

Volume 2 Issue 6
February, 2008

District Events:

February 6th

CCC Meeting

February 13th

1:00 Early Release

February 19th

Tips - n' - Tools for
Parents Night

February 21st

Kindergarten
Registration

February 27th

1:00 Early Release

March 3rd

No School

March 4th

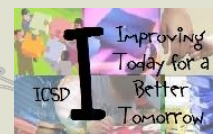
2 Hour Late Start

March 10-11

Kindergarten Roundup

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February Assessment Update By Devin Embray, Superintendent

The assessment of the high school is nearing completion. The firms of Kane and Johnson out of Rochester MN, and HSR out of Madison WI, have been working very hard on the completion of this assessment. The completed assessment is tentatively scheduled to be presented to the board of education at a special meeting on February 28th, 2008 in the board room located at 1207 1st Street West at approximately 6:00 P.M. It has been a very successful operation so far. The firm's last visit to our high school was during the last week of January in which they met with all staff at the high school to go over educational programming issues. In addition, they brought down engineers for a second time to address our Mechanical and Electrical systems in more detail. Below is an outline of some of things they are looking at in their assessment.

ARCHITECTURAL

- Educational Program
- Site
- Building Envelope
- Technology
- Complete review of original Architectural plans underway.
- Code Review identifying present deficiencies, requirements.
- Scheduling interviews with teaching staff
- Drafting content pieces for report.

- Evaluating thermal envelop of existing building (s) with options for improvement.

- Considering if demolition of certain buildings/portions is wise.

- Starting Architectural Programming for new building on new site.

MECHANICAL/PLUMBING

- Reviewing and familiarization with existing systems.
- Analyzing operating costs and potential payback of new systems
- Exploring options to upgrade system
- Inadequate ventilation
- Analyzing code issues, sprinkler requirements, etc.
- Considering energy implications, operating cost of replacement systems.
- Assembling list of outmoded, inefficient pieces of equipment.
- Detailed review of existing mechanical and plumbing plans underway.

ELECTRICAL

- Old fuse panels
- Analyzing fire alarm, security, data cabling
- Analyzing electrical power circuiting for computers in Classrooms



- Analyzing code issues
- Considering energy implications, operating costs of replacement systems.
- Assembling a list of outmoded, inefficient equipment.
- Studying capacity of existing electric service, including entry and distribution.
- Detailed review of existing electrical plans underway.

Many folks are in anticipation as to what the results of the assessment will be. I want to make it clear to all that this firm will not be suggesting to the board of education what they should do, but instead give the board the options they should consider and let the board decide what direction to then go. I am sure that many have an opinion as to what should be done, but it would be my hope that what direction the board ends up taking, our community will get behind the issue and support it. The assessment committee was very adamant that something needed to be done with our current high school. Should you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me and look for the presentation to the board in the later part of February.

January Fish! Nominees

Christine Bagley – MS Food Service Associate

Karyl Hand – MS Food Service

Becky West ó East Elementary Special Education Associate

Cindi Barenz ó East Elementary Associate

Deb Curry ó High School Secretary

Rhonda Sheets ó HS Business Teacher

Wanda Stanbridge ó MS Food Service

Rhonda Zieser ó West Elementary Special Education Associate

Mary Ann Crawford ó West Elementary Special Education Teacher

Keith Donnelly ó West and MS Physical Education Teacher

Brenda Hearn ó West Elementary 4th Grade Teacher

Linda Smith ó West Elementary 5th Grade Teacher

Julie Rouse ó East Elementary and West Elementary Counselor

Judy Wulfekuhle ó MS Secretary

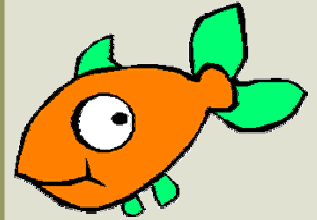
Lori Dietzenbach ó MS Special Education Teacher

Mary Cooksley ó Director, Curriculum and School Improvement

Brittany Heins ó HS Special Education Teacher

Jan Reed ó MS Science Teacher

Marcia Kreutner ó HS Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher



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

Call Mary at
334-7400

Helping Your Child Succeed

Physical Fitness Can Boost Your Child's Academic Fitness

The increasing demands on academic success has some schools reducing the amount of time spent on physical fitness. The Independence Community School District recognizes the importance of a healthy body along with a healthy mind. The following are ways how being physically fit can improve your child's performance in school and ways you can help your child be as healthy as possible.

- ⇒ *Children who are healthy have an easier time paying attention in class!*
- ⇒ *Children who are physically fit miss fewer days of school due to illness!*
- ⇒ *Exercise can lead to better sleep habits!*
- ⇒ *Children who are involved in sports often work harder in school to remain eligible to play!*

Quick Tips

1. Help your child learn to make healthy food choices
2. Encourage your child to drink water or milk
 - a. Hydration is important to a highly functioning mind!
3. Be active WITH your child
4. If your child takes physical education, remind him or her that the point is not about being athletic, but that it is about TRYING!

Fish Philosophy Principles

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

Understanding Student Academic Achievement Growth

By Mary Cooksley, Director, Curriculum and School Improvement

Last month I had growth scores for several grades & in this issue I am including growth scores for several other grades. The chart below explains how to read or interpret the growth scores, or the National Standard Scores.

National Standard Score – Brief Explanation

If your child scored in the 76th percentile one year and then scored in the 76th percentile the following year & is that good, bad, or what does that exactly mean? It actually means that your child saw a year's growth. But the percentile rank is not the most effective way of indicating academic growth over time & the National Standard Score (NSS) actually is! But what is the National Standard Score???

Stay with me now ... this is where it gets interesting

The National Standard Score is based on the average score a student should have from one grade to the next. For example, the following table shows the average growth from one grade to the next.

Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11
180	196	210	223	235	247	257	266	273
Amount of Growth expected from one grade to the next	<u>16 pts</u> 3 rd – 4 th Grade	<u>14 pts</u> 4 th – 5 th Grade	<u>13 pts</u> 5 th – 6 th Grade	<u>12 pts</u> 6 th – 7 th Grade	<u>12 pts</u> 7 th – 8 th Grade	<u>10 pts</u> 8 th – 9 th Grade	<u>9 pts</u> 9 th – 10 th Grade	<u>7 pts</u> 10 th – 11 th Grade

What does this mean to you?

When you get your child's score this spring & find out what their National Standard Score (NSS) is and then look at this chart & what is their score in comparison to an average student in that grade? If you are really curious, check and see what their NSS was for the previous year. Did your child see growth?

What do the NSS Scores say about academic growth across the district?

Students in the Independence Community School District have seen large increases in National Standard Scores & I have included a couple of grades' NSS to show you how a particular grade has increased their academic achievement over time. Anytime you see at least 100% growth means the group as a whole saw at least one year's growth. Anytime you see over 100% growth means they saw more than a year's growth academically. I will include more achievement growth data in the next month's newsletter.

What do the NSS Scores say about academic growth across the district?

Anytime you see at least 100% growth means the group as a whole saw at least one year's growth. Anytime you see over 100% growth means they saw more than a year's growth academically. As you look at the following charts, compare the NSS as well as the growth seen between grades to the chart above. Did that group see the average amount of growth expected? What about your child? Is their growth where they are expected to be?

If you want to know more about your child's NSS, ask the building counselor, or contact me at 334-7400 and I will assist you in any way I can!

Understanding Student Academic Achievement Growth Continued

By Mary Cooksley, Director, Curriculum and School Improvement

2006-2007 4th Graders in Reading Comprehension (This Year's 5th Graders)

	As 3 rd Graders	As 4 th Graders
NSS	188.8	209.8
Growth in points		21
Achieved Growth by %		<u>300%</u>

This is a fantastic amount of growth! This group is beginning their academic careers strong!

2006-2007 6th Graders in Reading Comprehension (This Year's 7th Graders)

	As 3 rd Graders	As 4 th Graders	As 5 th Graders	As 6 th Graders
NSS	186.9	212.3	222.4	224.5
Growth in points		25.4	10.2	2.1
Achieved Growth by %		<u>254%</u>	<u>113.3%</u>	<u>30%</u>

Notice as 6th Graders they did not grow a minimum of 100% - we see this trend and are researching why this is occurring.

2006-2007 8th Graders in Reading Comprehension (This Year's 9th Graders)

	As 5 th Graders	As 6 th Graders	As 7 th Graders	As 8 th Graders
NSS	226.6	225.9	249.7	258.1
Growth in points		-.7	23.8	8.4
Achieved Growth by %		<u>-7%</u>	<u>264.4%</u>	<u>120%</u>

Notice as 6th Graders they did not grow a minimum of 100% - again indicating we look into this decline in growth during this grade.

Understanding Student Academic Achievement Growth Continued

By Mary Cooksley, Director, Curriculum and School Improvement

2006-2007 10th Graders in Reading Comprehension (This Year's 11th Graders)

	As 7 th Graders	As 8 th Graders	As 9 th Graders	As 10 th Graders
NSS	133.3	248.6	269.6	274
Growth in points		15.3	21	4.5
Achieved Growth by %		<u>153%</u>	<u>233.3%</u>	<u>64.3%</u>

Notice as 10th Graders they did not grow a minimum of 100% - we will analyze this class's growth this year and determine a course of action as a result.



We're Looking for a Few Good Mentors!

When you were growing up, was there someone in your life ó a teacher, coach, relative, neighbor, friends or boss ó who encouraged you and showed you the ropes? That person was a mentor to you.

You can õpass it onõ to the next generation by volunteering at a local mentoring program.

It doesn't take special skills ó just a willingness to listen, offer encouragement, and share what you've learned about life.

Share what you know.

Become a mentor.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Iowa

Call today!

Val Maximovich, 334-3353.



Independence Community Schools

2nd Tips and Tools Night

Originally scheduled on January 16th

Rescheduled for

Tuesday, February 19th

Stay tuned for more details!



Principal's Corner - Mary Jean Blaisdell

The school year seems to be flying! Amazingly, we will soon actually be thinking about the 08-09 school year and incoming Kindergartners! There are two important dates to remember this spring:

Kindergarten Registration at East Elementary

Thursday, February 21st 1:30 - 7:30

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 10-11

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, 2008, 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 tell 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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February

**Feb 13 1:00 Dismissal
In-service**

**Feb 21 Kindergarten
Registration
1:00-7:30 East**

**Feb 27 1:00 Dismissal
In-service**

March

**Mar 3 No School
12:00-8:00
Parent/Teacher
Conferences**

**Mar 4 2 Hr Late Start
3:30-6:00
Parent/Teacher
Conferences**

**Mar 10-11
No School for
Kindergarten,
ECC or JK**

**Mar 10-11
East Roundup**

**Mar 12 1:00 Dismissal
In-service**

**Mar 21 No School
Spring Break**

**Mar 24 No School
Spring Break**

**Mar 26 1:00 Dismissal
In-service**



Calling All 2008-09 Kindergartners!

We are trying to locate all children in the Independence Community School District who will be five years old on or before September 15, 2008 for entrance into kindergarten in the fall

of 2008. 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 8, 2008.

Child's Name: _____

Birth Date: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____



Fun With Friends in February!

February is 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 31st! We hope the groundhog doesn't see his shadow so spring will arrive early.

First Grade Focus

First grade students at East Elementary have had many opportunities to work with and learn from Sondra Cabell, of Fontana Park. Mrs. Cabell prefers the students to call her Sondra. Through her interactive, hands on, lessons students learn about conserving, reusing and recycling our natural resources. Classes made decorations using "trash" as materials. Old puzzles pieces were new again with a coat of green spray paint, and tacky glue to create a wreath decoration.



Mrs. Knott's class make decorations using "trash" as materials.

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 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.

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.

Media

Mrs. Lake serves as both Media Specialist and Talented and Gifted (TAG) Instructor at East Elementary. On our rotating schedule, Mrs. Lake spends every other day working with students in the library: reading aloud, teaching book skills, and helping match readers with appropriate reading levels. On the alternate days, she switches hats and becomes the buildings TAG Teacher: providing extended learning opportunities for K-2 students in reading, writing, and math. These activities may include reading and writing projects and managing the Accelerated Math program. Mrs. Lake does an excellent job wearing both hats. She is always available to help students and staff.



Mrs. Lake works with 2nd grade students in the East Media Center.

*Independence
Community
Schools 2nd
Tips - n' - Tools
for Parents
Night is
rescheduled for
Tuesday,
February 19th.
Stay tuned for
more details!*

P.E. Fun!



Mrs. Seamans' P.E. class has a snowman relay race.

East Elementary is excited for the New Year to get rolling. Even though we are looking forward to the events in 2008 we won't forget what we learned and how much fun we had in 2007. We ended the year in Physical Education class with some exciting activities. One of the most memorable activities in 2007 was our Christmas lesson. The students participated in a snowman relay race. They created the snowman using hoola hoops, beanbags, and yarn balls. They all ended the year as winners. There is much more to look forward to in 2008. In February the Jump Rope For Heart Program will begin, and toward the end of the year we will have our very own Fitness Day.



TeRRiFiCC Times By Mrs. Rouse

Character Counts News from West Elementary January 2008

Caring Pillar Kids of Character



Hannah Brunko, Sarah Morkel, Becca Lang, Jasmine Trumblee, Dalton Brown, Zoe Harrison, Kaylee Eilers, Andrew Hermesen, Christian Blad, Jared Snyder, Alexis Brown-Madisan Teel, Jill Halstead, Kyle Zieser, Ashley Hettinger

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

Kids of Character

Hannah Brunko – Hannah was selected to represent Mrs. Spinler's third grade class for the Caring pillar. Hannah is helpful to other students and to the teacher. She always tries to do her best. "Hannah cares about herself and this shows in the way she interacts with others," stated Mrs. Spinler.

Becca Lang – Becca is a third grade student in Ms. Bolger's class. Becca is a Kid of Character because she is always willing to help people. She sees each individual as a person of worth and tries to encourage people whenever she can. "Becca is a cheerful and extremely kind girl," Ms. Bolger commented.

Sarah Morkel – Sarah is a very caring young lady in Mrs. Black's third grade class. She sees the needs of others in the classroom and on the playground and will do what she can to help them out in resolving their problem. Mrs. Black stated, "Sarah is very sensitive and will put the needs of others before her own."

Jasmine Trumblee – Jasmine was nominated for Kid of Character by her third grade teacher Mrs. Wendling. Jasmine cares about other student's feelings, and also shows concern when someone is having a bad day. "Jasmine is a very caring student," commended Mrs. Wendling.

Dalton Brown – Dalton is a fourth grade student in Mrs. Grover's class. Dalton was selected for the Caring pillar because he is helpful, shows concern for others, and is a good listener. Mrs. Grover appreciates Dalton because he works well in groups and he encourages his classmates.

Kaylee Eilers – Kaylee is a fourth grade student in Mrs. Mueller's class. Mrs. Mueller stated, "Kaylee is caring to every student in the school. She listens when spoken to and always responds with interests and enthusiasm." Several of Kaylee's peers mention her in their Terrific News nominations. Kaylee is a wholesome person who believes everyone is worthy to feel as good about themselves as she does.

Zoe Harrison – Zoe was recommended as a Kid of Character by her fourth grade teacher Mrs. Hearn. Mrs. Hearn stated, "Zoe is our representative for the caring pillar because she is kind to everyone. She is helpful if someone has been absent and needs help catching up. She is always considerate of others and thinks about their feelings."



The Six Pillars of Character

Trustworthiness

e

R espect

R esponsibility

i

F airness

i

C aring

C itizenship

TeRRiFiCC Times By Mrs. Rouse continued

Kids of Character cont....

Andrew Hermesen – Andrew was selected as a Kid of Character by his fourth grade teacher Mrs. Matthiesen. Andrew is always kind to others. He likes to help others if he can. He is always very polite, uses good manners, and likes to share his experiences. Mrs. Matthiesen stated, “Andrew has never said an unkind word in class or been upset about anything asked of him. He shows consideration and thoughtfulness towards others. I appreciate his caring attitude towards all others and towards his learning.”

Christian Blad – Christian was chosen to represent Mrs. Kineth’s fifth grade class as a Kid of Character. Christian shows he cares by helping anyone who asks. He also assists with class activities. He is very friendly and always has a kind word to say with a smile. Christian looks out for others and tries to include everyone in recess games. “He shows he cares by praising others for their good work. Christian is a good model for other classmates to follow,” commented Mrs. Kineth.

Alexis Brown – Alexis is a fifth grade student in Miss Offerman’s class. Alexis is a quiet individual but is someone who is kind and considerate towards her classmates and adults in the building. Miss Offerman stated, “Alexis is a Kid of Character because she works extremely hard, follows directions, and is a good role model for others.”

Jill Halstead – Jill is a fifth grade student in Mr. Buresh’s class. Jill is a kind and compassionate student. She is always eager to help others and lend a helping hand, when needed. “In addition to being caring, Jill exhibits all of the Pillars of Character on a daily basis,” praised Mrs. Unwin.

Ashley Hettinger – Ashley was nominated for Kid of Character by her fifth grade teacher Mr. Buresh. Ashley is a compassionate, kind, and considerate student. She is never mean or inconsiderate to her classmates. Mr. Buresh commented, “Ashley is always willing to comfort a friend in need, and try to help make their lives better because she knows it is the right thing to do. Ashley is a Kid of Character!”

Jared Snyder – Jared was selected to represent Mrs. Smith’s fifth grade class for the Caring pillar. Jared is compassionate and kind. “He quietly has given both of his time and possessions to another student because he knew he could make a difference in that child’s life. Jared did not do this for any accolade, he did this kindness because he knew he could help,” commented Mrs. Smith.

Madisan Teel – Madisan is a fifth grade student in Mrs. Smith’s class. Madisan is a Kid of Character because she thinks of others and is compassionate. Miss Maas stated, “Madisan tries to help everyone out in my classroom.”

Kyle Zieser – Kyle was selected by his fifth grade teacher Miss Offerman. Kyle is a Kid of Character because he truly does have a huge, loving heart. “He is a great student to have in class and is very caring and kind towards his classmates. He’s a fun student, lovely person to have in class,” commended Miss Offerman.

Thank You!

*A special
thank you to
McDonald's,
Movie
Gallery,
Pizza Ranch,
Subway,
and
all other
Character
Counts
supporters!*

TeRRiFiCC Times

By Mrs. Rouse continued

Raffle Winners

Other students at West Elementary were entered in a raffle. Students were entered into the raffle if they were recognized by classmates for CARING behaviors. Raffle winners took home a pencil, candy, and their choice of a McDonald's free ice cream cone, a Movie Gallery free rental, or a free Subway cookie. The following students received raffle prizes:

Jenna Price
Austin Lange
Michael Coonrad
Arieana Ajruloski
Cole Turner
Katelynne Coonrad
Mason Wood
Elizabeth Lake
Tayt Johnson
Brittany Carlin
Alissa Myers
Cassidy Martenson
Chloe Henningson
Jackie Huang
Courtney Bailey
Ashish Upadhyay
Lucy Martinez
Shelby Lehman
Marshall Gibbs
Addie Bolles
Mady Johanningmeir



Classroom of Character

Classroom of Character awards were given at the Character Counts assembly on Friday, January 18. The winning classrooms received the Classroom of Character sign, a free recess, the game Cadoo, and a movie and popcorn celebration. The winners are.....

3rd Grade – Mrs. Black's Class

4th Grade – Mrs. Mueller's Class

5th Grade – Mrs. Kinseth's Class

What pillar is next?

The next pillar of character West Elementary will be striving to meet is TRUSTWORTHINESS. Be sure to write a TeRRiFiCC News to show your appreciation for a student or class that is demonstrating the TRUSTWORTHY pillar of character.



THE SIX
PILLARS OF
CHARACTER™

Hello from the Middle School! By Dave L. Ross, Principal

Since the last communication there have been a few noteworthy events at the Middle School. The Holiday Celebration took place. Miss Dietzenbach worked extremely hard to make the holiday special for the students. The Commons was decorated as only she can with assistance from Mrs. Wulfekuhle and the staff had a GREAT time being waiters, servers, and bussing tables for the students. Miss Duritsa oversaw the creation of an excellent meal complete with ice cream for them as well. The only damper on the day was that the two-hour fog delay forced us to cancel the planned outing to see *National Treasure II* on opening day, but we were able to salvage the "Seventh Annual Dinner and Movie" by playing the Disney film *Ratatouille* in the Media Center and broadcasting it throughout the school. The staff also participated in the holiday spirit as well by sharing gifts, food and fun throughout the week. The Middle School truly is a place where people



Dave Ross

care about each other and care about making a positive impact.

On January 11th the Middle School Staff participated in an all-day Professional Development Day. The day consisted of initially fleshing out future professional development plans. Then Rusti Sparks from AEA 267 explained Ruby Paine's Framework for Poverty to the staff, followed by a lively discussion. Next, teachers broke up into grade level groups to discuss how they could use their new information to positively impact shared students. After that, the teachers viewed a PowerPoint presentation on Differentiated Teaching and discovered their own learning preferences in an on-line evaluation. They were encouraged to use this evaluation with

their own students so they could discover what styles of learners they had in each of their classes. Then Mrs. Hilbert and Miss Dietzenbach shared reading strategies in the content areas and provided many tools and handouts for the teachers to use in the coming months. Finally, the teachers were tasked with creating a ten-minute classroom mini-lesson incorporating at least three of the concepts or tools that they had been introduced to through out the day. In Learning Teams the teachers then presented their lessons to each other with the goal of sharing ideas that could be used by all.

On a final note boys' basketball has their opening game with Benton on January 17th with the seventh grade visiting and the eighth grade hosting with an exciting season anticipated by all. Please help support our team, help support our school and as always

YOGOWYPI!

Dave L. Ross

February

- 1
ITBS Testing
- 5
ITBS Testing
BBB Marion @ 4:15p.m.
7th Indee; 8th Marion
- 7
ITBS Testing
- 8
6th Grade Solo Contest
- 9
7th & 8th Grade Solo Contest
- 11
BBB Waterloo Hoover @ 4:15p.m.
7th Indee; 8th Hoover
- 12
BBB CPU @ 4:15
7th Urbana; 8th Indee
- 13
1:00 Dismissal
Staff Development
- 14
BBB Vinton-Shellsburg @ 4:15p.m.
7th Indee; 8th Vinton
- 19
Life Touch Spring Pictures
- 22
Coe Jazz Summit
- 27
1:00 Dismissal
Staff Development
- 28
End of Trimester 2

7th Grade Social Studies by Mr. Carey

The 7th grade social studies 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 western hemisphere. Currently the students are studying Europe. Overall the 7th graders have been enjoyable and pleasant students to have in the classroom.

Recently the 7th grade students have participated in the national geography bee. The 10 students who qualified for the final round were: Andrew Mieborg, Nick Halverson, Mackenzie Black, Chloe Kaiser, Kristin Rouse, Curtis Rosauer, Connor Sherrets, Nicole VanDeWalle, Alan Sturtz, Clark Corkery. The winner of the final round was Andrew Mieborg, making him the geography bee champion. He has received his medal and submitted his exam to the state. It is possible that Andrew may get the chance to compete at the state or national competition.

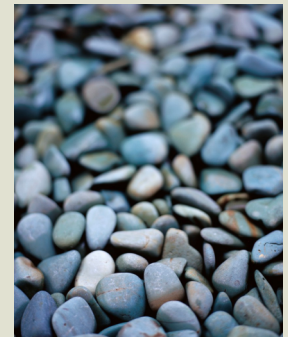


Eighth Grade Earth Science by Paul Brown

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.



Professional Development, In-Service, Staff Development

What is it and Why is it Important?

By Mary Cooksley

In education we have many names and acronyms for every facet of what we do. You may have heard of such things as AYP, APR, ITED, ITBS, CSIP, IPDM, CCC, SAC, PD, ETCí .. one might need a course or seminar just to learn what all the jargon means. Other terms or jargon we use are the terms "professional development", "in-service", "Staff Development" and "Learning Team time". What is the difference and what is the definition of them?

What is Professional Development – is it the same as in-service or staff development?

Professional development tends to get associated with going to a conference somewhere away from the district. The attendee goes to sessions and learns a wide variety of things from several sessions. Teachers gather ideas and determine what is worthwhile for their classroom and implement as appropriate. In-service tends to get associated with the early release time district's set aside for teachers to "learn" and determine management type of items. Learning Team time is when teachers collaborate with colleagues to adjust what they do in their classroom to meet their students' needs.

When does Professional Development take place?

In Independence Community Schools, professional development, in-service, staff development and Learning Team time mean the same thing ó they are times for teachers to gain additional knowledge, skills and expertise in the area of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Our district has chosen to utilize early release days in the calendar to schedule the learning opportunities for our teachers. We have, this year and in the past, scheduled two full days when students do not attend school for these learning opportunities to take place. In fact, in the Spring is when teachers attended a reading conference and implemented what they learned at the conference. This year the same opportunity exists for our teachers ó some are attending a conference while others are visiting other schools to analyze their programs.

If teachers are professionals, why don't they learn on their own time?

It is important to have professional development ó it provides additional knowledge, skills, collaborative time, and training necessary in order to make sure we are providing the best curriculum and instruction to our students. The only way to keep pace with the changing student population and their needs is to be constantly learning and integrating new methods of instruction. Like any occupation, training and education of the workforce is vital to maintaining the standards and expectations of the product ó in our case, students and their success. Time is always a factor in education ó there never seems to be enough time with our students and we do not seem to have enough time, but utilizing the organized time to accomplish the considerable amount of work needing to be completed. Most teachers still use "their own time" to grade, plan lessons, and prepare materials for their students.

If teachers are spending more time on professional development, is your child being shortchanged by not getting as much time with their teacher?

Since early release days are scheduled into the calendar, teachers can plan their lessons around the professional development opportunities. Curriculum is adjusted as needed and students still are learning the necessary content to be successful. Students receive the benefit of a teacher with increased skill and strategies which will enhance their educational experience. Quality Professional Development and implementation of the newly acquired skills only increases the chances for student learning and achievement. In fact, research shows the most effective schools focus heavily on professional development and as a result have higher student achievement than those schools not focusing their time and energy on professional development.

News from the IHS By Karl Kurt, Principal

End of Terms

*2nd term is scheduled to end on 1-18-08. This is an adjusted day due to the school cancellations we have had for snow.

*3rd term is scheduled to end on 3-20-08. This is the day before we are off for Spring Break.

Note: The district calendar committee, which is made up of staff, parents, and administration from all levels has looked for ways to build in snow days for the 2008-2009 school calendar.

Professional Development

*During the professional development day on 1-11-08. The Independence High School staff was introduced to the R4 framework. The 4 R's are Rigor, Relevance, Reflection, and Relationships. We viewed a pod cast of William Daggett who created the R4 framework, and we watched a video about the integration of technology into the curriculum. Each learning team at the high school was given time to discuss how they could improve the rigor and/or relevance for a classroom lesson.

Meeting with Class of 2009

*We are finishing up with meeting with the Class of 2009. We sat down with each student individually to discuss their plans after they graduate. We are working to help ensure that they have an idea of what they want to accomplish, and helping them map out the best path to achieve their goals. We hope that they take challenging courses during their senior year, and have a plan for taking the ACT or Compass test, and are looking at scheduling campus visits for this spring, and internships for next year as well.

ITEDs

Iowa Tests of Educational Development are around the corner. We are scheduled to take them at the High School on the 26th, 27th, and 28th of February.

Hawkeye Community College

The current sophomore class will also be touring the Hawkeye campus in Waterloo, IA on February 5th.

We will be bussing the students from Independence High School and they will have the opportunity to tour Hawkeye campus, hear about their various programs and course offerings, and the students will also take the Compass test. Lunch will also be provided for our students. We appreciate Hawkeye Community College providing this service at no cost to the district.

We believe this field trip will be a great opportunity for all our students. I believe this experience will underscore the importance of taking upper level courses during their junior and senior years to better prepare them for success at college.

If they plan on attending a 2-year college our students will get a chance to see the various programs that are offered, and they will also take the Compass test, which will enable them to see where they stand for the entrance requirements for Hawkeye and Kirkwood. If they do not score at a specific level on the Compass test then Kirkwood and Hawkeye require you to take remedial courses. These remedial courses cost additional money and they do not count toward the completion of your 2-year program. Again, I believe the scores achieved will underscore the importance of taking upper level courses during their Junior and senior years to better prepare them for success at community college, further education, and the workplace.

If some students do not plan on attending a 2 or 4-year college, then we hope the field trip will enable them to see a program that they may be interested in pursuing for a career.

Thanks,

Karl Kurt

Principal

Independence High School

February Calendar

- 1 – JV /V GBB (H)
Maquoketa
- 9th GBB (H) Maquoketa
- JV/V BBB at Maquoketa
- 2 – WR - Sectionals at
LaPorte City
- 4 – BBB (H) Olewain
- 5 – WR Regionals Duals
- JV/V GBB (H) Vinton-
Shellsburg
- 9th GBB (H) Vinton-
Shellsburg
- JV/V BBB at Vinton-
Shellsburg
- 9th BBB at Vinton-
Shellsburg
- 7 – GBB (H) Oelwein
- 8 – JV/V GBB at West
Delaware
- 9th GBB at West
Delaware
- JV/V BBB (H) Central
De Witt
- 9th BBB (H) Central
De Witt
- 9 – WR - Districts -
Grinnell
- 13 – 1:00 Dismissal
Staff Development
State Wrestling
- 14 – H.S. Conferences
3:45-7:30 p.m.
State Wrestling
- JV/V BBB (H) West
Delaware
- 9th BBB (H) West
Delaware
- 15 – State Wrestling
- 16 – State Wrestling
- 23 – State Wrestling
Duals
- 26 – HS ITED's
- 27 – 1:00 Dismissal
HS ITED's
- 28 – HS ITED's

Independence Community Schools

**Independence Community
School District**

1207 1st Street West
Independence, Iowa, 50644

Phone: 319-334-7400
Fax: 319-334-7404

District Mission:

Educating people to be life-long learners and respectful, responsible citizens

District Vision:

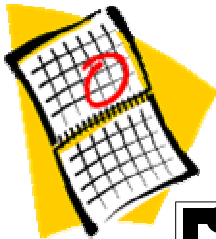
Creating a climate in which individuals of the ICSD will strive to become effective communicators, problem solvers, responsible citizens, and productive people

District Values:

<i>Compassion</i>	<i>Perseverance</i>
<i>Honesty</i>	<i>Respect</i>
<i>Integrity</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
<i>Responsibility</i>	

We're on the Web

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



Mark Your Calendars!

- * February 13th - 1:00 Dismissal — Staff Development
- * February 19th - Tips - n' - Tools for Parents Night
- * February 21st - Kindergarten Registration
- * February 27th - 1:00 Dismissal — Staff Development
- * March 3rd - No School
- * March 4th - 2 Hour Late Start