e.g., walnuts, almonds, cashews, pistachios, pecans), wheat, soy, fish, and shellfish.
- ◆ There is no cure for food allergies. Strict avoidance of food allergens and early recognition and management of allergic reactions to food are important measures to prevent serious health consequences.
- ◆ Even trace amounts of a food allergen can cause a reaction.
- ◆ Most people who've had an allergic reaction to something they ate thought that it was safe.
- ◆ Food allergies are life-altering for everyone involved and require constant vigilance.
- ◆ Early administration of epinephrine (adrenaline) is crucial to successfully treating anaphylactic reactions. Epinephrine is available by prescription in a self-injectable device (EpiPen® or Twinject®).

News from the IHS

By Karl Kurt, Principal

Class Registration for the 2009-2010 School Year

We will begin registering this year's 9th, 10th, and 11th graders for classes next year toward the end of this month. The selection of courses is very important as our students continue to work toward their future goals and aspirations.

As students and parents begin selecting appropriate courses for the 2009-10 school year, you will find the Course Selection Guide to be an invaluable tool. I recommend that parents and students work together and use their academic plan as a means for selecting courses that meet high school graduation requirements, and prepare students for their career goals. We encourage students to select rigorous courses that will enable them to effectively pursue those goals following graduation. Remember that the choices made now will determine your future educational and career opportunities.

The following sequence is suggested to assist you in the registration process:

- ÉRead the material carefully
- ÉConsider all possible courses and choose those that will help attain career goals
- ÉComplete the academic plan to ensure graduation requirements are met
- ÉParents should discuss potential choices with their students
- ÉSchedule a registration appointment with the school counselor if you have any questions.

Careful planning and personal persistence will ensure that you achieve your goals.

Sincerely,
Karl Kurt
Principal
Independence High School



Karl Kurt,
High School Principal



Speech Team Advances 7 Groups To State By Dan Putz

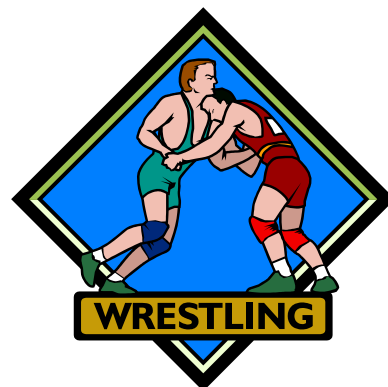
Independence speech team traveled to Cascade, Saturday, January 24th for the District Large Group Speech Contest. Congratulations to the seven events that earned 1 ratings and advance to the state speech contest February 7th in Decorah. Those earning top honors were; the Readersø Theater øløn Herbertø, both Radio News Teams ø89.7ø and øKIHS2ø, all three Group Improvs, and The Musical Theater øPhantom of the Operaø.

Those earning 2 ratings were; the Musical Theater øGrumpy Students Who Like To Singø, The Group Mime øBallet Class, øl Passø, the ensemble act øMinna and the Space Peopleø and the one-act play øWindowsø. Thanks to all the parents and students who came to support us.

High School Calendar

FEBRUARY

Monday Feb. 2	JV WaMaC Wrestling Conf. Meet @ Western Dubuque
Tuesday Feb. 3	GBB vs. Vinton-Shellsburg (H) BBB @ Vinton-Shellsburg
Thursday Feb. 5	9 th GBB/BBB vs. Waterloo West
Friday Feb.6	GBB @ Williamsburg BBB vs. Williamsburg (H) Senior Night
Saturday Feb.7	State Lrg. Group Speech Contest Wrestling Sectional Meet
Monday Feb. 9	GBB vs. Oelwein (H) BBB @ Oelwein
Tuesday Feb.10	Wrestling State Dual Team Regional Meet GBB vs. Columbus (H) JV/V only Senior Night BBB @ Columbus ó 10 th /V only
Wednesday Feb.11	Early Dismissal ó Professional Development
Thursday Feb. 12	GBB/BBB @ Jesup (Varsity only)
Friday Feb.13	GBB @ Center Point Urbana BBB @ Anamosa
Saturday Feb.14	WaMaC Individual Speech Contest Wrestling Districts Boys AAU Tournament HS, MS
Monday Feb.16	HS Band/Vocal Concert
Tuesday Feb. 17	BBB vs. CPU
Wednesday Feb. 18	State Wrestling Tourney ó Des Moines GBB Regionals ó Western Dubuque
Thursday Feb. 19	State Wrestling Tourney ó Des Moines
Friday Feb. 20	State Wrestling Tourney ó Des Moines
Saturday Feb. 21	State Wrestling Tourney ó Des Moines All State Lrg. Group Speech UNI Tall Corn Jazz Festival
Monday Feb. 23	BBB 3A Districts
Wednesday Feb. 25	Early Dismissal ó Professional Development
Friday Feb. 27	Coe College Jazz Summit
Saturday Feb. 28	District Individual Speech Contest State Wrestling Duals Indian Hills Jazz Competition Winter Dance



Continued on the next page...

High School Calendar continued

MARCH

Monday March 2	Indee Jazz Concerts
Saturday March 7	NEIBA District Jazz Competition
Sunday March 8	Mini Mustang Wrestling Tourney
Monday March 9	Wartburg Boys Indoor Track Meet
Tuesday March 10	Wartburg Girls Indoor Track Meet
Friday March 13	NEIBA MS 6-8 Concert/Band Contest
Saturday March 14	State Speech Contest
Monday March 16	Wartburg Indoor Co-ed Track
	Girls Tennis, Golf, Boys Soccer practice starts
Tuesday March 17	Red Cross Blood Drive @ HS
Thursday March 19	HS Musical
Friday March 20	HS Musical
Saturday March 21	HS Musical
Monday March 23	Boys Tennis, Golf, Girls Soccer practice starts
	HS Girls WaMaC Indoor Meet - Cornell
Tuesday March 24	Girls State Indoor Track Meet @ UNI
	HS Boys WaMaC Indoor Meet @ Cornell
Wednesday March 25	Girls State Indoor Track @ UNI
Saturday March 28	IHSMA State Solo/Ensemble Contest @ Indee Hosting
Monday March 30	All-State Individual Speech Festival - UNI



*Gyms reserved for AAU not listed. Please check with your child's coach if you have questions.
Most weekends from November through February are booked.*

All dates subject to change if impacted by weather.

Indee Speech Places Second In WaMaC @Westö

Independence speech team placed 2nd at the WaMaC large group speech contest Monday, January 19th in Marion. We had 11 events performing and 7 received 1 ratings. Earning first place points were the musical theater "Grumpy Students Who Like to Sing", and the Radio Broadcast "89.7" Finishing 2nd included the musical theater "Phantom of the Opera", The group improv of Emily Goedken and Hannah Butler. the one-act play "Windows", and the radio broadcast "KIHS2". Other groups earning 1 ratings included the group improv of Ryan Hoffman and Justin Grover.

Thanks to Ashley Coleman, Jason Kilby and Dan Putz who coached the students.

All of these groups will perform at the District Large Group Speech Contest Saturday, January 22nd at Cascade High School. Those earning 1 ratings there will perform at the State contest in Decorah, February 7th.

Buchanan County Success Center

What exactly is the Buchanan County Success Center (BCSC)?

We are an alternative high school available to students in the school districts of Independence, Jesup, and East Buchanan. The BCSC serves students who have dropped out of school or meet eligibility criteria. It is an opportunity for students who did not fit the high school setting to continue their education and earn a high school diploma.

Busy Year

We have had a very busy first half of the year. We have implemented service projects into our groups and invited a number of speakers to help educate us on relevant topics. Our service projects have included:

- ♦ **Cleaning up the outside area of our campus. We pulled weeds, picked up trash, swept the sidewalks, and cleaned up the parking lot. We felt good about it and so did the owner of the building.**
- ♦ **We also went to our local food bank and helped them with sorting and packing food items for the holidays. Again, all involved were pleased.**
- ♦ **Our most recent attempt at service was canceled due to the weather (school was canceled) but we were lined up to bell ring for the Salvation Army.**

Our guest speakers have been from a variety of organizations and have included the following:

- ♦ **Pathways: the effects of drugs and alcohol**
- ♦ **Together for Youth: birth control and sexually transmitted diseases**
- ♦ **Riverview: Expect Respect-signs and effects of abuse**

In addition to the above we also took a fieldtrip to The Gallagher Bluedorn to see The Lakota Sioux Indian Dance Theater.



1st Annual BCSC Thanksgiving Soup Supper

Submitted by: Pete Augustine

The Buchanan County Success Center had its first Thanksgiving Soup Supper Thursday, November 20th. The students at the BCSC invited friends and family to come to the school and enjoy some soup, chili, punch and dessert. Although the students were encouraged to bring their parents, some just brought friends, believing that the teachers had ulterior motives. The meals were picked out and prepared by students and staff. The students also helped decorate the two rooms used for the supper by painting pumpkins, generously donated by the Shannon's, and putting up decorations. By the end of the night, the Soup Supper was considered a success by the Success Center after more than 75 people came to enjoy the food and friendly atmosphere.



Indee School Board Wants to Hear From You!

The Board of Education has a formal goal statement and a series of action steps to carry out and achieve that goal.

Goal Statement

The Independence Community School District's Board of Education will promote efforts to increase student achievement by supporting district initiatives and will strive to provide opportunities, resources, and a highly qualified staff to all students. The Board will work to enhance a climate of positive communication while managing the schools in an efficient and cost effective manner.

One of the action steps includes getting feedback from the community. In an effort to address this important part of the goal, board members Kathryn Jensen and Dawnye Sturtz are seeking your input in assessing our school communication with the public. The district uses a variety of methods but is interested in hearing alternative ideas.

Dawnye and Kathryn will open our TnT night on February 3rd with an open forum. Come and join the discussion!



Superintendent Advisory Council

By Devin Embray, Superintendent

Are you interested in school initiatives? Do you hear things on the street or at a gathering and wonder, "What's that all about?" in reference to the school district? Do you have ideas and talents that could be utilized in the helping the district accomplish it's mission? Then maybe you would be interested in becoming part of an advisory council with our district. I am trying to organize this council to meet monthly; time and day of month yet to be determined. This council will establish ground rules and work together to help make our district even better. You may take the lead on an idea and report back to the group on progress of that idea and/or your input and questions may help solve current difficulties that we may be experiencing. The meetings will last approximately 60-90 minutes once a month. Should you have interest in this advisory council please contact the Central Office at 334-7400. We will take those interested on a first come first serve basis up to approximately twelve individuals. Should you have further questions regarding this council, please do not hesitate in contacting me. I can be reached at 334-7400.



INDEPENDENCE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS VOLUNTEER 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) 334-4780. Thank you!

RETURN THIS FORM TO: Independence Community School District
Attn: Teresa Barske, Volunteer Program Coordinator
1011 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) ____ Elementary (K-5) ____ Middle School (6-8) ____ High School (9-12)

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 (Middle School)
- ☐ 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: _____
