

Volume 2 Issue 5  
January, 2008

### District Events:

#### January 9th

1:00 Early Release

#### January 11th

No School

#### January 16th

CCC Meeting

#### January 17th

Tips - n' - Tools for

Parents Night

5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Middle School

#### January 23rd

1:00 Early Release

#### February 21st

Kindergarten

Registration

#### March 10-11

Kindergarten Roundup

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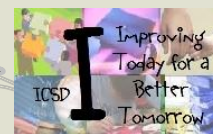
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## Snow Make Up Days

By Devin Embray, Superintendent

Greetings! And Happy New Year!! The Independence Community School District has had a rough start to the winter season; especially when we have missed four days of school prior to the "Official" start of winter, which was December 22, 2008. Three days were missed due to ice and snow, while one was for fog. We are cautiously optimistic that this is not a sign that our winter will be full of inclement days. We will make up these days at the end of the current calendar while adjusting the terms to balance out the trimesters and terms at the Middle and High School levels. As of right now the four snow make up days are May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. The last day of school is scheduled for May 29, 2008. In reference to when we decide to delay school we usually

make that decision by 6:00 A.M. We have a two hour delay that we have utilized for several years. It has served us well and students can still obtain a quality day of instruction. If the delay would be for more than two hours, the quality of the day for students is jeopardized in my opinion. If we are ever in doubt about whether or not we should go late or cancel, the decision will be made on the ability of our drivers to safely transport students to and from school. Should we see that the weather should change for the worse while students are in school we will make decisions in a manner that would be in the best interest of students. That may mean that we dismiss early or hold students until the weather situation passes and we can begin transporting students.



We will not be using a hard surface road procedure unless the county roads are embargoed by the County Supervisors. Should that happen, we will communicate possible pick up points for your child if you are affected by the road closure. We appreciate your willingness to work with us to ensure safe transport of your child to and from school. Should you have any questions, comments, or concerns related to this topic or others, please do not hesitate in contacting me at the school. 319-334-7400.

## Writing Contest for Students – Honors Fathers

Taken from *Reading Today* 6 January 2008

To celebrate the publication in October 2008 of *One Million Men and Me* by Kelly Starling Lyons, a book commemorating the 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Million Man March, publisher Just Us Books is sponsoring "My Most Memorable Moment With My Father", a nationwide writing contest for elementary school youth across the United States.

The contest is open to 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students, and entries can be prose or poetry. Prizes will be given for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place. The entry deadline is February 28, 2008. For details visit the Just US books website at

[www.justusbooks.com](http://www.justusbooks.com)



## December Fish! Nominees

Leah Martinson – Middle School Special Education Associate

Charmaine Wickwire – Business Manager

Dave Morkel 6 High School Physical Education teacher



## **Join Independence Community Schools**

for

**The 2<sup>nd</sup>**

## **Tips – n’ – Tools for Parents Night**

**Thursday January 17, 2008**

Independence Middle School

**5:30 – Registration – 8:30 – Door Prizes Given**

### **Featured Presenters:**

**Bob Kremer, Cedar Falls Police Office**

#### **“Internet Safety”**

This will be a candid look at what your children experience and the dangers they may encounter. Learn ways to keep your children safe while on-line!

**Jim Garnett**

#### **“SMART Discipline”**

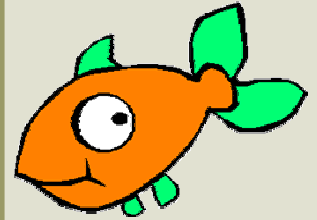
Learn strategies for disciplining your children. This will be a hands-on, practical session. A free workbook will be given to the 1<sup>st</sup> 20 participants in the session

#### **Other possible sessions will include:**

- ◆ Attention Deficit Hyper-Activity Disorder – what it is and how to help the child who is diagnosed
  - ◆ Understanding the Middle School Student
  - ◆ Understanding All Those Test Scores!
- ◆ Utilizing the on-line Grade Book – the Parent Portal
- ◆ Internet Scams - how to know when you are being scammed

*All Parents are encouraged and invited to attend!*

**Food, Free On-Sight Child-Care, and Door Prizes**



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

Call Mary at  
334-7400

## **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

**Keep Reading – Do NOT let the title make you think this will be a boring and dry article!**  
**(It may be, but read it anyway!)**

Students will be taking the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED) later this month or in February. When the results come back later in the school year parents find out what percentile their children scored at. For instance, you may find that your child scored in the 76<sup>th</sup> percentile or the 43<sup>rd</sup> percentile or the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile. The higher the percentile rank, the higher the score on the test. But what exactly does that mean? If you compared your child's score this year to their score from last year, what would you learn or know about your child's academic progress?

### **Still with me?**

If your child scored in the 76<sup>th</sup> percentile one year and then scored in the 76<sup>th</sup> 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 is 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 <sup>rd</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<u>14 pts</u> 4 <sup>th</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<u>13 pts</u> 5 <sup>th</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<u>12 pts</u> 6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<u>12 pts</u> 7 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<u>10 pts</u> 8 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<u>9 pts</u> 9 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<u>7 pts</u> 10 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup> Grade

### **What does this mean to you?**

When you get your child's score this spring is find out what their National Standard Score (NSS) is and then look at this chart is 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 is 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.

### **Did I lose you? ..... I tried, but test scores are test scores! Stay tuned for more next month.**

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 Eleventh Graders in Reading Comprehension (This Year's Graduating Class)

Grade	As 8 <sup>th</sup> Graders	As 9 <sup>th</sup> Graders	As 10 <sup>th</sup> Graders	As 11 <sup>th</sup> Graders
NSS	250.1	271	283.5	295.1
Growth in points		20.9	12.6	11.5
Achieved Growth by %		<u>209%</u>	<u>140.0%</u>	<u>164.3%</u>

This is a fantastic amount of growth!  
Anything over 100% is very good!

### 2006-2007 5<sup>th</sup> Graders in Reading Comprehension (This Year's 6<sup>th</sup> Graders)

Grade	As 3 <sup>rd</sup> Graders	As 4 <sup>th</sup> Graders	As 5 <sup>th</sup> Graders
NSS	190.3	214.2	228.1
Growth in points		23.9	13.9
Achieved Growth by %		<u>265.6%</u>	<u>198.6%</u>

This is a fantastic amount of growth! This  
appears to be a strong academic group.

### 2006-2007 8<sup>th</sup> Graders in Reading Comprehension (This Year's 8<sup>th</sup> Graders)

Grade	As 4 <sup>th</sup> Graders	As 5 <sup>th</sup> Graders	As 6 <sup>th</sup> Graders	As 7 <sup>th</sup> Graders
NSS	208.6	227.2	231	244.5
Growth in points		18.7	3.8	13.4
Achieved Growth by %		<u>187%</u>	<u>42.2%</u>	<u>191.4%</u>

Notice as 6<sup>th</sup> Graders  
they did not grow a  
minimum of 100% -  
we see this trend and  
are researching why  
this is occurring.  
The encouraging  
information is they  
recovered in  
7<sup>th</sup> grade.



## Why is reading at home important?

Parents who read to their children at home have:

- ◆ Higher phonemic awareness skills
- ◆ Higher decoding skills
- ◆ Higher reading achievement in the elementary grades
- ◆ Advanced oral language development
- ◆ Maintained higher achievement over time
- ◆ Increased vocabulary development

## How to encourage Independent Reading at Home

1. Keep it simple ó ease of implementation
2. Have options ó read aloud and silent to them and with them
3. Provide Texts or Booklists ó see below for suggestions
4. Keep up with children's literature and use children's interest to make book recommendations ó see the websites to keep up-to-date



## Great Websites for Learning About Children's Literature

[www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/childrensnoteable/notablecbooklist/currentnotable.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/childrensnoteable/notablecbooklist/currentnotable.htm)

Notable children's books, shared by the American Library Association

[www.monroe.lib.in.us/childrens/booklists.html](http://www.monroe.lib.in.us/childrens/booklists.html)

A list of web-based booklists for children

[www.reading.org/resources/tools/choices\\_childrens.html](http://www.reading.org/resources/tools/choices_childrens.html)

List of good books selected by children themselves

[www.nea.org/readacross/resources/catalist.html](http://www.nea.org/readacross/resources/catalist.html)

Teacher's top 100 books, compiled by the National Education Association

[www.hbook.com/booklists/default.asp](http://www.hbook.com/booklists/default.asp)

The Horn Book's list of recommended children's literature

[www.cbcbooks.org/readinglists/childrenschoices/booklists.html](http://www.cbcbooks.org/readinglists/childrenschoices/booklists.html)

The Children's Book Council book lists



## Helping Your Child Succeed

### How the Arts Can Help Your Child:

The Arts encompass a wide range of disciplines ó visual arts, performing arts, language arts, and on, and on.

The Arts enrich your child's education and is a basic part of education. The following are a few examples of how a child who studies some form of Art can improve:

⇒ Boosts reading, writing and math skills!

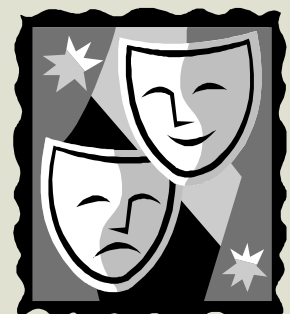
⇒ Enhances your child's ability to learn!

⇒ Learns skills that will aid in his or her future success, including employment

**If your school is not able to offer the arts, try to find a program in your community, such as:**

⇒ Visit art museums and attend plays and musicals, vocal and instrumental concerts, or even just the circus

⇒ Participate in local cultural festivals or historical fairs



## Principal's Corner - Mary Jean Blaisdell

Happy New Year! We hope that you enjoyed the holidays and the time with family and friends.

December was a busy month. East Elementary held its Winter Vocal Music Program and all the children performed so well for their family and friends!

We again held Respect & Protect assemblies with all students at East Elementary to remind them of our policy and rules. It would be a good time for parents to remind students of their expectations for student behavior as well at this time. We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to make our buildings safe and happy places for students to be.

During January, we will have our second set of assessments at the K-2 level. These tests will begin January 28 and continue through February 1. These assessments measure instructional reading level and comprehension, fluency, and phonemic awareness. Math facts and computation are also measured at this

time. The results of these tests will be shared at conference time in March.

Don't forget! There will be another Tips - n' Tools for Parents Night on January 17 starting at 5:30. Jim Garnet will be there to present Smart Discipline for Parents. He is an excellent speaker who will present information parents can use with children of any age in the household!

Looking ahead, for those of you who have students who will be 5 years of age by September 15, 2008 and are anticipating enrolling that student in kindergarten, you may want to mark the following dates on your calendars:

### *Kindergarten Registration*

1:00-7:30 Thursday, February 21

### *Kindergarten Roundup*

Monday/Tuesday, March 10-11

Thanks,

Mary Jean Blaisdell

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### January

- Jan 3 School Resumes
- Jan 9 1:00 Dismissal In-service
- Jan 11 No School In-service
- Jan 17 Tips - n' Tools for Parents Night 5:30 p.m. @ MS
- Jan 23 1:00 Dismissal In-service
- Jan 28-Feb 1 K-2 Testing

### February

- Feb 13 1:00 Dismissal In-service
- Feb 21 Kindergarten Registration 1:00-7:30
- Feb 27 1:00 Dismissal In-service

## Kindergarten Corner: Winter Comes to Kindergarten

January will bring a study of cold weather things: polar bears, mittens, penguins, and SNOW! We will enjoy many hands on experiences with these topics. Sondra Cabell, Interpretive naturalist, and her helper, Jessica, from Fontana Park, will come to East to share an activity that teaches students about protecting their bodies against the cold weather. During the winter months young children struggle with the task of dressing themselves with warm clothing. Allow your child the opportunity to complete this task on his/her own.

Students are growing and learning to manage their own work habits (working independently, following directions & using time wisely.) Academic skills will focus on letter & sound relationships to build early reading skills as well as develop our abilities to write our ideas. Number readiness (counting, naming and writing numbers to 20) is also an area of emphasis. Kindergarten students are looking forward to celebrating 100 days of school this month (if we don't have too many snow days!) We will participate in many activities involving 100.



Nathaniel uses his ears like a bat to listen for sounds while trying to capture Kirsten, the bug.

## 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.

## Second Grade Scene: Happy New Year!!!

Happy New Year!!! We hope that your family had a relaxing holiday break. January is a busy month in second grade. Students need to continue to work hard on their addition facts as we are progressing toward larger, more difficult addition concepts. Basic subtraction facts should also be practiced. Our winter CBM testing takes place this month. It is a fun time to reflect on how much the students have learned already this year! We will be celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, as well as, the 100th day of school. Please keep encouraging your child to read each day. We appreciate your support!

## 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!**

# You're Invited to....

## “SMART Discipline”

A seminar for parents  
of students K-12

Just answer this...would you come out of your snug home for a guaranteed way to stop the fighting and bickering between your kids...or, to get your kids to do what you ask the first time (without screaming at the top of your lungs)?

If your answer is yes, have we got a great deal for you! We're bringing the nationally acclaimed SMART Discipline workshop to Independence. What an event it's going to be! You'll laugh yourselves silly at the plight of parenthood and learn guaranteed ways to boost self-esteem (even in negative kids).

This seminar will be a part of the  
**Tips - n' - Tools for Parents Night on:**  
**Thursday, January 17, starting at 5:30 p.m.**  
**at the Middle School.**

**FREE SEMINAR      Free Child Care Available**

***Tips - n' - Tools  
for Parents  
Night  
Thursday,  
January 17,  
starting at  
5:30 p.m.  
at the  
Middle School.***

## JANUARY—National Mentoring Month!!

Exciting events are planned both nationally and locally in January to bring focus to Mentoring!! Last month, our mentees worked on posters showing them doing things with their mentor. In January, posters judged as being finalists, will be on display at BankIowa where the public is encouraged to vote for their favorites. The posters voted most popular by the public from East Elementary, West Elementary and Middle School will receive a prize. Winners will be announced on January 26<sup>th</sup> at the Starlight Cinema where Bigs (mentors), Littles (mentees) and BankIowa employees and their families will enjoy a free showing of "Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium". BankIowa's Casual for a Cause Fund sponsors this movie.

In other news....we have a large number of children waiting for mentors.... 21 to be exact! Of that, many, many male mentors are needed. 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 on a positive note! Call Val Maximovich at 334-3353.



December 2007



Dear Parents,

With your children in school and hopefully off to the another successful year, Iowa KidsNet would like to inform you and your family about an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of other Iowa children.

Iowa KidsNet is the statewide collaboration of agencies responsible for the recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families in Iowa. In addition to finding families who want to explore the possibilities of foster care and adoption, Iowa KidsNet provides ongoing support to each family . from advocating for the child in school to providing services to the family in their home. On any given day, over 4,500 Iowa kids need a foster home. These children need foster or adoptive parents who will provide love, support, and will help them reach their potential for greatness.

We recognize the wonderful love and support you provide to your own children as they pursue their education and their dreams. If your family has extra room in your home and your heart to also encourage other Iowa children and teens, please consider becoming a foster or adoptive parent. Being a foster parent means providing support and temporary care to children who need a safe place to live while they wait to reunite with their birth families or find a new adoptive family.

For more information about becoming a foster or adoptive parent in Iowa, please visit [www.iowakidsnet.com](http://www.iowakidsnet.com) or call 1.800.243.0756. You can sign up for an orientation session where you can ask questions and learn more about Iowa's foster care system. You can also visit our website to meet and read about Iowa children who are waiting for a family like you.

We hope you'll consider joining Iowa KidsNet in finding safe, permanent and loving homes for Iowa children.

Sincerely,

Anne Gruenewald, Iowa KidsNet CEO



*"Iowa KidsNet  
is the  
statewide  
collaboration  
of agencies  
responsible  
for the  
recruitment  
and retention  
of foster  
and adoptive  
families in  
Iowa. ....  
On any given  
day,  
over 4,500  
Iowa kids  
need a  
foster home."*



## the bottom line By Josh Lyons, Principal

It's hard to believe the year is almost half over with many things yet to accomplish. I have been absolutely impressed with the work the students have been accomplishing and their attitudes toward the many challenges they are presented on a daily basis. When walking into all of the classrooms, the kids are working extremely hard, but yet take time out to say hello and give me a smile.

Take time to congratulate your kids for their hard work and for making West Elementary a great place to be. They have taken a great deal of pride in the Character Counts! program this year and have worked to put into practice responsibility, caring, trustworthiness, citizenship,

fairness, and respect. I see such caring acts being committed to one another, and not just to earn points or a prize, but because they really do care about other students. I am very proud of their accomplishments.

As we continue to push through to the end of the year, please keep encouraging your children to do the best they can and to be their cheerleaders through the ups and downs of their learning. Not all success is easy, especially when dealing with all the challenges that are presented academically as well as socially. Be proud of your children's accomplishments and take time out to celebrate who they are!

### ***Iowa Test of Basic Skills***

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) will be taken during the first week of February. This is usually a time of high stress for some students, especially due to the fact that these tests are timed. The information from this test is valuable not only for reporting to the state, but providing us with another tool to pinpoint areas that are both strengths and weaknesses in the area of student achievement. During the month of January we will be preparing students for the test by providing practice opportunities and test-taking strategies for during the test. We will also send home some tips for you to talk with your student about as it pertains to tests and how to be prepared for testing days.



## The Six Pillars of Character

T rustworthiness  
e

R espect

R esponsibility

i

F airness

i

C aring

C itizenship

## TeRRiFiCC Times By Mrs. Rouse

*Character Counts News from West Elementary December 2007*

### **Responsibility Pillar — Kids of Character**



Ashley Cappel, Elizabeth Gonzales, Jacob Crawford, Daniel Parmer, Cody Gerken, Kara Davison, Matthew McMillan, Mitchell Ohl, Ross Thedens, Ally Flaucher, Madison Phelps, John Gates, Suzan Wegmuller, Shaelyn McEnany

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

other students at West Elementary were entered in a raffle. Students were entered into the raffle if they were recognized by classmates for RESPONSIBLE behaviors. Raffle winners took home a pencil and their choice of a McDonald's free ice cream cone, a Movie Gallery free rental, or a free Subway cookie. Earlier in the month, one person from each class (whose name was in the raffle) won a \$4.00 gift certificate to the Book Fair.

### **Kids of Character**

**Ashley Cappel** – Ashley, a third grade student, was nominated by Mrs. Black. Mrs. Black stated, "Ashley is an extremely responsible young lady. She faithfully does everything that she is asked to do, and she does her best! She goes about doing her tasks quietly, but responsibly. Ashley is the person that we can rely on to do what needs to be done."

## TeRRiFiCC Times By Mrs. Rouse continued

### Kids of Character cont....

**Jacob Crawford** – Jacob was nominated by his third grade teacher, Mrs. Wendling. Jacob is a Kid of Character because he is always polite to everyone. Mrs. Wendling selected Jacob for the RESPONSIBILITY pillar because “he has a good sense of what is right and what is wrong.”

**Cody Gerken** – Cody was selected to represent Ms. Bolger’s third grade classroom for the RESPONSIBILITY pillar. Cody demonstrated responsibility after he returned to school from being ill. Cody made up work he missed without complaint. Ms. Bolger stated, “Cody strives for quality work.”

**Elizabeth Gonzales** – Elizabeth is a third grade student in Mrs. Spinler’s class. Elizabeth demonstrates that she is responsible each day. She uses her class time wisely and has read many AR books and completed several AR math objectives. Mrs. Unwin stated, “Elizabeth completes assignments on time and brings her homework back each morning.”

**Daniel Parmer** – Daniel was nominated for Kid of Character by his third grade teacher, Mrs. Spinler. Daniel demonstrates responsibility by listening in class, completing his work, and participating in discussions. “Daniel always tries to do his best,” commented Mrs. Spinler.

**Kara Davison** – Kara was selected to represent Mrs. Grover’s fourth grade class for the pillar of RESPONSIBILITY. Kara is a Kid of Character because she tries hard and completes her work on time. She can be counted on to use her time wisely and to help other students. Kara’s positive attitude is a great benefit to the class and she is a joy to be around.

**Matthew McMillan** – Matt, a fourth grade student, was nominated by his teacher Mrs. Hearn. Matt was selected for the RESPONSIBILITY pillar because he completes his work when he misses class for Project Think or working at the Mini Mustang bank. Matt is a careful worker that always completes his work, usually ahead of schedule. Also, he is very helpful to his classmates.

**Mitchell Ohl** – Mitchell is a fourth grade student in Mrs. Matthiesen’s class. Mitchell demonstrates the pillar of RESPONSIBILITY by always completing assignments and making sure it is done well. He strives to learn and to achieve good grades. Mitchell likes to do extra work. He helps around the room and makes sure he is doing exactly what is expected. Mrs. Matthiesen stated, “Mitchell is very interested in learning and being the best that he can be.”

**Ross Thedens** – Ross, a fourth grade student, was recommended for Kid of Character by his teacher Mrs. Mueller. “Ross is a very conscientious worker, always gives 110%, takes care of missed work, consistent with homework, and takes his studies seriously,” praised Mrs. Mueller.

**Ally Flaucher** – Ally was selected for Kid of Character by her fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Smith. Ally is a responsible and meticulous student. She is consistently checking to make sure she has completed her work. Ally will appropriately assist other students in the room to help them catch up if they have been ill or missed a class during band lessons. When she is working in a group she will make sure all children are included. “When I think of Ally, the word conscientious springs up in my mind,” stated Mrs. Smith.

**Thank you!**

*A special thank*

*you to*

*Bank Iowa,*

*Cy & Charley's,*

*McDonald's,*

*Movie Gallery,*

*Pizza Ranch,*

*Subway,*

*Renita Wieland*

*and*

*Wieland &*

*Sons*

*Lumber Co.*

*for donating*

*funds for*

*Character*

*Counts prizes!*

## TeRRiFiCC Times By Mrs. Rouse continued

**John Gates** – John is a fifth grade student in Mr. Buresh's class. John was selected for Kid of Character because he works hard at trying to hand in his homework. Miss Maas appreciates John because "he takes responsibility for his actions."

**Shaelyn McEnany** – Shaelyn, a fifth grade student, was selected by her teacher, Mr. Buresh. Shae was chosen to represent her class because she takes responsibility for herself and for her actions. She always has her desk organized and her materials ready. Mr. Buresh stated, "Shaelyn is prepared and ready to do her best in class each day. She never blames others or complains about others. Shaelyn is a student of character!"

**Madison Phelps** – Madison's fifth grade teacher, Miss Offerman, stated, "Madison is a perfect choice for this month's character counts student. She exhibits many great qualities that I look for in a student to help lead the class. She is a student that I can rely on to help encourage and demonstrate appropriate behavior in and out of the classroom. Madison is a student that I am proud to have in my class." Additionally, Madison is a responsible individual who can always be counted on to turn in homework assignments on time, follow directions, be respectful towards classmates and teachers, understands the expectations and how to meet them.

**Suzan Wegmuller** – Suzi, a fifth grade student, was selected for Kid of Character by her teacher, Mrs. Kinseth. Suzi is very responsible in getting her work organized and completed on time. She works hard and is always willing to help out others in the classroom. "Suzi is very helpful and is always looking out for our class pets, too. She feeds and gives the gerbils water, cleans their cage, and lets them out for exercise. She is a great kid to have in class," commented Mrs. Kinseth.



### *Classroom of Character*

Classroom of Character awards were given at the Character Counts assembly on Thursday, November 29. The winning classrooms received the Classroom of Character sign, a free recess, a 20 Questions electronic game, and a movie and popcorn celebration. The winners are...

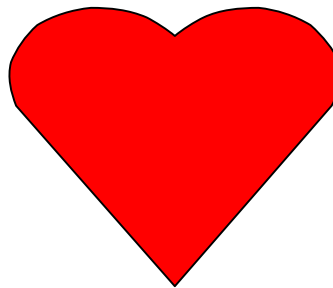
*3<sup>rd</sup> Grade – Mrs. Spinler's Class*

*4<sup>th</sup> Grade – Mrs. Matthiesen's Class*

*5<sup>th</sup> Grade – Mrs. Kinseth's Class*

### **What pillar is next?**

The next pillar of character West Elementary will be striving to meet is CARING. Let's work hard to show each and every person that West Elementary is a caring place where we show concern for others and give support to others that may need our help. Who have you seen being CARING? Be sure to write a TeRRiFiCC News to show your appreciation for that student.



### **Congratulations**

*Classroom of  
Character  
winners are...  
Mrs. Spinler's  
Class,  
Mrs.  
Matthiesen's  
Class  
and  
Mrs. Kinseth's  
Class.*

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

Winter has gotten an early start this year! The days are getting shorter and the nights longer. This trend will finally reverse on December 21st and I, for one am looking forward to the longer days that the Winter Solstice announces.

During the month of December the sixth graders finished MAP testing. MAP test scores can be used as one tool to gauge student progress. The MS is excited at the opportunity to utilize this tool more fully in the future. I cannot stress how helpful Mr. Noyes and Mrs. Hopkins were in making the testing process run smoothly. A "thank you" is also in order for the extra effort that Mrs. Crawford, Mrs. Henkes, Mrs. Berryhill and Mrs. Reed put forth in encouraging the students to do their best.

On December 7th the entire Middle School student body viewed the inspirational presentation entitled "Charting Your Course". The video presentation is a three-screen, speaker pounding, fast paced

learning experience promoting the positive goals and the utilization of a plan when charting the future. Students and faculty alike reacted favorably to the presentation.

The middle school Winter Concert planned for December twelfth had to be changed to the fourteenth of December due to a snow day. Although having the concert during the day was not the evening concert that was hoped for, the performance was well received by the student body as well as many parents and family members.



**Dave Ross**

The Middle School wrestling team finished its season on December 17th at Van Horne. The girls' basketball team has finished their season as well with the final games being played against Vinton on

December 18th. On January 15th the boys' basketball team opens their season with the seventh grade hosting West Delaware and the eighth grade visiting. No matter whether students sing, play an instrument, participate in sports or are engaged in some other school activity, being involved in school improves the middle school experience and the middle school student.

On December 17th the MS invited Prosecuting Attorney for the State department Sean Berry to speak on Internet Safety. Students were attentive and became more aware of the possibility of cyber-bullies and cyber-predators.

As the year comes to an end and the holidays draw near, I want to take just a moment to thank those many people who have helped me throughout the year. Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and

**YOGOWYPI!**

Dave L. Ross

## January

**3**  
Classes Resume

**9**  
1:00 Dismissal  
Staff Development

**11**  
No School  
Staff Development

**15**  
BBB West Delaware  
@ 4:00 p.m.  
7th—Indee;  
8th—Manchester

**17**  
BBB Benton Comm.  
@ 4:15 p.m.  
7th—Norway;  
8th—Indee

**22**  
BBB Marion @ 4:15p.m.  
7th—Marion;  
8th—Indee

**23**  
1:00 Dismissal  
Staff Development

**24**  
BBB Vinton-Shellsburg  
@ 4:15 p.m.  
7th—Vinton;  
8th - Indee

**29**  
BBB CPU @ 4:15 p.m.  
7th—Indee;  
8th—Urbana

**31**  
BBB Dyersville-  
Beckman @ 4:15 p.m.  
7th—Dyersville;  
8th—Indee



## 6th Grade Science by Jan Reed

Our Christmas break is past, and the 6th graders are settled in for a new year of learning and fun. They are thankful that 2008 brings us an extra day in February in hopes to get out of school before June! Variables and controlled experiments seem to be lessons from the past, but the students are learning that science and life never drop these lessons. From cooking to baseball to shampoo, life is full of variables. Our Wisconsin Fast Plants have completed their cycle, and we have harvested the tiny seeds for next year's 6th graders. We have started our simple machines unit with the study of levers. In January, Mrs. Reed is attending a Winter Solstice to learn new ideas for our environmental units. She is going to experience a mini MRF!! The 6th graders will have an all day field trip to Fontana on May 7th, and we will need some parent chaperones. Please send a note with your student to let me know that you would enjoy this opportunity! Thanks.

## Extended Reading By Ronda Hilbert

It is hard to believe that the first trimester has passed. It is been a very busy first part of the year. This is my second year having the opportunity to teach Extended Reading at Middle School. Students that have scored below the 41st percentile on reading comprehension are scheduled into this class for one trimester. Although we call it Extended Reading at Middle School, it is more commonly known as Second Chance Reading for Struggling Readers. It is not a program but rather course work that encompasses research based reading strategies for secondary students. There are specific skills that are worked on during this 12 week course: comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, independent reading, graphic organizers, writing and inferential thinking, with the greatest emphasis being placed on improving the comprehension of each student. Last year students in this course showed growth on Iowa Test of Basic Skills. Second Chance Reading for Struggling Readers is course work the state, as well as others, has agreed is an intervention to improve reading scores following legislation of No Child Left Behind. If you ever have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call me at school or e-mail me - rhilbert@independence.k12.ia.us.

## Middle and High School TAG News by Linda Deutmeyer

**TIME** magazine ran an article called "The Genius" in the August 27th 2007 issue saying, "It doesn't take an Einstein to see that our schools are failing our smartest kids. Research shows that U.S. Schools spend \$8 billion on the mentally challenged, and just 10% of that on our gifted students." Then the article went on to propose some solutions.

I believe we have some solutions at our Independence Schools with the excellent programs we participate in with our gifted students. Just this year Cindy Thompson and Deleen Donnelly drove 14 of our middle school students to a **Road Less Traveled Conference** at Iowa State University where they had a wide choice of math and science workshops to attend. Ten of our Middle School **Mock Trial** students prepared and presented a case as attorneys and witnesses in a competition at the Black Hawk County Courthouse on December 17th. Michaela Geertsema and Alisha Thompson were nominated as outstanding lawyers by the judges, and Angie McCardle was nominated as an outstanding witness. Sarah Rothman, a licensed attorney, took time out of her busy life to help coach the students. Two of our students, Abigail Goedken and Matt Bebee earned their way to compete at a district contest with **Invent Iowa**, where they displayed their clever projects. Matt Beebe will take his invention of the Football Warmer on to a state competition in April. **Future City** is also another great program we are preparing for. In this program, students use SIMCITY software to design a city 150 years in the future. Jeff Behan, an engineer, and Greg Halverson, in economic development, provided them with valuable advice as guest speakers. The students also attended an ICN program where professors from UNI and the University of Iowa taught the students about nanotechnology. Other programs we will work on later on in the year will be **Writer's Workshop**, **International Leadership**, **Battle of the Books** and **National History Day**. Jackie Berryhill is working with many 6th grade students on **Math Olympiads**, Sarah Thome is teaching advanced math to 7th graders and Tracy Curtis is teaching Algebra I to 8th grade students. At high school some of our students are doing independent studies on Agronomy and Medical Research. Hyder Chowdhry attended the **World Food Prize World Hunger Conference** in Des Moines for three days. Several students are doing research for **National History Day** and **Mock Trial**. Other students are preparing for a **Physics Olympics Competition**. Several other high school students are interested in leadership projects.

Do gifted students need special attention to discover and develop their potential? Absolutely. Are our gifted students in Independence being given opportunities to develop their potential? Absolutely.

*"The 6th graders will have an all day field trip to Fontana on May 7th, and we will need some parent chaperones. Please send a note with your student to let me know that you would enjoy this opportunity! Thanks."*



*A very special thank you to Jeff Behan and Greg Halverson for being guest speakers.*

## The wonders of water

By Teri Schloss RN

We are often reminded to drink water in the summer time when it is hot, but how often have you been told to drink more water in the winter? Our bodies need water during the cold months just as much as they do in the good 'ole summertime.

Our bodies are approximately 60% water. Every cell in our body requires water to function. Water helps protect our organs and tissues, regulates our temperature, lubricates our joints, carries nutrients and oxygen to cells, helps dissolve minerals and other nutrients to make them accessible to the body, lessens the burden on the kidneys and liver by flushing out waste products, helps prevent constipation and moistens tissues such as those in the mouth, eyes and nose.

Most children need approximately six to eight cups of water daily. The food we eat usually makes up about 20% of this amount, but we still need fluids from other sources such as milk, water, or juice. Although not encouraged, caffeinated beverages including tea, coffee and cola can be counted as a portion of your daily intake of fluids.

Without water your body will become dehydrated. Even mild dehydration (1-2% of your total body weight) can cause you to

have a loss of energy and feel tired. Other symptoms of dehydration include: Mild to excessive thirst, fatigue, headache, dry mouth, dizziness, lightheadedness, muscle weakness, and little or no urination. Children in school who become mildly dehydrated can be irritable, tired and unable to concentrate. Mild dehydration rarely will cause complications as long as fluids are replaced quickly. More severe dehydration can be life threatening, especially in the very young and elderly. In extremely rare cases, it is possible to drink too much water. This is very uncommon in otherwise healthy people.

In the school nurse's office, we see many students with headaches, sore throats and chapped lips. Some of these conditions could be helped with an additional glass or two of water daily. So during these cold dry months, try to encourage your children to drink fluids, run a humidifier in your home, use skin moisturizers after bathing and keep lips moist with lip balm, especially before going outdoors. Please send lip balm with your student to school for this purpose if they are prone to chapped lips.

As always, children learn by example so don't forget to drink your water!

***“Most children need approximately six to eight cups of water daily.”***



***“Our bodies are approximately 60% water.”***

## News from the IHS By Karl Kurt, Principal

### A Brief Introduction to the Rigor/Relevance Framework by William Dagget

Successful schools recognize that today's education system was designed for another time and place in which people typically had lifetime jobs that required predictable skills performed in a familiar environment. Over the past 40 years, our society and our economy have gone through dramatic changes that require workers to possess different sets of skills from those that the education system has traditionally provided. As the demands on the education system to raise standards have become steeper, the tendency has been to rely on the old tried-and-true curriculum content and teaching approaches. The problem is, of course, that the old methodology was intended for an education system whose job was to select and sort students, not to try to get all of them to achieve high standards of proficiency.

Successful schools tend to envision a system focused on the future. The goal is to teach students how to think, not simply what to know. In addition, learning how to learn and how to embrace change are critical skills that will enable individuals to thrive in our changing society. The schools that have achieved success also understand that they need to teach students to do things not simply by rote, but rather with a deeper levels understanding. In effect, they need to help students

apply high levels of cognitive knowledge to real-world unpredictable situations. That means academic rigor applied in open-ended ways that are relevant to the 21st century.

At Independence High School we have a team that attends meetings at AEA 267, where a consistent focus is the 4Rs (Rigor, Relevance, Reflection, and Relationships). We continue to learn and look for additional ways to create critical thinking skills in our students. As educators, we continue to improve the opportunities and skills that our students have through our curriculum work and professional development opportunities. We understand the skill set our students need in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is much different than past generations.

More information about the Rigor and Relevance Framework can be found at: <http://www.leadered.com/rigor.shtml>

If you have any questions about R4 or 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills please give me a call,

Karl Kurt  
Principal  
Independence High School



### January Calendar

- 5 – JV WR at Benton Comm.  
JV/V GBB at Waverly  
WR – Clash 6 – Rochester
- 8 – JV/V GBB (H) CPU  
9<sup>th</sup> GBB (H) CPU  
JV/V BBB at CPU  
9<sup>th</sup> BBB at CPU
- 9 – 1:00 Dismissal  
Financial Aid Meeting 7:00p.m.
- 10 – WR (H) CPU
- 11 – Non Student Day - Staff Development  
JV/V GBB at Beckman  
9<sup>th</sup> GBB at Beckman  
JV/V BBB (H) Beckman  
9<sup>th</sup> BBB (H) Beckman
- 12 – WR at Osage Duals  
JV/WR – Indee Invite
- 15 – JV/V GBB at Marion  
9<sup>th</sup> GBB at Marion  
JV/V BBB (H) Marion  
9<sup>th</sup> BBB (H) Marion
- 16 – HCC Compass Test - Sophmores
- 17 – WR (H) Vinton-Shellsburg
- 18 – JV/V GBB (H) West Del  
9<sup>th</sup> GBB (H) West Delaware  
JV/V BBB at West Delaware  
9<sup>th</sup> BBB at West Delaware
- 18 – End of Term 2
- 19 – WR at Anamosa Duals  
JV/WR at Starmont Invite
- 21 – Start registering  
10-12<sup>th</sup> graders
- 22 – JV/V GBB (H) Bent Comm  
9<sup>th</sup> GBB (H) Benton Comm  
JV/V BBB at Benton Comm  
9<sup>th</sup> BBB at Benton Comm
- 23 – 1:00 Dismissal
- 24 – WR (H) Wamac Extra
- 25 – JV/V GBB at West Del  
9<sup>th</sup> GBB at West Delaware  
JV/V BBB (H) West Delaware  
9<sup>th</sup> BBB (H) West Delaware
- 26 – WR – Wamac at Vinton
- 28 – JV/WR Wamac at  
Manchester  
9<sup>th</sup> GBB (H) Holmes Jr. High
- 29 – JV/V GBB at Columbus  
9<sup>th</sup> GBB at Columbus  
JV/V BBB (H) Columbus  
9<sup>th</sup> BBB (H) Columbus
- 31 – 9<sup>th</sup> B/GBB at Waterloo West

**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:**

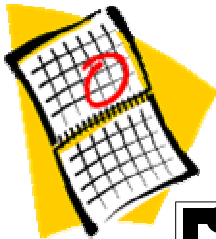
*Creating a climate in which individuals of the ICSD will strive to become effective communicators, problem solvers, responsible citizens, and productive people*

**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!**

- \* January 9th - 1:00 Dismissal — Staff Development
- \* January 11th - No School — Staff Development
- \* January 17th - Tips - n' - Tools for Parents Night  
5:30 p.m. at the Independence Middle School
- \* January 23rd - 1:00 Dismissal — Staff Development
- \* February 21st - Kindergarten Registration — 1:00 - 7:30