

Mustang



pride



District News from Independence Community Schools

Inside This Issue

Superintendents Corner ...	Page 1
District News.....	Page 2
Curriculum	Page 3
Transportation Request....	Page 4
Literacy Tips.....	Page 5
Big Brothers Big Sisters....	Page 6
East Elementary News.....	Page 7
Kindergarten Gives Thanks.....	Page 8
Second Grade Scene.....	Page 8
First Grade Focus.....	Page 9
Nurse News.....	Page 9
West Elementary News....	Page 10
Third Grade.....	Page 11
Fourth Grade News.....	Page 11
Middle School News.....	Page 12
Special Needs Classroom..	Page 13
High School News.....	Page 14
Weather Related Information.....	Page 15

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

Certified Student Counts

I mentioned last month in my article that we were optimistically cautious as to our preliminary student count numbers. If you recall the school's budget is calculated by this number. It rarely is a rounded number due to the "weightedness" that is assigned to it. As of two weeks ago we certified our count. It is down by 21.7 students. This number will be used to calculate our budget for the 2007-2008 school year. We are never really happy about a declining enrollment, but as I stated last month the potential was for us to be down by 125 students.

So, while we are disappointed that we dropped again in student enrollment yet another year, the drop didn't make the negative impact that it could have. Some may ask, "What does this mean for our district?" Well, it means another year of budget reductions. With a drop of 21.7 on the certified count we can expect to lose approximately \$115,000. Couple that with the cost increases in education we are most likely looking at a loss of approximately \$250,000. This number could be affected by an early retirement package. Currently, we do not have one for this year. It will be an item for the board to consider at our November regular meeting. On a happier note we continue to take calls from families interested in our school district and communities and are coming next year or yet this year to be a part of our district.

While we can't count those students for funding for next year they will most certainly be counted for the following year. We continue to see optimistic signs that we are headed out of the declining enrollment age and hopefully, with continued support from other organizations like city leaders and county leaders who are trying to grow our economy here in Buchanan County as well as bring families to our communities, we will see that increase in student enrollment. While we have seen 12 years of continuous decline we have maintained our high quality programming. It is our goal to continue to keep the high level of programming we have in our district through these difficult times.

November, 2006

Superintendent's



Devin Embray

Corner

Calendar of Events

November 1st – Early Out – 1:00
Dismissal – Professional Development

November 7th – CCC meeting

November 11th – HS Volleyball

November 15th – Early Out – 1:00
Dismissal – Professional Development

November 20th – K-12 Parent Teacher Conferences – 1:30-8:00

November 21st – Early Out – 1:00
Dismissal
K-8 Parent Teacher Conferences – 1:30-8:00
HS Professional Development - 1:30 – 3:40

November 21st – Indee Jamboree: 5:30

November 22nd – No School
Thanksgiving Break

November 23rd – Thanksgiving – No School

November 24th – No School
Thanksgiving Break

November 28th – 9th Grade Boys Basketball

9th Grade Girls Basketball

November 29th – Early Out
1:00 Dismissal – Professional Development

November 30th – HS Wrestling



**Independence Community Schools**

1207 1st 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 McCordle, 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****New District Website**

The Independence Community School District has a new look and feel on its district website. If you have visited you may have noticed the amount of information available to parents, teachers, and students. We are continually adding information to the site, but if you have suggestions to make it even more informative, contact Mary at the Administration Building at 334.7400.

Home Page – District Calendar with events from every school listed; Link to employees e-mails; Quick Links with access to the student information program (Centerpoint), current school board minutes, and this district newsletter to name a few. Also check here to see if there is a school delay or closing!

District/Community Page – Community information, links to curriculum information and school board information.

Our Schools – Link to each building site to find out more information about each building

Parents – Student handbooks, the district curriculum, articles on helping students succeed, and food service information – you can add money to your lunch account here!

Guidance Information – Learn about scholarships, college preparation, the ACT test, and help on college or career planning.

Teaching and Learning – Information on Learning Teams and many resources
School Improvement – Find information on curriculum, school improvement and professional development going on in the district.

Publications – Locate forms or district information that has been published – curriculum brochures and minutes of meetings to name a couple.

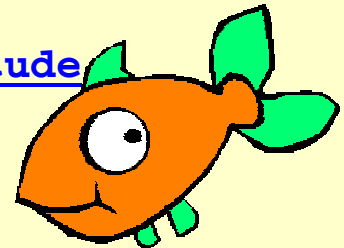
Fish Nominations

❖ **Choose Your Attitude**

❖ **Be There**

❖ **Make Their Day**

❖ **Play**



- **Delene Donnelly** – Elementary Gifted and Talented
- **Buffy Campbell** – High School Art
- **Peg Bantz** – High School Special Education Associate
- **Marcia Ciha** – High School Family and Consumer Sciences
- **Stephanie Funke** – HS Spanish
- **Judy Hess** – West Elementary Secretary
- **Michael Doyle** – High School Math
- **Jami Tekippe** – East Elementary Secretary
- **Marilyn Freeman** – 8th Grade Language Arts
- **Jackie Berryhill** – 6th Grade Math
- **Nancy Michels** – Food Service Director
- **Kay Grover** – 4th Grade Teacher
- **Tammy Ryan** – Success Center Teacher/Director
- **Meredith Miller** – Middle School Principal
- **Donalyn Pogue** – Kindergarten Teacher
- **Keith Donnelly** – Elementary Physical Education

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



What Does the Logo Mean To You?

“Improving Today for a Better Tomorrow” is the new academic slogan along with the logo you see to the left. But what does that slogan actually mean to those that read it or look at the logo? One thing it means is that teachers and administrators are taking the necessary steps to ensure the growth and achievement of students across the district. Certainly, the amount of time, energy and expertise being utilized to accomplish the goals we have set for the district is evident wherever you look.

Whether it is the alignment of the curriculum, instruction, and assessments, the work teachers are doing in their Learning Teams, or the professional development teachers and administrators are involved in, there is a vast amount of work taking place to ensure students are successful. As a result many practices are changing – no longer are we allowing students to fail; you might say “Failure is NOT an option”. As one teacher stated about the slogan and logo – “What we do today shapes tomorrow – we work individually at times and yet we also work for the group cause.” With a strong parent and community partnership, we feel we can accomplish the goals we have set for our students. If you ever have questions or concerns about the work being undertaken in the district, do not hesitate to call a building administrator or the central office; your involvement in the education of your child is vital to their success. Thank you for your continued support.

Mary Cooksley, Director of Curriculum and School Improvement

The Independence Community Schools Curriculum Coordinating Council Vision

The vision of the CCC is to promote a culture where there exists the enthusiastic teaching and learning of a workable and worthwhile curriculum while facilitating open communication with parents, students, staff and the community.

Foreign Language Study in Elementary School

East and West Elementary students have the opportunity this year to be involved in Foreign Language instruction as an encore (special) class. Did you know that there are great benefits to your child taking Spanish during their early elementary years?

The research indicates that Foreign Language instruction contributes to increased student achievement in other academic areas as well. Look at the following research:

- Students who experience instruction in two languages at a young age reach high levels of cognitive development at an earlier age than students instructed in just one language.
- Student who learn a second language tend to be more creative and have enhanced ability to solve complex problems.
- Elementary students have shown improved reading achievement, particularly in vocabulary and comprehension after being instructed in a Foreign Language for only 15 to 20 minutes a day.
- Students who have studied a language at the elementary level had a stronger performance in listening, speaking, and writing at the high school level.

A well-designed elementary Foreign Language program enhances teaching and learning in elementary classrooms:

- Elementary instruction uses a variety of strategies that meet differing learning styles.
- The focus on culture supports the teaching of social studies!





Meth & More
Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2006
Independence Middle School

7:00 PM
Meth & More Presentation

Charles Larson, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Iowa

C.J. Williams, Assistant U.S. Attorney
An Undercover Special agent, Division of Narcotics Enforcement

8:00 PM
Local Law Enforcement Panel Perspective

Bill Wolfram, Buchanan County Sheriff
Doug Rasmussen, Independence Chief of Police
Allen VanderHart, Buchanan County Attorney

Methamphetamine (Meth) use in Iowa communities and rural areas has reached epidemic proportions. Alarming, 69% of the federal criminal cases in Iowa involve meth, compared to 14% in the rest of the United States. The battle against drugs in our communities requires several tactics. Vigorous efforts on the part of local, state, and federal law enforcement and judicial agencies are only one part of the equation to curtail drug use. Meth & More will explain what meth is, what it looks like, signs and symptoms of use, as well as the cost to our society in terms of money and destroyed lives. You will also learn about Iowa's newest epidemic "ice". For more information call Greg Moen at 334.7415

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



Parent Teacher Conferences
Suggestions for Parents

Parent/Teacher conferences are approaching – the following are some sample questions you might ask your child's teacher to gather more information regarding academic or social progress:

- What does my child do that surprises you? Very often this question can reveal to parents what expectations the teacher has for the child. Many times children behave differently at school than they do at home.
- What is my child reluctant to do? This question may tell parents what likes and dislikes their child has regarding school. This might allow the teachers to better understand the student and their preferences.
- What is a goal you would like to see my child achieve? This will allow the parent to assist the student and the parent in reaching an academic goal the child or parent has. Setting goals allows for higher academic achievement for students.
- What can I do at home to support what is being done at school? This question is ALWAYS appreciated! Teachers may have suggestions but may be afraid to offer unsolicited advice – this question helps to foster a partnership in education.



Literacy Tips for the Busy Parent!

How to get the most from any story after you've read to your child

1. Ask them to summarize the story. See if they can tell you what happened at the beginning, in the middle and at the end. Give lots of praise and support where necessary.
2. Ask which characters they liked or didn't like.
3. Ask them to think about different points of view. How might different people in the story feel about what happened?
4. Talk about how the story could be changed. If the stepsisters were nice to Cinderella, the fairy godmother would never have shown up!
5. Change the ending of the story.
6. Read true-life stories and talk about other people's lives.
7. Find similar books to encourage different explorations of the same topic
8. Imagine the story slightly changed. If the pigs had fifty more brothers, could the wolf have blown down fifty-three houses?
9. Read books that offer a different version of familiar stories, and discuss the difference with your children.
10. Talk about themes in the book you read. How do they relate to your real-life experience as a family?

Report Cards: Advice for Parents

Soon after school begins, Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled and report cards are given to parents to communicate the progress of students. Many times there are anxious feelings associated with receiving the report card, but there are also feelings of pride, excitement, and enthusiasm. Here are some words of advice to parents when they receive their child's report card:

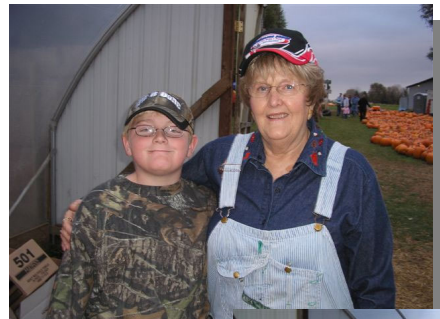
- **Focus on the positive** – regardless of the grade your child brings home, focus on the positive aspects of the report card. This may not always be easy, but remaining positive shows your child you care about the accomplishments, not only the areas in need of improvement.
- **Ask the Right Questions** – Be careful not to overact to low grades, but use this time to look at past performance and plan for the future. Talk to your child to understand how a particular grade was earned:
 - **Was the work too difficult?**
 - **Could the pace of the class be too fast?**
 - **Does your child finish their homework and ask questions when they do not understand?**
- **The Next Step** – Create a plan for the future – set a goal, talk to the teacher, organize your student, provide a set time and place for homework

DO YOU REMEMBER THE MAGIC?

It's often the simple things in life that form our favorite memories, yet it is not until we grow that we realize how those little, magical moments affected our lives and made us who we are.

Those are the moments a "Big" or mentor gives a child. By listening, encouraging, and just being there as a friend, mentors can help transform a young person's life. Little Moments....BIG MAGIC!!

Here's some of that magic in action as Bigs and Littles enjoy a Halloween Party put on by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast





Independence
Big Brother Big Sisters
Mentoring Program



It's official!! Effective October 2nd, our local school mentoring program officially became a Big Brothers Big Sisters Of Northeast Iowa affiliate!!

What does that mean to our school and the participants in the program?

It means that we can offer three mentoring options instead of just one!

- The first mentoring opportunity is the 13-year-old program that most of you are familiar with. That program is known as the "School Based Program" and will continue to operate on the school grounds, during the school day, with a time commitment of 30-45 minutes per week for the entire school year.
- The second mentoring opportunity is "School Based Plus" and is an expanded version of the "School Based Program". The mentor's driving record is checked and proof of car insurance is verified. Then, the mentor and student may meet off campus occasionally for a special Saturday movie or just to "hang out" after school or on the weekends.
- The third mentoring option is the "Community Based" Program. Mentoring usually occurs off campus and the "Big" (Brother or Sister) and "Little" (Brother or Sister) get together for 6-10 hours per month for one year. This option allows the pair to share common interests and pursue new experiences outside of school.

We are very excited about these new possibilities!! We have had a very successful mentoring program these past 13 years and it's getting even better with these new options.

With this change also comes a challenge--a financial challenge. We no longer receive funding from the federal grant that supported the program for the last 5 years. The School Board has supplied partial funding, but more needs to be raised. We have received \$500 from the Brew BQ event. A Bowl For Kids' Sake fundraiser is planned for November 5th at Lucky 10 Lanes. We need bowlers and sponsors to help make this event a success.

So, if you feel that this program is important to the students and children in our community and would like to financially support us, please contact me.

Jeannie Neeley – 334-3353
Mentor Coordinator





Elementary

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Nov 1 - 1:00 Dismissal – In-service

Nov 2 - 700pm PTO @ East

Nov 15 - 1:00 Dismissal – In-service

Nov 20 - 1:00 Dismissal – Parent Teacher Conferences (1:30-8:00)

Nov 21 - 1:00 Dismissal – Parent Teacher Conferences (1:30-8:00)

Nov 22-24 - No School

Nov 27 - Classes Resume

Nov 29 - 1:00 Dismissal – In-service

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

The school year is progressing well and we're fast approaching the holiday season. The students are developing skills and becoming accustomed to routines in their daily lives at school. We are looking forward to sharing their successes at school with parents at conference time this month.

In-service time in October was spent learning about successful reading strategies in the area of fluency. This is important time for faculty and thank you for your continued support in our efforts to improve the educational experience of your children.



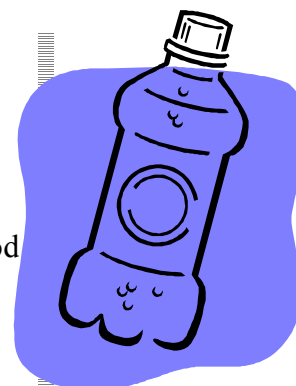
Emergency procedures such as those used during fire and tornado drills are a typical part of our learning environment. In addition to this, we have practiced, as a faculty (without involving K-2 students), procedures involved in a school lockdown. While we hope this will never be a necessary procedure to implement, it is necessary to think about and plan for such emergencies.

Parent/Teacher Conferences are scheduled for Monday-Tuesday, November 20 & 21, 1:30-8:00pm. Conference time is crucial to the educational development of your child. It is a chance to learn more about your child's academic progress and to share information with the teacher who can help him/her to best meet your child's needs.

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 Gives Thanks

November will include a study of Thanksgiving and things we are thankful for as kindergartners. A highlight of our unit will be a Charlie Brown Thanksgiving Feast. We will also be holding Parent/Teacher conferences November 20 & 21. We look forward to sharing your child's progress with you! Kindergartners continue to develop their alphabet and number skills, as well as the practice of line basics and body basics.



Mrs. Malek's kindergarten class goes for a hike at Fontana Park to look for signs of fall.

Second Grade Scene

Second grade classes enjoyed learning about frogs and toads in science during October. An exciting part of the frog unit was a visit from Fontana's Sondra Cabell who brought in a toad and shared lots of information with us. In October, Mrs. Mace's class, Mrs. Miller's class, and Mrs. Flickinger's class sang for the Buchanan County Health Center Long Term Care and for Prairie Hills under the direction of Pat Thomas. In November, we are looking forward to our Veteran's Day program, and visiting with parents at November conferences!

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!

What can parents do to help children reach and maintain their best weight and live a healthy lifestyle? Parents can demonstrate a healthy lifestyle.

Children learn by example.

- Parents need to offer the child a variety of nutritious foods at regular intervals. Planned meals and snacks give the child regular sources of energy, help the child develop sensible eating patterns and encourage the child to learn correct food behavior in social situations.
- Parents can help the child learn to identify and pay attention to feelings of hunger and fullness.
- Buy fewer high calorie, low-nutrient foods. Buy healthy choices for snacks.
- Parents should not put children on a weight reduction diet which can become a form of punishment.
- Make exercise a part of the family routine! A family that exercises together - stays fit together!



First Grade Focus

First Graders are excited about the group of animals our school was able to adopt from Fontana Park! Thanks to donations from families at East Elementary, we are providing food and care for the two black bears Tana and Bear-Bear, as well as a pair of blue winged teal ducks.

In addition, visitors to Fontana Nature Center will find East Elementary listed as a continuing Sponsor of Fontana. Funds from the sponsorship program are used to support environmental education in Buchanan County. In September, first graders enjoyed learning about water and prairie habitats as part of this program.



East Elementary Adopts
Animals at Fontana

Nurse News

By Christine Carnelly

One of the problems confronting parents occurs when a child complains of not feeling well on a school day. You don't want to keep your child home if he/she is not really sick, but you also do not want to send a sick child to school. Here are some guidelines to follow.

Fever: A fever is a warning that all is not right with the body. No child with a fever over 100 degrees should be sent to school. Do not allow the child to return to school until he/she is free from fever for twenty-four hours.

Cold, Sore Throat, Cough: A child with a "bad" cold such as a hacking cough, running nose or aching, belongs at home, even though he/she may not have a fever. If your child complains of a sore throat and has no other symptoms, he may go to school as long as the pain can be controlled. If white spots can be seen in the back of the throat or if fever is present, keep him/her home and call your doctor.

Rash: A rash may be the first sign of one of childhood's many illnesses, such as chicken pox or roseola. Do not send your child to school with a rash until a doctor has okayed you to do so.

Stomachache, Vomiting, Diarrhea: Consult your doctor if your child has a stomachache which continues or is severe enough to limit his/her activity. If vomiting occurs, keep your child home until he/she can keep his food down for twenty-four hours. A child with diarrhea should be kept at home until the diarrhea subsides. Call your doctor if improvement doesn't occur.

Pain: If tooth pain occurs, contact your child's dentist. An earache is cause to take your child to the doctor. Headaches (unless severe) are generally not cause to keep your child home unless other symptoms are present.





November, 2006



WEST ELEMENTARY

the bottom line

by Josh Lyons, Principal

Being a parent can be one of the most challenging and terrifying jobs we have in today's world. We constantly worry about what our kids are doing, who they're with, if they are making good choices, etc...

I know as a parent of a young child I worry about those things and what she will grow up to be. However, out of all of those daily worries, there are also the things we need to celebrate in the lives of our kids. For me those are being able to walk, talk, hug, kiss, learn, make friends, and love.

Remember to take some time out to recognize and celebrate what it is you enjoy and love about your kids and give them feedback about what it is they are doing well. Take time to read to your child, help them with homework, and especially take time to show them how much you love them.

Time slips by very quickly! Take time to smell the flowers and listen to who your kids are and will be.

Testing Versus Assessment

How often does your child come home with test results? How often does your child take an assessment? The idea of taking a test for a student often causes anxiety because they think about a test being that piece that holds them accountable for what they have learned and whether or not they have taken the time to ingest the knowledge.

Testing is often a measure "of what a child has learned." This means that we get a snap shot of a student's learning from one moment in time on one specific day, which by the way could have been a bad day for the student.

On the other hand, there is the assessment, which should give quick and frequent feedback for what the student is learning and whether or not they understand the material immediately following the instruction in the classroom.

Assessment has a powerful effect on student learning and one of the assessments students utilize at West is the Accelerated Math program. This program gives students immediate feedback and provides teachers with information about the students' math skills and understanding of concepts.



Coming Up:

Veteran's Day 8:45 Nov. 10

P/T Conf. 1:30-8:00 Nov. 20

P/T Conf. 1:30-8:00 Nov. 21

Thanksgiving Break Nov. 22-24

West Conducts Drill

On Monday, October 16 after school, the West Elementary Staff conducted a lock-down drill. This drill was conducted as a refresher as to what needs to occur when or if an intruder was outside or inside of the building.

With all that has happened around the country and even in Iowa, it is important to review and revise procedures so they are easily understandable and accessible to staff.

At the conclusion of the drill on October 16th, West staff made notes of procedures and resources that worked well as well as those items that need to be revised and updated to be sure the emergency plans are effective. Please speak with your children about safety and the importance of coming forward with any information regarding potential threats. Most often it is the student who is the intervention of violence in the school.

We are dedicated to making sure our school is a safe and comfortable place for everyone who walks through our doors. Please continue to be a partner in the success of our students. Your dedication and support to our students as parents and a community have made our school what it is today



Busy 3rd Graders at West Elementary

The third graders have adjusted well to West Elementary School. They have been busy using our reading series by Houghton Mifflin. The books contain interesting stories with a systematic plan for teaching reading skills, such as comprehension, inference, sequence, and word analysis. We are completing Theme Two: Celebrating Traditions. Grammar lessons are linked to the stories. The book company has a web site: www.eduplace/kids.com. Reading includes time for reading and discussing chapter books, plus writing summaries. There is silent reading time every day, and students are expected to work on reading books that are classified as Accelerated Reader books and take quizzes on them in their level. Third graders should be working on at-home reading and turning in slips for Book-It and earn Pizza Hut personal pan pizzas each month from October through March.

In math, the third graders have been working on place-value. They should know what each digit represents in numbers such as 342,567. A new concept has been rounding. The students will continue to work on rounding numbers to the nearest ten or hundred. Telling time to the exact minute is the next area to be worked on, then money. Other math practices include mini-math every day and using problem-solving. Students have been enjoying Accelerated Math. They should be bringing home completed work to show you various problems at their level. After they complete a set of problems at school, they scan their answer card on the computer to see the results. Their teacher or Mrs. Bailey, our aide, goes over problems they have missed with each student. They enjoy getting a blue check mark on the computer assignment book to show they have mastered an objective.

Students have various topics they will write about, including time for independent writing. Some writing will be taken through the writing process: prewriting, writing, revising, editing, and publishing, which includes sharing their writing. Some writing will be typed on the AlphaSmarts.

Cursive writing is a subject of big interest to third graders. They are continuing to learn the lower case letter of the alphabet.

The third graders are studying rocks in science. They should be able to identify the three types of rocks: igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary rocks. Time for Kids is a weekly news magazine that is used for class discussion. They have a web site at: www.tfk.com/kids.com.

Special classes, Art, Physical Education, Music, and Media, are classes the students look forward to. This year students were happy to discover that Spanish and Tech in the computer lab have been added to the six-day cycle of special classes.

Mrs. Black, Mrs. Bolger, Mrs. Spinler, Mrs. Mueller, Mrs. Wendling



Fourth Grade News

We are off to a great start. Thank you parents for checking assignment notebooks each night to make sure your child's work is completed as it should be and for looking at notes for you and work returned home to be looked over. We appreciate the help you give to your children with their work and their organization.

In science we have been studying about the classification and characteristics of vertebrates and invertebrate animals. We enjoyed time at Fontana with Dan Cohen and Sondra Cabell presenting excellent information for our students. We will continue by doing research on specific animals for a report writing project.

We appreciate your continued support of the at home reading time. We will use the Book-It incentives this year. Please keep reading with your child and discussing their books with them.

Students need to be practicing multiplication facts and moving on to division soon. Check with them to see what their teacher has assigned in this area.

Respect and protect is an important emphasis in our school. Ask your child what we have talked about and how we follow this in our school.





School

Meredith Miller, Principal

Calendar of Events

November

- 1 - 1:00 Dismissal
- 2 - 4:15 WR @ West Delaware
- 3 - 4:00 GBB West Delaware, 7th-H, 8th @ Manchester
- 7 - WaMaC Vocal Festival @ Benton Community
- 9 - 4:15 GBB Vinton-Shellsburg, 7th H, 8th @ Vinton
- 10 - 2:30 Veteran's Day Program
- 4:15 WR Benton Comm -H
- 13 - 4:00 WR @ Marion
- 4:15 GBB Oelwein, 7th @ Oelwein, 8th-H
- 14 - WaMaC Bend Festival @ I.H.S.
- 15 - 1:00 Dismissal
- 16 - 4:30 WR @ Winthrop
- 4:15 GBB Marion, 7th-H, 8th @ Marion
- 20 - 1:00 Dismissal, Parent-Teacher conferences 1:30 - 8:00
- 21 - 1:00 Dismissal, Parent-Teacher conferences 1:30 - 8:00
- 22 - No School
- 23 - No School, Thanksgiving
- 24 - No School
- 28 - 4:15 GBB Vinton-Shellsburg, 7th @ Vinton, 8th H
- 29 - 1:00 Dismissal
- 30 - 4:15 WR @ Jesup
- 4:15 GBB Benton Comm., 7th H, 8th @ Atkins

The Principal's Corner

By Meredith Miller

Although it doesn't seem possible, we are already approaching the end of the first trimester and parent-teacher conferences. Our trimester (day 60) ends on November 15 and conferences will be held November 20 and 21 (Monday & Tuesday), 1:30 - 8:00 both days.

Parent-teacher conferences at Middle School are scheduled 20-minute student-led conferences with the student's advisor. You will soon be receiving a letter explaining our conference procedures. Please return your preferred date/time to your child's advisor as soon as possible. If you have not received conference information by November 10, please contact the Middle School office. It is our goal to conference with the parents of every student!

At the conference, your child will do most of the talking. Your son or daughter will review the portfolio with you and explain areas of study in each class. The teacher will provide the actual report card and a conference sheet from each teacher.

All teachers will have their conference schedule posted outside their rooms. There are "open times" in the schedule to allow for quick visits to other teachers.

Our football, cross country, and volleyball seasons have come to an end and we have already started wrestling and girls basketball seasons. The wrestlers begin competition on Thursday, November 2 when we travel to West Delaware for a dual meet at 4:15. The girl's basketball competition gets underway on Friday, November 3, when our Mustangs take on West Delaware at 4:00. (8th grade plays at Manchester; 7th grade plays at home.) I encourage you to attend some of our athletic events. The competitions are exciting. Admission is \$2 for adults and \$1 for students.

Finally, I'd like to congratulate Miss Yeager and the Middle School Marching Band for their fine performance at the varsity football game on October 20.



If you have any questions or concerns, please give me a call.

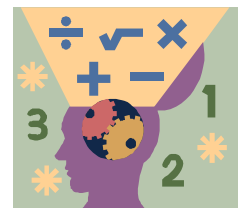
6th Grade Math

By: Jackie Berryhill

I had the opportunity to meet several of my students' parents and/or relatives at the Middle School Open House. I would like to say, "Thank you for taking the time to stop by my room; I was glad to meet you."

In math class, we finished our first grade level expectation (MA.6.1 - Students will classify and compare prime and composite numbers, find factors and multiples, and use them to solve real-life problems.) The sixth grade math students have seven remaining expectations, which are listed in the pamphlet you received at the beginning of the year. While the students have general math with me every day, they also have a problem-solving class with me every four days. The school days are very full and go by quickly. It is hard to believe that we are well on our way to the end of the first trimester.

The overall view of what we are doing in math class is: problem-solving that demonstrates the relevance of math, encouraging multiple strategies to give all students the opportunity to succeed, and focusing on number sense to promote conceptual understanding and retention. All in all, my goal is to prepare students for today's tests and tomorrow's challenges. I appreciate any and all support that the students and I receive from parents: it really makes a difference.





On Tuesday, Nov. 7 at 7:00 pm an informational meeting and panel discussion on Methamphetamine will be held at the Independence Middle School. The "Meth and More" Presentation is sponsored by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Iowa. Please feel free to get the word out on this important presentation. It is free and no reservations are needed to attend. Thanks!
Greg Moen

Methamphetamine (meth) use in Iowa communities and rural areas has reached epidemic proportions. Alarming, 69% of the federal criminal cases in Iowa involve meth, compared to 14% in the rest of the nation. The battle against drugs in our communities requires several tactics. Vigorous efforts on the part of local, state and federal law enforcement and judicial agencies is only one part of the equation to curtail drug trafficking. The other part involves an informed citizenry.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Iowa is reaching out to all Iowans through a dynamic presentation, "Meth and More," which helps individuals in all walks of life become familiar with the dangers and hazards of methamphetamine and other illegal drugs in our communities. "Meth and More" is a no-cost seminar that explains what meth is, what it looks like, signs and symptoms of use, as well as the cost to our society in terms of money and destroyed lives. You will also learn about Iowa's newest epidemic "ice."

U.S. Attorney, Charles Larson, Sr., is deeply committed to this outreach program and attends each presentation. He is accompanied by one of our top federal prosecutors and an undercover DNE agent who deliver a unique presentation providing startling insights into meth production, use and consequences – including an array of items from a confiscated meth lab.

We work with local law enforcement and drug prevention agencies to encourage their active participation in the seminar. They provide a local perspective on the scope of the meth problem, and services and contacts for obtaining help for individuals experiencing the horrors of meth use, or use by a family member, friend or neighbor.

Public response to "Meth and More" has been spectacular. Working with businesses, hospitals, schools and other organizations to fit into their schedule, we have presented "Meth and More" to more than 11,000 Iowans, with the full impact of the information reaching far more.

We applaud your commitment and initiative in helping reach fellow Iowans with timely information on the implications of the current meth epidemic in our state.

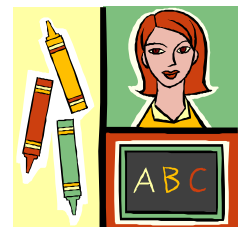
Thank you again for helping us reach out to your community.

Special Needs Classroom

By: Dawn Keenan

I'm accustomed to doing my article towards the end of the school year, so I am very pleased to be doing it more towards the beginning of the school year and during my favorite season! I'm especially enjoying this school year and the various students I have in my classroom!

I would like to share with you an approach that I am beginning to use for teaching spelling in my two language arts sections. It is a multi-sensory or multi-style spelling technique and it incorporates using different sensory input systems and the different learning styles which are: visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile. Researchers agree that children who use more than one of their input systems to learn spelling, will, in general, be more successful. This technique is geared more towards utilizing the unique learning styles of individual students. Some of the activities include the student writing the word in large print on a piece of paper, looking at the word and then reading the word, followed by visualizing the word with his/her eyes closed. The primary learning style involved is visual. This activity is followed by the teacher/tutor reading the word and the student listening carefully to the word with his/her eyes closed. The learning style involved is auditory. Each word is reinforced with these types of activities as well as activities for the kinesthetic and tactile learning styles. I'm excited about implementing this spelling technique in my classroom, and I'm anxious to see how it benefits my students.



Besides language arts, we have been busy learning about multiplication, place value and money in my 8th grade math class. In the future we will be doing a Thanksgiving activity which involves using grocery ads to plan the Thanksgiving Day meal and a Christmas activity which involves using advertisements to plan gift buying. In life science we've been learning about bacteria and fungi and did quite an interesting experiment with bread! We are just starting to learn about plant cells. Last but not least, my 7th period American History has been learning about map skills and using various graphs, tables and time lines. They will be doing a time life of their own lives.

This year is passing by quickly. As I write this, the next major event on this year's time line for my classroom will be preparing portfolios for student led conferences in November. Which, by the way, are only a little over four weeks away. Hope to see you then!



High School

By Karl Kurt, High School Principal

Dear Parents,

- ❖ As I write this letter we are ending up the 1st term. I can't believe 25% of the school year is already complete. We are anxious to analyze how our students did overall in their 1st term classes. We hope they have had a successful 1st term, and are building momentum for an even better 2nd term. We ask parents to analyze your student's grades and effort as well. Obviously, we feel having a solid foundation of basic skills is essential to the long-term success of our students. We thank you for consistently reinforcing this message at home and for being so active in monitoring their effort and performance. It makes a big difference.
- ❖ Recently, the news has been filled with violence in schools. We take the possible threat of violence in our schools very seriously. We recently had a drill at IHS for our teachers and have had discussions of how to handle various situations. We encourage parents to talk to their children about the importance of notifying authorities if they hear about any potential violence. Students are often the first to hear these things, and can be very effective in preventing situations from developing.
- ❖ Finally, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please don't hesitate to give us a call. We are here to help.

November Calendar

- 1 – 1:00 Dismissal – Staff Development
- 2 – Musical 7:30 p.m.
- 3 – Musical 7:30 p.m.
- 4 – Musical 7:30 p.m.
- 7 – Wamac Vocal Festival
- 10 – Band Trip to Indianapolis
- 11 – Band Trip To Indianapolis
- 12 – Band Trip to Indianapolis
- 14 – Wamac Band Festival at Indee
- 15 – 1:00 Dismissal – Staff Development
- 16 – All State Music in Ames
- 17 – All State Music in Ames
- 18 – All State Music in Ames
- 20 – 1:00 Dismissal
- 1:30 – 8:00 P-T Conferences
- 21 – 1:00 Dismissal
- 22 – No School
- 23 – THANKSGIVING DAY
- 24 – No School
- 29 – 1:00 Dismissal – Staff Development



Cast



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. 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

