

# Mustang



# pride



District News from Independence Community Schools

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If you have items you would like to see in the newsletter, or if you have information you would like to place in the newsletter, please contact Mary at the Administration Building by calling 334-7400 or e-mail her at [mcooksley@independence.k12.ia.us](mailto:mcooksley@independence.k12.ia.us)

## Come Live in the Independence Community School District!

-Devin Embray, Superintendent

With the declining enrollment that we face, it is a difficult task to maintain a balanced budget. School districts seem to always be in a reactionary mode due to the fact that we can't control our situation with enrollment or we don't seem to lobby from a bigger perspective to bring families to our district and communities. In order for latter to happen, the City Councils and Realtors from our communities along with economic development from each area in conjunction with the school district would need to sit down together to discuss how we can lobby for families to move here to raise their children. As a school district we will continue to work in this area to form relationships that will in the end, hopefully bring more families to our communities. I would encourage you to promote our communities and school district to those you know, about our wonderful area of the state we live in and availability of employment opportunities that exist in our communities or how close by they may be in larger urban areas along with the high quality education we have to offer. Some of us argue that our communities are bedroom communities or that they are economic growth areas with the jobs currently available and/or the companies that exist currently. Regardless of your opinion on what the community is thought to be, we could all help each other by promoting our communities to those not from here. If you have a relative or friend thinking about relocating, encourage them to consider our communities and our school district.

Cont. on page 6

February, 2007

## Superintendent's



Devin Embray

Corner

## Calendar of Events

**February 6 - CCC**

**February 6-7 - High School ITED's**

**February 6** – Social Studies/World Language SAC meeting

**February 7** – Early Out – 1:00 Dismissal – Professional Development

**February 8** – Industrial Tech/Business Subject Area Committee meeting

**February 13** – 6-12 Language Arts SAC – AM and Health/Wellness SAC PM

**February 15** – High School Parent-Teacher Conferences - 3:45-7:30

**February 19** – Science SAC and Technology SAC meetings

**February 20** – Middle School pictures

**February 21** - Early Out - 1:00 Dismissal - Professional Development

**February 23** - End of 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester

**February 23** - Kindergarten Registration at East Elementary, 1:30-7:30

**February 27** – K-5 Language Arts SAC meeting



**Independence Community Schools**

1207 1<sup>st</sup> Street West  
Independence, Iowa 50644  
319.334.7400

Visit our website at:

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

**Board of Education**

Dawnye Sturtz, President  
Bob Reiff, Vice President  
Kevin Greenley, Director  
Charlie McCardle, Director  
Kevin (KC) Robb, Director

**Superintendent**

Devin Embray  
319.334.7400

**Director of Curriculum and  
School Improvement**

Mary Cooksley  
319.334.7400

**Director of Finance**

Chris Kimball  
319.334.7400

**Transportation Director**

Michael Donnelly  
319.334.7435

**Food Service Director**

Nancy Michels  
319.334.7415

**Technology Director**

Dan Good  
319.334.7405

**East Elementary Principal**

Dr. Mary Jean Blaisdell  
319.334.7425

**West Elementary Principal**

Josh Lyons  
319.334.7430

**Middle School Principal**

Meredith Miller  
(319) 334-7415

**High School Principal**

Karl Kurt  
(319) 334-7405

**High School Asst  
Principal/Athletic Director**

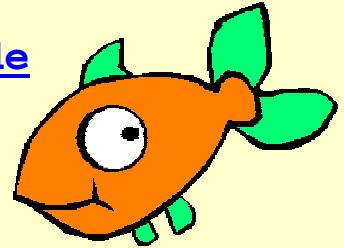
Dave Ross  
319.334.7405

**Big Brothers, Big Sisters**

**Coordinator**  
Jeannie Neeley  
319.334.7415

**District News and Information****Fish Nominations**

- ❖ Choose Your **Attitude**
- ❖ Be **There**
- ❖ Make Their **Day**
- ❖ **Play**



- **Penni Gaul** – Pre-School
- **Chris Olthoff** – Junior Kindergarten
- **LeAnna Buskohl** – Pre-School
- **Jenny Cappel** – Special Education Teacher Associate
- **Cathy Gilson** – Special Education Teacher Associate
- **Teresa Barske** – Special Education Teacher Associate
- **Suzie Kuper** – Early Childhood Center
- **Michelle Unwin** – Special Education – West Elementary
- **Keith Donnelly** – Physical Education
- **John Neil** – HS Special Education
- **Mark Torgerson** – HS Math
- **Rachel Hurley** – HS Social Studies
- **Mary Cooksley** – Director, Curriculum and School Improvement
- **Ann Rigdon** – HS Science

Does your child have a teacher that possesses the Fish! Philosophy Principles each and every day? Nominate them for entry into the Fish! Community. **Make Their Day** by showing your appreciation for all they do for students. To make a nomination call Mary at 334.7400 or e-mail the nomination to: [mcooksley@independence.k12.ia.us](mailto:mcooksley@independence.k12.ia.us)

**Needs Assessment Results**

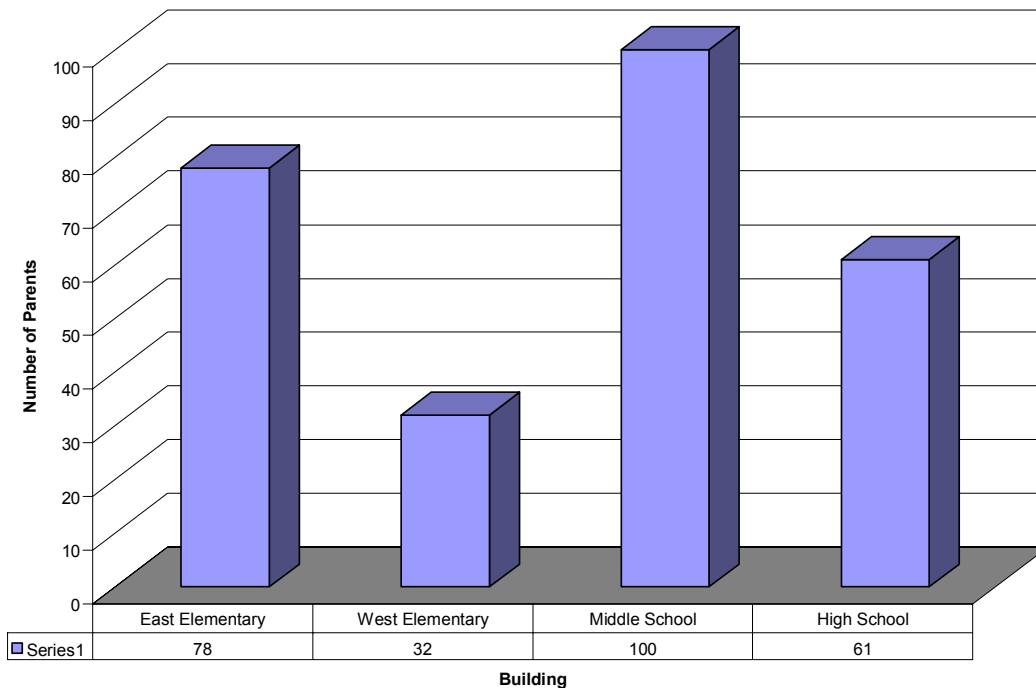
At the November parent/teacher conferences parents were asked to complete a brief survey about the building their child attends. We were interested in determining parents' thoughts and perceptions on a variety educational and safety issues pertaining to each building. East Elementary, West Elementary, Independence Middle School and Independence High School parents participated in the survey/questionnaire. Each principal as well as the office of school improvement compiled and analyzed the information gathered. The graphs that follow give you data about the perceptions parents have about programming and safety.

Based on the information, the district and the building administrators want to engage in further dialogue. Since communication is a priority across the district we are designing opportunities for next fall that will increase parents' understanding of the processes, policies, curriculum delivery, instruction, and social issues facing students in our schools. You may be contacted to be part of the planning of these opportunities!

If you have any questions regarding the results of the survey, please call Mary at 334-7400. Thanks for your continued support!



Number of Parents Completing the Survey by Building

**Parents respond on Surveys**

The Independence Community School District wishes to thank all of the parents who participated in the needs survey given in November. We will be able to provide better services to you and your family as a result. Thank you for your comments!

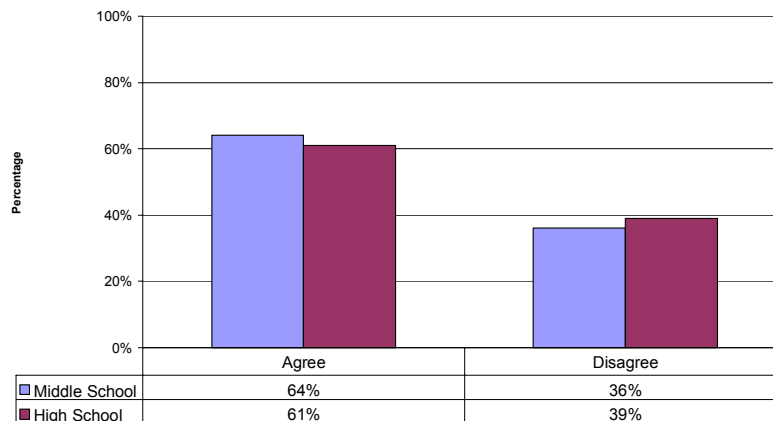
**Student Management System**

Did you know you can access your child's grade on-line? Assignments and grades can be monitored at all times by visiting the Centerpoint site linked on the district website.

E-mail or contact parents when you have concerns. If you do not remember your password, but would like to access this resource, contact the building your child attends.

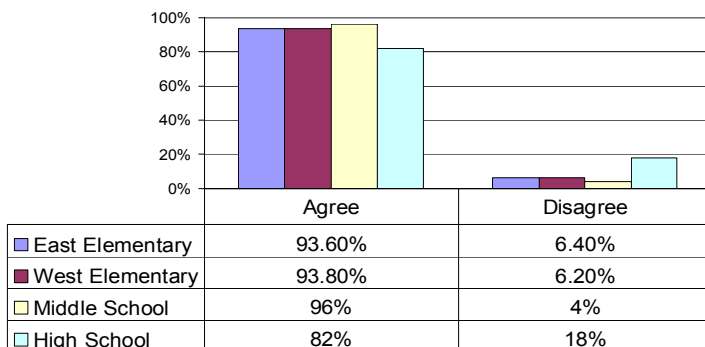
This does not replace personal contact, but it can be a valuable tool for parents to utilize!

Percentage of Parents who access the Student Management System (Centerpoint)

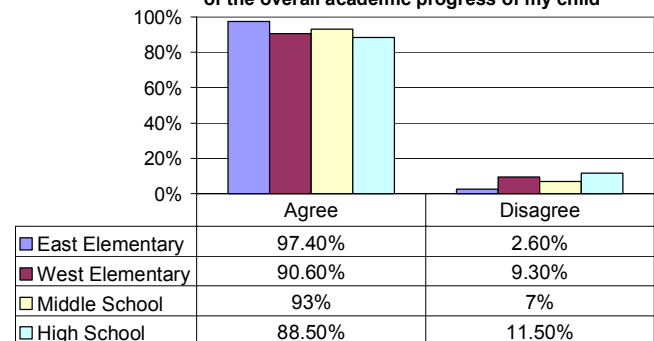


East Elementary and West Elementary currently do not post assignments or grades on Centerpoint – please call your child's building for a progress report.

My Child's school is open to input from parents and makes me feel welcome at school

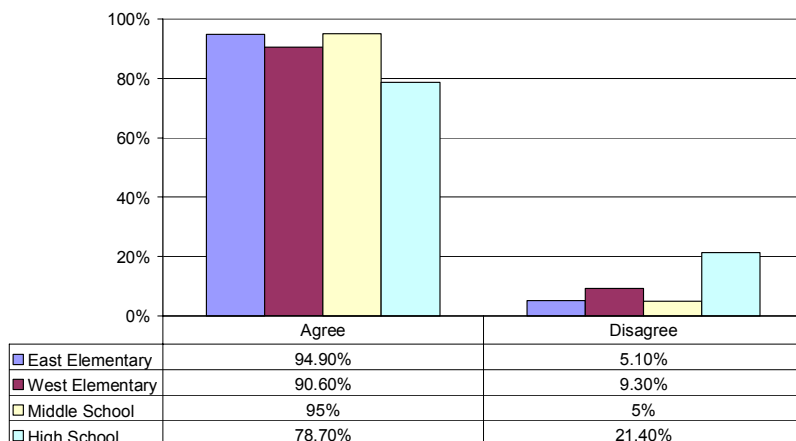


My child's teacher(s) or school keeps me well informed of the overall academic progress of my child

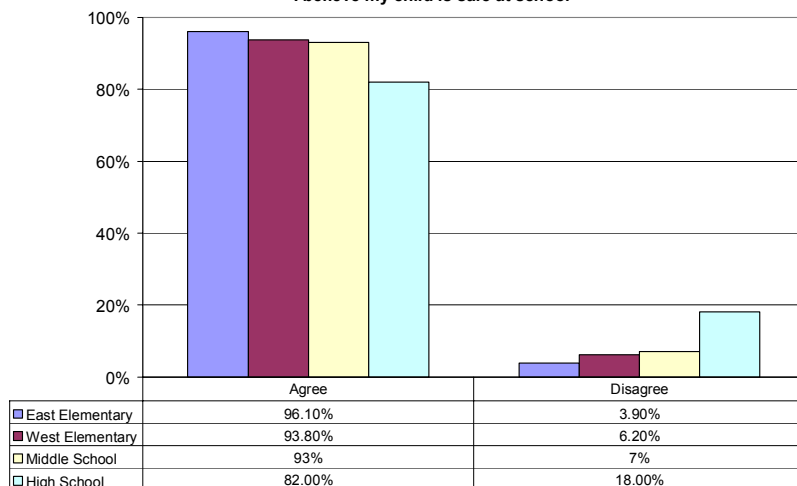




Grade Level Expectations and relevant academic information have been adequately communicated by teaching staff and administration at my child's school



I believe my child is safe at school



## **Bus Transportation Request**

I would like to ask all parents of East, West, and Middle School students who ride the rural busses home to call the bus garage if their children are not riding the bus home due to being picked up by parents or going home early.

Bus garage #334.7435  
24 hour answering machine

Thank you, Mike Donnelly

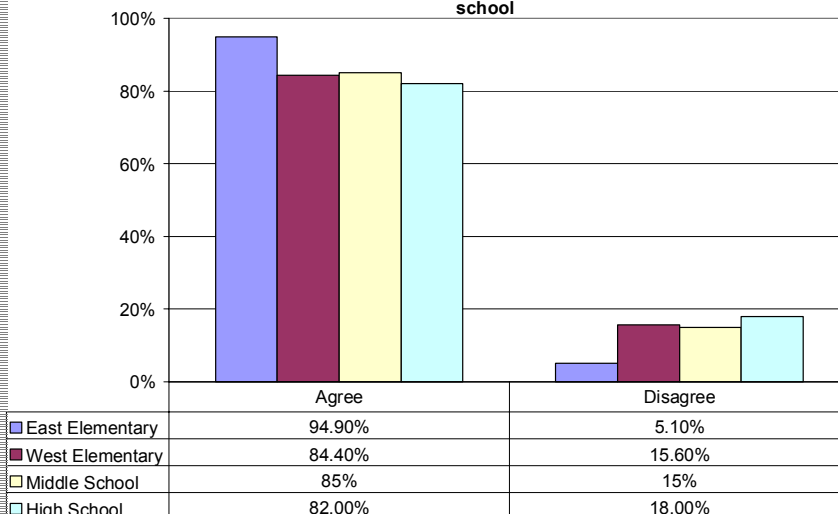


## **Safety and Understanding Classroom and Curriculum**

Parents across the district feel their child is safe while attending school. The challenge for the district lies at the high school where there are many entrances to monitor. This will be an area the district will need to problem solve as the year progresses – thinking about next year and the overall safety of students.

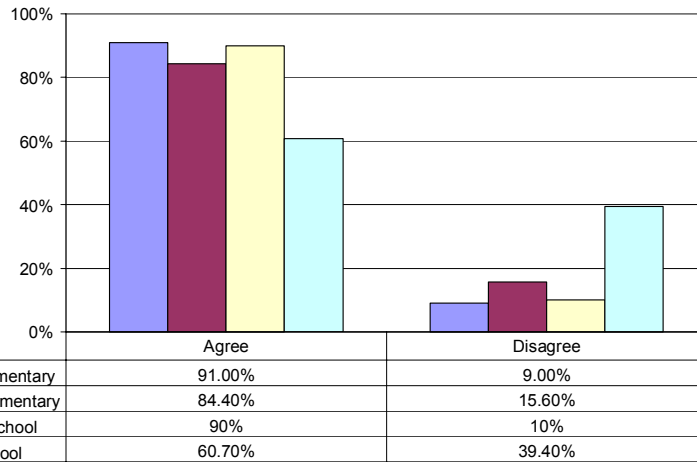
Parents seem to have been informed what the Grade Level Expectations are for each grade and subject area across the district, and are kept informed about their child's progress, but do not feel as comfortable discussing what is happening in individual classrooms.

I feel like I know and understand what is happening in my child's classroom(s) or school





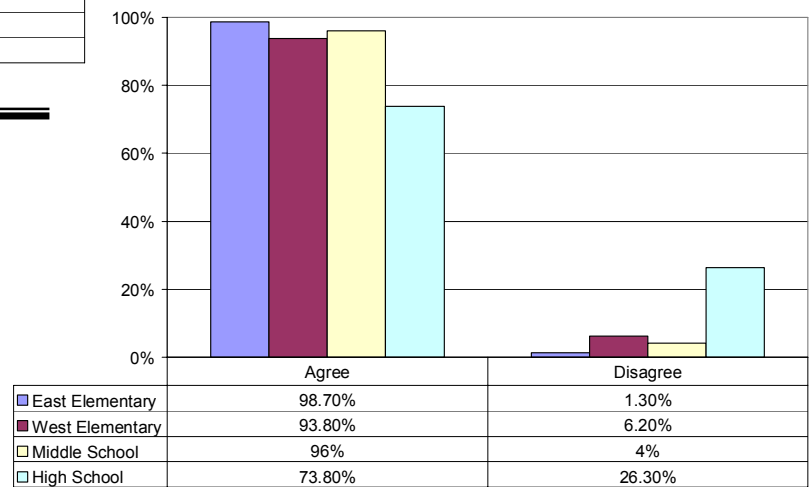
The technology available in my child's school is up-to-date and provides the necessary skills my child needs



### Technology

Technology is an area of concern across the district – even though we have the necessary computers, we need to keep thinking toward the future needs of our students who will be competing in a global economy. The district technology committee is meeting to address the future needs of the district at each level – from computer hardware to instructional integration to provide hands-on real-world application and practice.

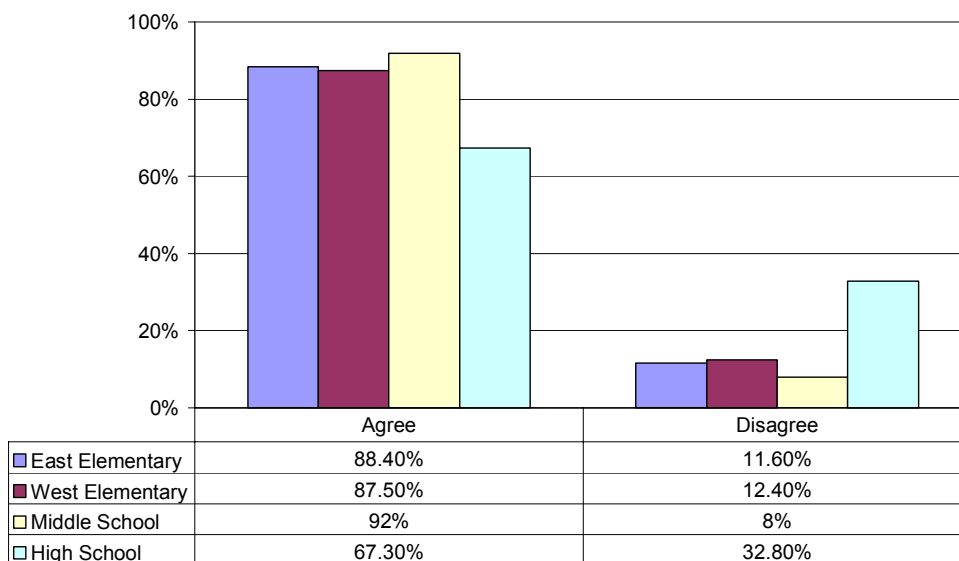
The school my child attends is clean and well-maintained



### Maintenance of Buildings

Thanks to the very dedicated maintenance and custodial staff in the district, the buildings we have are being looked after well. The faculty and students are also to be commended at the pride they take in keeping their buildings looking like a true learning community!

Overall, I understand and agree with the direction of the school district's policies and programs



### Overall direction of school district

While a large percent of parents understand and agree with the direction the school district is going with its policies and programs, there are still areas we need to improve. Communicating what we are doing and the future of the district is vital if we want to forge a partnership with parents.

The curriculum process and holding students to academic excellence were comments reflecting a positive direction the school district is taking our students. Preparation for each level and beyond high school is a positive for students as expressed by parents completing the survey.

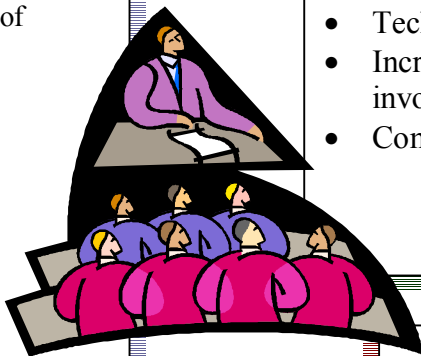




## Parent Needs Assessment Results - Continued

### Areas of Strength

- **DEDICATED TEACHERS!!**
  - This was the most often written response to what is the area of strength in our district!!
- Support systems in place
- Dedication to excellence
- Smaller class sizes
- Communication with parents
- Positive learning environments
- Learning – dedicated to student's accomplishments
- Band Program



### Biggest Challenges

- High School facility
- Funding
- Technology
- Increased community involvement
- Communication with parents



### Looking Ahead .....

The administrative team has analyzed the information compiled from the surveys and discussed how each building can use the information to provide better services to parents as a result.

Learning Teams in each building will also analyze the survey results to determine how each team can address the challenges described and how they can contribute to building/district goals.

The administrative team is working on developing a series of events next school year to address the challenges outlined in the survey. We will partner with Parents, student groups, teaching staff, and outside agencies to increase communication with parents. These will be hands-on, informative, educational sessions benefiting all stakeholders in the district.

You may be contacted next fall to participate in what we hope is the first annual learning opportunity for parents. If you are interested in being a partner or if you want to assist in the planning, do not hesitate to call the administration building and talk to Mary.

Thanks for you continued support!!

## Come Live in the Independence District

[Continued from page 1]

We have wonderful communities and a wonderful school district to support high quality education for their children. The following are some things to consider when you are speaking to someone about our district:

- Lowest class size of neighboring districts and those in the WAMAC conference. K-5. (based on 2005-2006 data)
- We rank number one in the WAMAC conference on the Iowa Test for Educational Development (ITED's) for 11<sup>th</sup> graders in Mathematics; 88% proficient, Science 87% proficient, and in Reading we ranked second with 80% proficient. (According to 2005-2006 ITED data).
- A dedicated staff who care and have an attitude that failure is not an option.
- Wide array of post-secondary course options available through our partnership with Hawkeye Community College, and the Independence Satellite Campus.
- Wide array of Extra Curricular and Co-Curricular programming available for students.
- Comprehensive Curriculum process that ensures that skill sets are learned and students are prepared for post-secondary success.
- Comprehensive Respect and Protect program K-12 that ensures that students feel safe and secure, with open access to adults.
- State of the Art Early Childhood center that houses programs from ages 3-5 with early childhood special education and junior kindergarten. Along with a partnership with a preschool and daycare under one roof.
- Comprehensive elementary program that includes foreign language K-5.

While this is just a short list of the great things we have going on within our district, it is something that you can discuss with those who you encounter. Our county has a lot to offer families who would like to raise their children here. If you need more information or have comments to share, please don't hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at 319-334-7400.



# Elementary

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Feb 7 1:00 Dismissal – In-service  
Feb 21 1:00 Dismissal – In-service  
Feb 22 Kindergarten Registration  
1:00-7:30 at East

Elementary

Mar 1 7:00 pm PTO mtg. at West

Mar 5 No School:

12:00-8:00 Parent/Teacher

Conferences

Mar 6 2-Hr. Late Start

3:30-6:00 Parent/Teacher

Conferences

Mar 12-13 **NO SCHOOL for  
Kindergarten, ECSE or JK**

Mar 12-13 East Roundup

Mar 21 1:00 Dismissal – In-service

Mar 29 6:30 pm East Vocal Music  
Concert

## 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 East/South 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!



## Principal's Corner

By: Dr. Mary Jean Blaisdell

It's hard to believe, but soon we will actually be thinking about the 07-08 school year and incoming Kindergartners! There are two important dates to remember this spring:

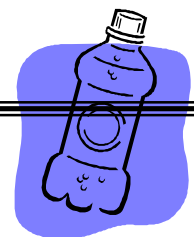
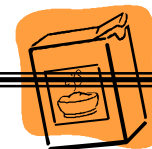
### **Kindergarten Registration at East Elementary 1:30-7:30 Thursday, February 22**

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 12-13 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, 2007, 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 keep them warm and dry. Students do not go outside for recess if the temperature plus wind chill is below 0 degrees.



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

We continue to collect General Mills Box Tops, Pop Can Tabs, and bottle caps and bag tops from Kwik Star products. Our PTA will again be taking care of these collections for us! 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!



### Kindergarten Corner

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 January 29th! We hope the groundhog doesn't see his shadow so spring will arrive early.

Students in Mrs. Meyer's class play a number game



### Mileage Club Continues!

The **Mileage Club** continues to go very well! Students at East Elementary are really "getting into" getting fit. We've had several students reach the 5-mile mark or more, which earns them a Toe Token, and many others are close to doing this. Walking is such an easy thing to do for exercise and the students are excited about the healthy habits they are forming.

### Fruit & Veggie

We continue to participate in the program at East Elementary. Each day, students are served a small portion of fresh or dried fruits or vegetables at a break after recess. Many students have tried these healthy snacks and look forward to them each day. **Ask your student what snack they tried each day!**

### Calling All 2007-08 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, 2007 for entrance into kindergarten in the fall of 2007. 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 2, 2007.

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Birthdate</u>	<u>Parent's Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____





### **First Grade Scientists!**

First graders are getting the opportunity to work as scientists as part of the science curriculum at East. All classes have studied insects, and are taking turns exploring Pebbles, Sand, and Silt. This new unit gives children an introduction to Earth Science, and lets them examine, sort, and classify different kinds of rocks and soil. Magnifying glasses, strainers, and journals are all part of the "hands-on" activities included. Students agree that first grade science is fun!



### **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.

### **Second Grade Scene**

Second grade is always busy!!! Monday, January 29, 2007, was the 100th day of school. Each classroom had their own special projects and events to celebrate that day!!! That also means the school year is more than half over and is moving very quickly. It reminds teachers that we still have many things to do this year!!!

Because we have new science curriculum, second grade has two units to teach: Solid/Liquids and Balance/Motion. We are using FOSS kits (Full Option Science System) which include investigation, exploration/ observation, and communication. In math we will continue to work on time and money. Parents can also help students practice counting money, telling time, and practicing math facts. These are life-long skills that need ongoing practice all year. For reading, many will be studying fairy tales. We will have conferences soon and reporting results of our CBM testing to parents. In February Mrs. Hill's and Mrs. Goedken's classes will go to sing at nursing homes with Mrs. Thomas. February is a fun month because second graders

### **Wow! A Limo Ride is cool!**

Fifteen East Elementary students earned the prize of a Limo Ride to lunch during this year's fundraiser! They did an outstanding job at helping with the fundraiser by meeting the requirements of selling at least 35 items towards the fundraising efforts! Students went to lunch at Pizza Hut and were treated to a ride around town in the Limo on January 3. Congratulations goes out to: Kirstie M., Matthew C., Olivia W., Cole T., Grant P., Cliff B., Anthony B., Dustin B., EJ H., Karma B., Holdyn G., Brandon P., Michael D., Cyrus B., and Molly L.!



East  
Elementary  
students  
earn limo  
ride!



February, 2007


WEST  
ELEMENTARY

## the bottom line

by Josh Lyons, Principal

With winter weather upon us, it is important to remind our children to wear the appropriate attire for traveling to and from school, as well as for recesses. We have had several students without appropriate dress for these conditions. If you need assistance obtaining winter weather gear, please contact the West Office at 334-7430.

It is also important to have a plan in place in case of a late start or early out due to severe weather conditions. We are asking that parents and students place important information including phone numbers, addresses, names and other important information as to where your child might need to go due to an unforeseen early out.



### Coming Up:

Feb. 7	1:00 Dismissal
Feb. 14	Hearing Checks
Feb. 21	1:00 Dismissal
Feb. 23	End of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Trimester

### ITBS Kickoff

Students at West Elementary were treated to a song and dance routine by Mr. Lyons, West Principal, and Mr. Donnelly, West PE teacher. The assembly was to create hype for the ITBS week starting January 15<sup>th</sup>. With pom-poms in hand and the catchy tune of YMCA in the background, Mr. Donnelly and Mr. Lyons bounced their way into history as students cheered them on singing...I...T...B...S!

Often times testing, specifically standardized tests, are difficult to get excited about and motivation is low. It is important for students to understand their importance. These tests measure where students are academically and how our school compares to other schools in Iowa and across the nation.

The testing was moved back one day due to the late start on Monday, January 15. We are anxious to see the results and should receive scores in two to three months. Our hope is that we will be able to pass this information out to parents at conference time.



### Mini Mustang Bank

Some Mini Mu\$tang Bank depositors came up big winners in December! Each week they deposited \$2 or more in their Savings Account, they put their name in a drawing to win a \$50 Savings Bond from Security State Bank. The winners from each grade level and staff were: Jennifer Bloom from third grade, Mitchell Evens from fourth grade, Rachel Barloon from fifth grade, and Maureen Morehouse from staff. Congratulations!

The Mini Mu\$tang Bank continues to help West Elementary students learn the advantage of saving money on a regular basis. Small amounts weekly can add up to considerable sums by the year's end. Students keep track of their accounts with their own Savings Book. It's not too late to open an account for this year. The West Elementary office can provide the necessary forms to fill out. We also encourage adults and students to stop in the West Library any Thursday morning from 8:00 – 8:30 to see how MMB works with student tellers and student board members. Visitors are surprised to see elementary students performing the tasks of real tellers, but without computers or calculators. Student tellers are responsible for balancing at the end of each bank day. What a good way to teach more math skills and responsibility.

The MMB Board of directors decide on monthly promotions, design and put up a bulletin board with Volunteer Pam Fruchtenicht's help. They make signs and buy necessary supplies. Security State Bank provides money each year for the students to manage their bank. The MMB treasurer writes checks for supplies. In January, MMB depositors got a cup of hot chocolate each week they deposited!

New tellers will be trained and start work in February. Third graders: Alyssa Jensen, Hope Staker, Mark Thompson, and Allie Wilkes. Fifth graders: Abby Bolton, Kelsie Gall, and Alex Schweitzer. Fourth graders starting in mid January were: Addie Bolles, Mitchell Evens, Molly Krempges, and Brianna Weber.

Harriet Short, volunteer coordinator of MMB



## Student Council News

The West Elementary students elected a representative from their classroom to serve on the Student Council for the first half of this school year. There was a nomination paper that each candidate needed to fill out in order to have their name on the ballot. Those candidates had the opportunity to make posters asking their classmates to vote for them. They also gave a campaign speech before their class.

The representatives for the first half of the year were:

Mrs. Black	Matt McMillan
Miss Bolger	Starr Johnson
Mrs. Mueller	Hope Staker
Mrs. Spinler	Shane Eder
Mrs. Wendling	Zoe Harrison

Mrs. Crain	Megann Kinseth
Mrs. Grover	Erik Gruber
Mrs. Hearn	Alyssa Hawkins
Mrs. Matthiesen	Taylor Wulfekuhle

Mr. Buresh	Kyle Fank
Mrs. Kinseth	Paige Davis
Mrs. Smith	Matthew Beebe
Mrs. Staker	Gabe Hoffman / Blake Henderson



The current Student Council Representatives sponsored some fun activities during Red Ribbon Week. We had pajama day, hat day, crazy sock day, slipper day, mismatched clothes, and wear your clothing backwards day. The students really enjoyed these special days. Each student was given a paper to make a "Just Say NO To Drugs" quilt patch. We then made a huge school quilt which was displayed in the hallway.

Another big project was collecting food items for the Independence Food Pantry. Thank you to our great group of students who collected over 500 lbs. of items. Just before our Christmas break our representatives loaded all the boxes in a bus and we delivered them to the Food Pantry. After the items were weighed in, we were given a tour of the pantry and told about how they get their food items and how they distribute the food. It was a very interesting field trip by the representatives.

We will be electing new representatives in February. Please watch for more information on these upcoming elections.

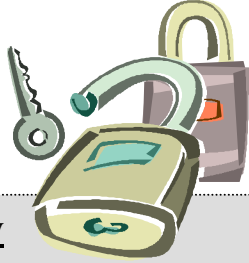
Student Council Sponsors:  
Deb Dutler  
Judy Hess





# Middle School

Meredith Miller, Principal



## Building Security

For the past few months we (all buildings) have been working on improving building security. We have enlisted the assistance of the following:

- Rick Wulfekuhle, Buchanan County Emergency Management
- Doug Cook, Fire Department
- Doug Rasmussen, Police Chief
- Bill Wolfram, County Sheriff

These experts have toured our buildings and recommended locations for securing students in the event of an emergency, whether it be related to weather, accident, or other dangerous situation. During a recent in-service each building's staff participated in a discussion in which the staff was presented with an emergency situation. Our goal is to revise and update the district's crisis plan to be prepared in the event of any emergency. We will continue to meet with the "experts" on a regular basis.

## **The Principal's Corner**

By Meredith Miller

### Midterms & Conferences:

While it seems that it was just a week ago that we were at midterms, we're already looking toward the end of the second trimester. Speaking of midterms, since our midterm was January 15, you should have received a midterm report for each of your child's classes within the week. If you have not seen your child's midterm by the time you read this, please give me a call. Our trimester ends February 26.

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled for March 5 and 6. Classes will not be held on March 5 and conferences will be held 12:00 noon to 8:00pm. On March 6, classes will start at 10:30 and dismiss at regular time. Conferences will be held 3:30 - 8:00pm. These conferences are the "drop-in" format. You will first be directed to your child's advisor for the report card. We hope you will visit with as many of your child's teachers as time allows.

## Parent - Teacher Conferences

**Monday, March 5** No classes, Conferences 12:00 noon - 3:45pm and 4:45 - 8:00pm

**Tuesday, March 6** Classes start 10:30, Conferences 3:30 - 6:00pm



### FCS Hosts Lunch

Mrs. Shaffer's Family Consumer Science class hosted a lunch at the Middle School January 11, 2007. Students were in charge of planning, preparing, serving and cleaning up after the meal. Each student had a role to play; some were part of the waiting staff, while others prepared food and others cleared away the tables when their "customers" finished their meal. Students planned and prepared a baked potato bar with all of the "fixins" Students were graded based on their performance that day. The performance related to the Grade Level Expectation they had been working on in their classroom.

### Activities:

Boys basketball will finish their season the second week of February. If you have not had the opportunity to see a game, you still have a chance. Please refer to the enclose calendar.

Be sure to reserve March 23 & 24 for this year's spring play, "The Magical Lamp of Aladdin." It involves a cast and crew of over fifty students.

# School

## February Calendar

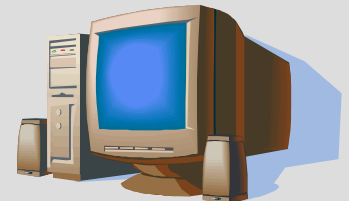
- 1 – WR (H) Sumner-Fredericksburg  
9<sup>th</sup> G/BBB (H) Waterloo West at SJ
- 2 – JV/V GBB (H) Columbus  
JV/V BBB at Columbus
- 3 – JV WR at New Hampton  
9<sup>th</sup> BBB (H) Benton Community
- 5 – JV BBB at Oelwein  
JV GBB at Oelwein  
V G/BBB at Oelwein
- 6 – JV/V GBB at Beckman  
JV/V BBB (H) Beckman  
9<sup>th</sup> BBB at Shellsburg  
ITED's
- 7 – 1:00 Dismissal  
ITED's
- 8 – ITED's
- 9 – JV/V GBB at Maquoketa  
JV/V BBB (H) Maquoketa
- 10 – Sectional WR at Indee
- 12 – Band/Vocal Concert  
JV BBB at Benton Community
- 13 – District WR Duals (TBD)  
JV/V BBB at Marion  
9<sup>th</sup> BBB at Marion
- 15 – P-T Conferences 3:45-7:30 p.m.
- 17 – UNI Tallcorn Jazz Festival  
District WR – Upper Iowa
- 21 – 1:00 Dismissal  
State Wrestling
- 22 – State Wrestling
- 23 – State Wrestling
- 24 – State Wrestling  
Coe Jazz Summit

By Karl Kurt, High School Principal

## Potential Dangers of Social Networking

Parents this newsletter article is dedicated to helping inform or remind you about the potential dangers of online social networking! Online social networking is fast becoming the communication tool of choice for young people. Your children may be logging into sites such as MySpace, Facebook, or Friendster, for what they think is harmless communication with old and new friends, to research colleges of interest, or for other legitimate purposes. Some of these sites, however, contain content that may be improper for and pose a safety risk to your children.

Some of these popular sites attract stalkers who may use personally identifiable information to entice teens into face-to-face meetings and other inappropriate actions. Students in the Independence Community School District DO NOT have access to these sites while at school. They are blocked by our firewall. Students may be accessing the sites at home and off school property.

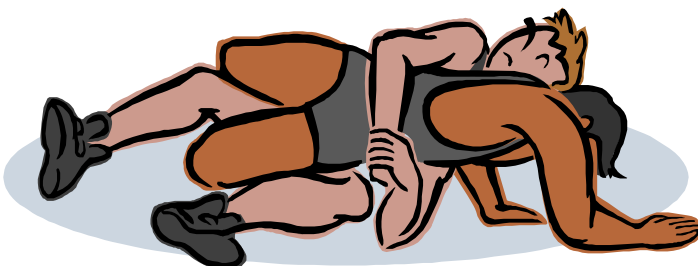


## WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Talk to your kids about their online habits. Tell them why it's important to keep their name, Social Security number, address, phone number, and family financial information to themselves.
- Your kids should post only information that you and they are comfortable with others seeing and knowing.
- Warn your kids about the dangers of flirting with strangers online.
- Tell your children to trust their gut if they have suspicions. If they feel threatened by someone or uncomfortable because of something online, they need to tell you, and then report it to the police.

## Additional information available at:

<http://www.onguardonline.gov/socialnetworking.html>





## Students in Oral Communications Make A Difference

As a high school teacher, I always hope that the lessons that come from my classroom make a difference. Well, earlier this fall it appears that they did. It turns out that they don't always have to come from the teacher. Students can teach other students, and yes, they are paying attention. In this case, it may have saved lives.

Given an assignment to prepare a demonstration speech for his oral communications class, senior, Gabe Hepke, did the research about meth labs and brought in various pieces of equipment along with dummy products to show the dangers of meth labs and their debris. He demonstrated how discarded waste from a meth lab might look and explained the dangerous chemicals and acids involved. He also explained the dangers in picking up those harmless looking items.

Megan Barske, a junior, was paying attention. While hunting pheasants with a friend one weekend afternoon, Megan came across debris from a meth lab. She recognized what it was, and knew what to do, as well as what not to do. She called the local authorities who came out and disposed of the waste. Deputy Chris Chesmore with the Sheriff's Department, indicated that there were active chemicals in containers that could have exploded or burned someone who did not know what they were. Megan's good deed could have prevented someone, unaware of the dangers, from being seriously injured.

Gabe's timely message was not only practical, but also meaningful to the class. I'm sure many more students are taking advantage of opportunities to make a difference each day. The next time another lesson is presented, whether by teachers or students, we can rest assured that the messages are being heard, and perhaps all of us can make a difference as life-long learners.



## SPEECH

Independence speech team traveled to LaPorte City, Saturday, January 20 for the District Large Group Speech Contest. Congratulations to the three events that earned 1 ratings and advanced to the state speech contest February 3rd in Decorah. Those earning top honors were the ensemble act **"Road Trip"**; the Choral Reading **"The Shooting of Dan McGrew"** and the **Radio News Team**.

Those earning 2 ratings were; the two group improvs, and the ensemble act "Transformation"; and the Musical Theater "Rent".



## Independence Community School District Weather Related Information

Dear Independence Community School District Parents/Guardians:

We will soon be experiencing our first real evidence of winter. It is time that we prepare for inclement weather and snow-laden roads that offer increased danger and risk.

The Independence School District's bus drivers have had an excellent safety record and always try to reduce any ever-present risk due to weather and road conditions. Buses are equipped with radio communication, communications are maintained with County and State road crews, buses are kept in top maintenance condition and drivers are experienced with driving conditions of the area.

Regardless of all we do to reduce risk, it does not guarantee that a bus will not stall or get stuck. Parents and students can reduce risk by simply dressing students warmly so they remain comfortable in any given situation.

In the Independence School District there are few days that the weather will not allow us to run buses and have school. Generally if we can run buses, we will have school. Occasionally we may have a late start, perhaps two hours late, in order to allow highway crews to clear roads, clear access areas, and to have the fog lift.

The transportation system of the Independence School District involves three levels of responsibility as to whether a child should attend school on a bad weather day. These levels are: The School administration and transportation supervisor, the bus driver and the parents. On days when weather and road conditions may be unfavorable the transportation supervisor and administration personnel are up before 5:00 a.m. to listen to weather forecasts, to check out road conditions first hand, to communicate with County and State road officials and to receive calls from certain people from various areas in the district. The bus supervisor will communicate with the superintendent of schools or his designee and a decision will be made to send out buses and have school.

If a decision is made to call off school, late start or early dismissal, that information will be on area radio, television stations, and the district web site as early as possible; generally by 6:30 a.m. **Please note, although the radio and TV stations listed below may not be your favorite listening/viewing choice, these are the only stations that will be contacted for weather related information for the Independence Community School District and St. John's.**

### Radio

KQMG - 95.3 FM

KOEL - 950 AM

WMT - 600 AM or 96 ½ FM

KMCH - 94.7 FM

KFMW - 108 FM

### TV

KWWL - Channel 7 or 11

KCRG - Channel 9 or 10

KGAN - Channel 2 or 13

**Web site:** [www.independence.k12.ia.us](http://www.independence.k12.ia.us). Click on District Information and scroll down to Delays and Closings, click to open.



After a decision has been made to have school and run buses the next decision is made by individual drivers. Some roads may not have been plowed or may be in poor condition. The individual bus driver must decide whether it is safe to travel on those roads. The drivers are instructed to observe safety first, to turn around if conditions are unsafe. If part of the bus route cannot be driven, every attempt will be made by transportation personnel to contact parents so children will not wait needlessly for a bus that is not coming. Please have patience. When the weather is bad it is likely the buses will not run on time and could be late. It is very important that students be dressed for the weather conditions and should not be left alone to wait for the bus.

The third and ultimate decision must be made by parents. Weather and road conditions can vary greatly across the Independence Community School District. Transportation decisions that are right for most of the school district might not appear safe in a given area of the district. Whether or not school is in session and whether or not the bus is on its scheduled route, no student should be sent to school when a parent feels the risk is too high. If a parent decides a student is unable to attend school because of bad weather, the student will be given an excused absence and allowed to make up missed schoolwork.

Even when all three levels of responsibility are exercising their best judgment rapid changes in weather will occasionally cause problems. The worst situation might make it impossible to get children home with buses. In that case each family should have an arrangement for their student(s) to stay overnight with someone in town. The student(s) and the school should be aware of those arrangements at the beginning of each school year.

Weather is so unpredictable that even expert forecasters upon whom we rely make mistakes. Some errors in judgment at all three levels may occur. Every effort will be made to make a decision that is based upon the best information available, it is in the best interest of everyone involved and is based upon the safety of students and what is best educationally.

If a decision is made to call off school, run buses late or dismiss early, that information will be broadcast on all local radio and when possible on television stations as early in the day as possible (refer to radio and TV stations on page 1). If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Devin Embray or Mike Donnelly.

Respectfully yours,

Devin Embray  
Superintendent of Schools  
334-7400

Mike Donnelly  
Transportation Director  
334-7435



## Independence Community School District

1207 First Street West  
Independence, Iowa 50644

