

Volume 14 Issue 2
Winter 2019 - 2020

District Events:

Feb 17

School Board Meeting
 5:20 p.m.

Feb 19

90 Min ED-Prof Dev

Mar 3

Revenue Purpose
 Statement Election

Mar 4

90 Min ED-Prof Dev

Mar 12

2 Hour ED-PT Conf

Mar 13

No School-PT Conf

Mar 16

School Board Meeting
 6:00 p.m.

Mar 18

90 Min ED-Prof Dev

Apr 9

90 Min ED-Prof Dev

April 10 & April 13

No School

Apr 20

School Board Meeting
 6:00 p.m.

Apr 22

90 Min ED-Prof Dev

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From the Superintendent's Desk...

Revenue Purpose Statement (RPS)

The Independence Board of Education is calling for an election on **March 3, 2020**, to ask the community to consider the approval of an updated Revenue Purpose Statement (RPS) which outlines how the district may use Secure an Advanced Vision of Education (SAVE) funds. More commonly referred to as the penny sales tax, SAVE funds are utilized by districts to specifically support school infrastructure and technology needs. If voters approve the RPS in March, The Independence CSD will continue to spend SAVE funds as Iowa law allows for the duration of the penny sales tax.



Russell Reiter,
Superintendent

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Revenue Purpose Statement?

A Revenue Purpose Statement (RPS) is a ballot measure that describes how school districts can spend penny sales tax (SAVE) funds that the State of Iowa has dedicated to public schools.

Why is it important now?

Independence current Revenue Purpose Statement will expire in 2031. The district is seeking voter approval of a new RPS that would extend for the duration of the penny sales tax (SAVE) which is allowed by Iowa law through the year 2050.

Will it raise my taxes?

No, this will not raise taxes. Approving the Revenue Purpose Statement will allow the district to access future SAVE funds, but it will not change the current sales tax rate. The penny sales tax that funds SAVE will be collected across the state regardless of whether or not this measure is approved. This vote is in regards to how the district utilizes these funds.

What have Save Funds been used for in the district?

The SAVE revenue has funded many key infrastructure and technology projects in the district, including:

- Construction of the Independence Junior/Senior High School, in conjunction with general obligation bonds
- Renovations and additions at West Elementary

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What have Save Funds been used for in the district? *Continued*

- Technology infrastructure improvements, as well as student and staff technology devices
- Buses and other transportation needs
- Roof repairs to school facilities

What does the new Revenue Purpose Statement say?

Money received by the Independence Community School District from the State of Iowa Secure an Advanced Vision for Education Fund may be spent for any one or more of the following purposes:

- To provide funds to acquire or install information technology infrastructure (including improving buildings or sites for the purpose of accessing broadband digital telecommunications) and school safety and security infrastructure.
- To provide funds to build and furnish a new school building or buildings; to build and furnish addition(s) to school buildings in the District; to remodel, reconstruct, repair, expand, and improve the school buildings in the District; to purchase and improve grounds; for demolition work; to furnish and equip district facilities.
- To provide funds for the purchase, lease or lease-purchase of buildings, equipment (including transportation and recreation equipment), or technology and to repair transportation equipment for transporting students as authorized by law, to implement energy conservation measures, sharing or rental of facilities including a joint infrastructure project for the purposes of offering classes under a district-to-community college as authorized in Iowa Code Section 423F.3(3)(c), procuring or acquisition of libraries, or opening roads to schoolhouses or buildings.
- To provide funds to purchase land as part of start-up costs for new student construction program or if the sale of the previous student construction was insufficient to purchase land, and to purchase construction materials and supplies for a student-constructed building or shed intended to be retained by and used by the District.
- To provide funds to make payments to a municipality or other entity as required under Iowa Code Section 403.19(2).
- To provide funds for demolition, cleanup, and other costs if such costs are necessitated by, and incurred within two years of, a disaster.
- To provide funds to establish and maintain public recreation places and playgrounds; provide for supervision and instruction for recreational activities; or for community education purposes.
- To provide funds for the payment of principal and interest or retirement of general obligation bonds issued for school infrastructure purposes, energy improvement loans, loan agreements authorized by Iowa Code Section 297.36, sales, service and use tax revenue bonds issued under Iowa Code Section 423E.5 or Iowa Code Section 423F.4.
- To provide funds for property tax relief; and
- To provide funds for other authorized expenditures and purposes as now or hereafter permitted by law and designated by the Independence Community School District.

When will the Revenue Purpose Statement vote be held?

The election is set for March 3, 2020. A simple majority (50% + 1) is needed for the RPS to pass. For additional information on how to register to vote or your polling place, please [visit the Iowa Secretary of State website](#).

What if the Revenue Purpose Statement is not approved?

If the new RPS is not approved, the district will need to spend SAVE funds in a manner previously allowed under the original RPS. A special ballot can be brought back to voters not less than six months after the previous election.

How can I learn more?

If you have a question about the Revenue Purpose Statement or vote on March 3, 2020, please contact the Independence Administration Office at 319-334-7400.

School Improvement by Erin Burmeister, Director of School Improvement



**Erin Burmeister,
Director of School Improvement**

“The most valuable resource that all teachers have is each other. Without collaboration our growth is limited to our own perspectives.” --Robert John Meehan

Collaboration is a non-negotiable for all educators since Iowa Code requires that teachers are given time for this. Here at Independence we know this is a requirement but we also believe it is a necessity for personal and collective improvement. Most of our professional development is centered around quality collaboration.

Professional Learning for Staff

For the 2019-2020 school year, the decision was made to replace some of our full days of professional development with 90-minute early dismissals on Wednesdays. That time has been incredibly valuable for staff and for moving us forward in our school improvement efforts. That time has allowed staff to meet and collaborate about curriculum, instruction, and assessments on a more frequent basis. When teachers come together to share information, resources, ideas, and expertise, learning becomes more accessible and effective for students.

At the elementary level, teachers are using Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) as a structure for their collaboration. Teams meet on Wednesday afternoons to discuss and work through the following four essential questions.

- What do we want our students to learn? (priority standards)
- How will we know if they have learned? (team developed common assessments)
- What will we do if they don't learn? (systematic interventions)
- What will we do if they already know it? (extended learning)

This time and structure have allowed us to truly focus and ensure high levels of learning for all students.

At the secondary level, teachers are using Authentic Intellectual Work (AIW) as a structure for their collaboration. This structure looks different than the PLC structure. Teams are comprised of teachers from different discipline areas and they are focusing on their instruction, the tasks they ask students to complete or assignments, and student performance. They use rubrics to provide feedback to each other in the areas of construction of knowledge, disciplined inquiry, and value beyond school. This structure is helping us to transform the quality of student learning.

Iowa School Performance Profiles

The Iowa Department of Education has released the updates to the online school accountability reporting system called the Iowa Performance Profiles. This website shows how our schools, as well as other across the state, are performing on multiple measures. This profile meets both federal and state requirements for publishing report

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cards reflecting school performance. Scores and ratings on a set of accountability measures, such as student growth and graduation rate can be found in the profile for each district and specific schools in the district. Schools are identified for needing support and improvement based on the following measures that are found in the Iowa School Performance Profile.

- **Student Participation on State Assessments:** Requires a minimum of 95 percent of a school's enrollment participate in annual state assessments.
- **Academic Achievement**
 - ◇ **Proficiency:** Percentage of students in a school who are proficient in math and reading based on assessment results.
 - ◇ **Average Scale Score:** Information about the average performance of students in reading and mathematics in a school.
- **Student Growth:** Measures overall student growth by looking at student percentiles and determining whether the student is meeting or exceeding growth targets.
- **Graduation Rate** (high schools): Determines percentage of students who graduate from high school in four or five years.
- **Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency** (doesn't apply to our schools)
- **Conditions for Learning:** Measure's a school's safety, engagement and environment based on a survey of students in grades 6 through 12.
- **Postsecondary Readiness** (high schools): Includes student participation and scores on college entrance exams, participation in postsecondary or advanced coursework, and percentage of students who are CTE concentrators.

East and West Elementary received an acceptable rating and have a targeted status for students with disabilities (IEP). The overall score for West was a 53.65 out of 100. This is slightly below the state average of 54.94. Assessment participation, average school achievement in mathematics, conditions for learning composite, and percent proficient mathematics were all strengths for West and were above the state average. Growth in math and growth in reading continue to be an area for growth and West was below the state average in both.

The Junior/Senior High received a commendable rating and have a targeted status for students with disabilities (IEP). The overall score for the Junior/Senior High was 55.26 out of 100. Assessment participation, average school achievement in mathematics, graduation rate, growth in reading, and percent proficient in mathematics were all strengths for the Junior/Senior High and were above the state average. Growth in math, conditions for learning composite, and average school achievement in English language arts are areas for growth with the Junior/Senior high performing below that state average in those areas.

This is the second year for our targeted status for students with disabilities (IEP). School improvement teams in each building began meeting last year and developed action plans to address the identified areas for growth. Those action plans focus on establishing and strengthening leadership teams in each building, strengthening universal instruction for all students, and providing high quality specially designed instruction for students with IEP's. Each building has its own set of actions and the teams are continuing to monitor and refine those plans as necessary. If you are interested in hearing more about the work being done, I encourage you to reach out to me. To access the Iowa Performance Profiles for every district in the state of Iowa, go to iaschoolperformance.gov.

This data suggests that we continue to have a great need for quality collaboration for teachers in order to strengthen our school improvement efforts.

Midterms, Interns, and Long-Term

The academic year for 2019-2020 is over half finished, we finished Midterm on January 20, 2020. With the change of terms comes a new season for state reports, student testing and schedule changes. Technology also starts to focus on summer projects and network upgrades. Technology always has the normal summer cleaning, storing, updating student Chromebooks and iPads. We also upgrade operating systems and prepare equipment for August. August always comes quickly even though there are very few scheduled classes. Our big summer plan for 2020 will be updating outdated wireless access points and few older network switches.



Steve Noyes,
Director of Technology

For this semester, we are excited to have an Intern from Hawkeye Community College. This student (does not want to be named in the newsletter) (“J” for this article) will spend the entire semester for about 20 hours per week. J has already been with us for a month and has replaced many broken Chromebook screens, worked in each of the buildings, helped teachers as requested. J will next start to look at school budgets. School budgets are structured differently from business budgets and take time to really understand how they work. We will also be looking at updating the District Technology Plan. I intentionally did not update last year, so J will have experience in the entire process of evaluating, upgrading and writing the district plan. These kinds of tasks are not normally dealt with in a college setting. We will also be working on the district printing software and district virus protection. J worked with these in her coursework, but there is nothing like the actual software being used by actual people in an actual environment. J has been terrific.

What about long-term plans? The district is continually looking to improve technology integration into the classroom and instruction. We will be replacing all of the current Chromebooks for 2021-2022 school district. There are plenty of options and features as Chromebooks are used by more schools and businesses. The district will place emphasis on a more rugged built Chromebook and expanded use of potential touch screens. It is exciting to see students sitting in Main Street doing research, typing papers and collaborating on projects.

It has been a good year for technology and we look forward to a great second semester.

District-wide Assembly

K-2 was able to travel over to the Jr/Sr High to attend an assembly. It was exciting for the students to travel on a bus and be present with grades K-12. East and West we asked to make a few remarks about the progress we have made this year. While the Jr/Sr recognizes clubs, teams, and individual successes. I will have to be honest I think our students enjoyed the pep band playing above all.



Danielle Donnelly,
Principal

Winter Dress

Winter weather continues to make it necessary for students to dress warmly. Even though our buildings are heated, children should be wearing warm clothing such as long sleeved shirts and/or sweaters or sweatshirts to keep them warm inside. This will serve as an extra layer to help them when they are playing outside as well! Just a reminder: if there is wet or snowy weather, students will be required to wear boots, coats, hats, mittens and snow pants to keep them warm and dry.

Professional Learning Communities

Wednesday early-outs have been crucial in giving our teachers time to collaborate. It is important that all students are being taught the same concepts and skills regardless of what teacher they have. Our teachers have continued to work hard to be very intentional on what we are teaching in each grade level.

Professional Development time has been focused on this work. This is a very exciting time in terms of curriculum. It has really made an impact on our student learning. Teams are given time to discuss literacy, math, and science.

Preschool

Early registration for the 2019-2020 school year will begin March 25th for Independence, Kidsville, Moser, St. John's and WeeCare sites. Feel free to call Nikki at 319-334-4780 with any questions.

Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (IQPPS)

Our preschool sites were recently audited by the state to ensure we are meeting all of the Voluntary Preschool Program components. The Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (IQPPS) represent an essential component of providing young children with early learning experiences that support the foundation for positive child outcomes and success. The implementation of IQPPS and criteria is part of continuous improvement efforts for districts and their community partners and is an ongoing process. Districts must routinely review the preschool program policies, procedures, and data to assure the programs are meeting the IQPPS and criteria.



Kindergarten Round Up

Chronologically, children in the United States are ready for kindergarten at age 5: more specifically, children in Iowa are legally ready for kindergarten if they turn 5 by September 5th. At Independence East Elementary, we conduct screening tests in the spring to help parents with their decision on their child's readiness for kindergarten. Our kindergarten round up offers a chance for us to meet the children, and for them to meet us. Students entering Kindergarten for the 2020-2021 school year will have round up March 20th. Parents you will receive information in the mail come mid-February.

The teachers spent time assessing students. Below are some skills that indicate readiness.

- Social and Behavioral Skills
- Self Help Skills
- Language and Listening
- Math Skills
- Large Muscle Skills
- Small Muscle Skills
- Writing

Not only is it necessary for teachers to assess the students it is equally important for students to gain a familiarity with the building. Below is a schedule of events for the students.

- Puzzles, Play-doh, Coloring pages
- Opening (Jobs, Schedule, Calendar), Names, Kindergarten, Morning message
- Read Big Red Barn/Activity
- Centers/Story/Songs
- Snack/Songs
- Recess
- Library – Principal Donnelly reads
- Home

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 Val Maximovich at 319-332-0626 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 Val at 319-332-0626 and let her know!

Wanted:

Substitutes

If you are available to substitute occasionally as a classroom, office or media paraprofessional, (duties vary), please call 334-7425.

We need YOU!

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

We continue to collect Pizza Ranch Wagon Wheels, Donuts to Dough, 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.

Kindergarten

Kindergartners have been working on letter sound fluency, sight words, and concepts of print. In math we have been busy recognizing and writing numbers 1-20, as well as measuring and estimating objects. They will be working hard to develop their reading skills and look forward to upcoming visits from Fontana to learn about animals. Look for information coming home from teachers about the 100th day of school. It is always a fun way to celebrate all their hard work!



First Grade

Valentine's Day brings an emphasis on friendship and kindness to our classmates.



President's Day will shift our focus to our current and past presidents. We will learn about the duties of the president as well as some interesting facts about presidential families and their time in the White House. One reading strategy that students have mastered is how to be a word detective. I encourage you to ask your student what this means to them. First graders are also continuing to work hard practicing their reading, writing, and math skills.

Second Grade

Students always benefit from high school students coming over to help them learn more about Science.



Writing has been a focus for our second graders. Students have been working on Narrative writing the first semester and will cover Informative Writing, and Opinions second semester.

Students in second grade are working on putting math into action. *Everyday Mathematics* is a comprehensive Pre-K through Grade 6 mathematics program engineered for the Common Core State Standards. It is designed to give students a variety of activities to experience math. Students continue to be challenged with the Everyday Math program. They are actively engaged through lessons, games, and computer programs that match the units we are teaching. Please continue to make sure they work on their at-home assignments.

Winter Greetings from West Elementary!

Our winter months have been filled with learning and lasting memories. At West Elementary, our staff continually works to build positive relationships and authentic, engaging learning opportunities to best meet students' emotional and academic needs.

During the months of January and February, our building's students and staff have been participating in the administration of the FAST assessment (Formative Assessment System for Teachers). The FAST assessment is designed to help educators screen, monitor progress, and analyze students' reading skills. Our students will also be taking the NWEA Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) Assessment for reading and math. The MAP assessment provides teachers with support in instructional decision making to provide the most intentional, targeted instruction to students.

In April, our students will be taking the state-wide assessment: Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP). Our students will be taking the on-line assessment. We will be sending home more information about our testing process, as the dates get closer.



Cheri Reed, Principal

Physical Education – Living a Healthy Lifestyle

Students in Physical Education at West Elementary are indoors due to the cooler temperatures and snow outside. While indoors, we have focused on several different activities that focus on various locomotor skills to help them become more agile, flexible, and physically fit. We spend some time talking about living a healthy lifestyle and the importance of eating properly and getting the proper amount of sleep. Students learn about the importance of trying to limit their intake on foods and drinks that have added sugars in them. While discussing nutrition and healthy eating, we also talk about the importance of getting plenty of uninterrupted sleep each night. As February approaches, we will begin our archery unit and hope to get outdoors in the near future for some team building activities. Continue to encourage your son/daughter to live a healthy lifestyle and be active as much as possible.

Keith Donnelly – Physical Education Teacher – West Elementary

6th Grade

In 6th grade, the students have been busy reading a lot of non-fiction lately as our lessons have focused on informational reading skills. For part of the unit, students are reading non-fiction narratives (biographies and NF told in more of a story format) in book club groups. How exciting to hear a student claim, "This is the best book I've ever read," after completing his first book in this unit! For the other part of the unit, the students are researching information on specific topics. The teachers have provided the websites and books for the research. While kids are usually researching with the purpose of an end product such as a presentation or paper, this unit is focused on how to research. Then they can apply these skills any time a teacher asks for a research project or paper. Again, students have groups for discussion about the topics to enhance their understanding and skills. Students always enjoy sharing their thinking with their peers when they are getting to meet in their book club groups.

During social studies, we have begun our unit on the history of Medieval Europe. As we learn about topics such as the feudal system, castle life and structure, knights, and medicine, the students will continue to practice note-taking skills. We will also compare and contrast medieval serfs to plantation slaves, castles to modern homes, and the education and towns of then to now. Causes and effects of history abound when we learn about the Black Death (Bubonic Plague), Hundred Years War, and the Battle of Hastings. Be prepared to hear about the crazy meals and other bizarre aspects of daily life in the Middle Ages.



5th Grade

We have been working hard on comprehension strategies and learning to think deeply when we read. Before the break, we put our skills to the test and performed Readers' Theatres for our grandparents to celebrate Grandparent's Day. We are currently working to find the main idea of non-fiction text.



We have been sharpening our math skills by working with decimals, learning the order of operation, and plotting graphs on a coordinate plane. Most of us are currently exploring the wonderful world of fractions!

In science, we are learning about Spaceship Earth, the Watery Planet, Chemical Magic, and the Web of Life.

In Social Studies, we are learning about the history of the United States. Several classes have completed a Native American project. The project outlines the characteristics of each tribe that we study in the Americas. We are working on creating bio cards for an assigned Explorer. Some classes have created dioramas and poster displays for Social Studies as well.



While we are always working hard in our classrooms, we are working just as hard outside of it. Many of us participate in a variety of activities that

include: football, basketball, volleyball, soccer, baseball, softball, dance, gymnastics, girl scouts, boy scouts, 4-H, choir and band. By participating in these activities, we are hoping to become a more well-rounded and better citizen in our community.



We have been working hard to *Live the Mustang Way*. We have been working to continue our journey to become lifelong learners who are respectful and responsible citizens. "I'm NOT here to be AVERAGE, I'm here to be AWESOME!" Go Mustangs!



4th Grade

We just completed Unit 5 in Everyday Math. Multiplication was the focus of this unit. Division is the focus of Unit 6. These processes can be a struggle, but the students are eager to learn the steps involved for multi-digit multiplication and division. *Energizing Everything* is the title of our new hands-on unit for Mystery Science. The land, resources, and history of the Midwest region will be studied in social studies.

In December, fourth grade students enjoyed making crafts with their grandparents/grandfriends. They also had their vocal concert at the JSH. The concert was festive and absolutely fabulous!

All fourth grade students are required to earn ten Accelerated Reading points each month. Students need to read at school and at home to meet this goal. Those students who earn the points have been enjoying the incentives. The latest incentive was *Minute to Win It*.



3rd Grade

Third graders are learning about opinions and will begin composing a persuasive piece during writing workshop. They continue to work hard adding details in sequential order, using complete sentences, and adding punctuation. In math, students have been learning about multiplication and division, fractions, and decimals. We are currently working on geometry. Our second social studies unit is over continents and oceans. Students are learning where each continent and ocean is located as well as what makes each unique. The upcoming science unit will be about animal changes through time. Third graders have been enjoying the many hands-on activities and fun videos that come with our science lessons this year.

“The Way… The Little Things” by Mr. Howard



**John Howard, Jr/Sr High
School Principal**

There are certainly many aspects of Independence Jr/Sr High, in general, that I could discuss in this Winter Newsletter article, but I want to focus on the “little things”. For it is these things that truly make Independence what it is today. Some you may have noticed before while others may have gone unnoticed until now. Let’s examine some, but to make it easier grammatically and to correspond to the title of this issue, please use “The Way” before each one.

- Staff members work with students to be successful.
- Authentic Intellectual Work has helped our teachers grow.
- Capturing Kids’ Hearts is improving our school climate/culture.
- Students and staff (K-12) embraced the all-district assembly.
- Our elementary pupils scream “We Are Mustangs” at every all-district assembly.
- Those coming into the building greet me in the mornings with a handshake or fist-bump.
- Teachers work collaboratively during content days to improve instruction.
- Our band is envied by many other schools around the state.
- Our JH band students reacted to the news of being selected to perform at the Iowa Band Masters’ Association
- The junior class performed on the ASVAB assessment.
- Teachers are in the hallways (more) between classes making connections with kids.
- New families to the Jr/Sr High School positively show appreciation for our great facilities and caring staff.
- The administrative assistants “juggle” all their responsibilities and demands with great pride and satisfaction.
- Student tutors help those who are struggling in certain areas.
- Adult mentors interact with students.
- Parents and community members support our extra-curricular programs.
- Coaches and sponsors continue to be committed and devote countless hours for team success.
- We, as a school community, come together in times of strife and tragedy.
- The staff has recognized nearly 180 students with positive messages, written notes, phone calls home, etc.
- Each of us comes to school every day knowing how lucky we are to work at Independence Jr/Sr High School.

I could go on and on with these “little things”, but for time and space considerations, I am not able to do so. We truly have a lot to be proud of and thankful for at our school. May all of us recognize these and more that make Independence Jr/Sr High School a great place. Go Mustangs!

“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

-Theodore Roosevelt, 26th President of the United States



**Dewey Hupke, JSH
Assistant Principal**

The above quote is a powerful message. This year, we have had a phenomenal year with many of our student activities. And even though I am not the Activities Director, I am extremely proud of the students who are involved in all activities, but especially those who are what I would call ‘trailblazers.’ These students are either in a program’s infancy, or accomplishing something that others had not been able to do.

First, the Independence Robotics team started up around nine years ago. According to Mr. Charles Bare, sponsor of the team, they have always finished in the lower half of the competitions until this year. This year, the students have qualified for the next level of their season. Mr. Bare said, “This program has never reached this level. To the students credit, they have worked extremely hard to improve.” Pictured from left to right are Connor Music, Matthew Zieser, Talon Rodriguez, Aidan Anderson, Caleb Kilby, Connor Davison. Not pictured Jacob Dinger, Jacob Elzey, Faith Oien,



Aidan Anderson said, “It wasn’t always easy, but the end result is exactly what we were looking for.” The robotics competitions consist of having different tasks that the student made robot has to accomplish in a given amount of time. These robots are controlled by the students with a cellular phone inside a square arena with various obstacles. If you would like to see these competitions, there are videos posted to the Independence Robotics Facebook page.

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In November 2019, the Independence High School fielded their first girls wrestling team. At the start of the season there were around 12 girls who were willing to give this new sport a chance. On January 24 and 25, seven girls competed at the Iowa Wrestling Coaches and Officials Association state tournament in Waverly. Kenzie Fischels and Rachel Eddy both finished as State Runner-up at their respective weight class in Iowa!! Dakota Whitman was a JV WaMac champion on January 27, 2020.

When asked about the impact the season had on them, Kenzie Fischels said, “The first thing I was told when I joined wrestling was that it was far more mental than physical. Whether it was conditioning with the boys or going into my first match ever, I had to be strong physically, but mostly mentally. Taking this opportunity was very eye-opening to me because I went in with no expectations and came out with a completely different perspective that will help me in my athletics, but also in life. I look forward to taking more opportunities in the future because I now know that you don’t have to have any experience in what you’re doing, you just have to be willing to learn and driven to succeed.”

Rachel Eddy said, “Going out for wrestling this year was one of the best decisions I've ever made. It also helped me focus a lot better in class and my grades are more consistent.”

Natalee Anderson commented, “I was exhausted after warmups, it really did a number on me. Then a few weeks pass by and we have our first competition, I lost every single match. Going to the next practice was even more challenging because I knew I had to put in more effort, I worked, and worked, and then worked again. The next time I wrestled, I won both my matches. I won't ever forget the moment I hugged my mom and dad and felt that feeling of accomplishment from pushing myself to be different and try something new.”

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Chevelle Hookom said, “Wrestling also made me work hard but I didn’t mind it because I knew it was going to make better at all of my sports. It also made me want to work hard at school because I did not want to sit on the side and watch.”



Pictured are the girls who competed at state. Left to right: Katelyn Van Buren, Natalee Anderson, Rachel Eddy, Kenzie Fischels, Layla Walker, Dakota Whitman, and Chevelle Hookom

The Jr. High band just received great news about their hard work and dedication. Mr. Karl Smith and our 7th/8th grade band will be the ONLY Jr. High band playing at the 2020 Iowa Bandmasters convention in Des Moines. This is first time this honor has been bestowed on the jr. high band since 2005. Through many hours of practice, meticulous rehearsals, and stepping out of their comfort zone, the Mustang Jr. High Band achieved at a high level. Great job to Mr. Smith and the Jr. High Band!! I am confident their dedication and commitment will suit them well in the high school band and in life. Zach Jimmerson, an 8th grader said this about the great award, “It means a lot to be chosen out of all 3A and 4A bands. We get to represent our school and community by getting this honor. We practice day in and day out trying to perfect our music.” Classmate Mackenzie Christian had this to say, “Making it into IBA really made me realize how good of a band we actually are. I’m so proud of what we accomplished and super excited for what’s to come in the future. This is a big honor for the Jr High band and we couldn’t have done it without everyone’s hard work. I am so excited for IBA and I can’t wait for the amazing experience.”

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Here is a photo of some of our band students.



Having students participate in school activities has shown to have a measurable impact on student attendance, positive attitude toward school, and academic success. It also provides students who are participating an opportunity to gain self-confidence, learn leadership skills, build friendships with peers and coaches/sponsors, and learn how to deal with success and failure. As a former athlete, coach, and now parent, I am so proud of the manner in which our students compete in many different opportunities at the Independence Jr/Sr High School. If you have a young child who may want to participate in school activities, please encourage them to start out and focus on learning the basics while having fun. As the child gets older, I am confident they will have more self-confidence, connected to school, and be better teammates.

Go Mustangs!!

Dewey Hupke

It is a great time to think about all the accomplishments our students have made. As a younger athlete I used to get pretty caught up in results. However, as a coach and AD I have learned to enjoy the process more and let the results fall into place. I have also found it important to reflect on the accomplishments of all of our activities and those who work so hard and do the right process to have success. Here some of Independence Activities Success from the first semester of the school year:



**Justin Putz,
Activities Director**

- The volleyball team had a record of 29-12 and won their second consecutive Wamac West Championship.
- The football team won its first ever district title, qualified for the playoffs, and finished 9-1.
- Multiple fall athletes were selected to all-conference teams.
- Multiple athletes were selected to all-state teams and all-star games.
- Over 20 school records were set by fall athletes.
- The marching band won multiple contest including Valley Fest and participated in two Bands Across America Events.
- The Independence Marching band won awards for Best Color Guard, Best Marching, and Best Hornline at multiple events.
- The music department had multiple all-state selections.
- The cross country team hosted the district meet.
- The fall play cast put on three successful performances of “Murder’s in the Heir”.
- The JH Band was selected to perform at the Iowa Band Masters Association.
- We had our first ever girls wrestling team with 11 girls competing in the state tournament. 2 girls finished runner-up.
- Both Robotics teams qualified for districts.
- Our FFA Meats Team finished 3rd in the state.
- We had multiple cheerleaders perform in a national competition.
- Performance PE has record kids taking the class.
- Multiple kids have signed college scholarships for athletics.

As I look at this list it is hard not to be impressed with the accomplishments of the students involved in the Independence Activities program during the first semester of the school year. So many times people get caught up in results that they can miss the great accomplishments that are happening daily. These accomplishments are a tribute the work that our students are putting in on a daily basis. With this type of work ethic I am excited to see what this list will look like at the end of the year.

Information from your School Nursing Department



How can you tell the difference between a cold and the flu?

Because colds and flu share many symptoms, it can be difficult (or even impossible) to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. Special tests, which usually must be done within the first few days of illness, can tell if a person has the flu.

IS IT A COLD OR FLU?		
SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS	COLD	FLU
Symptom onset	Gradual	Abrupt
Fever	Rare	Usual
Aches	Slight	Usual
Chills	Uncommon	Fairly common
Fatigue, weakness	Sometimes	Usual
Sneezing	Common	Sometimes
Chest discomfort, cough	Mild to moderate	Common
Stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes
Headache	Rare	Common

#FIGHT FLU

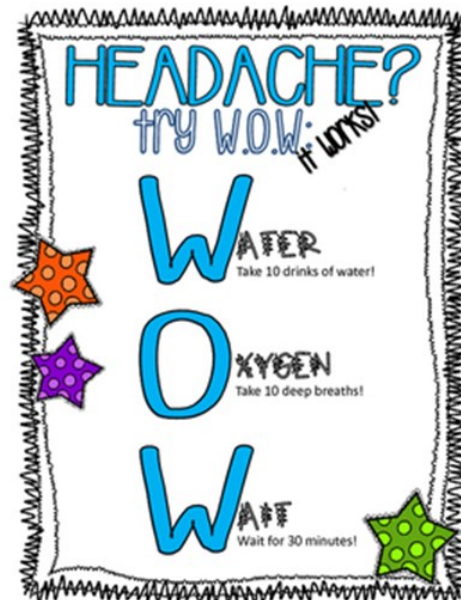


Most headaches aren't the result of a serious illness. Headaches can be triggered by lifestyle factors such as:

- Sleep changes or lack of sleep
- Stress
- Poor eating habits, or not eating
- Dehydration or not getting enough fluids

If you have a headache, with no other symptoms, the below interventions should be tried:

- Water
- Snack
- Deep breaths
- Rest/wait



As always, please contact your school nurse with questions, concerns, needs, or changes with your child's health.

Molly Beatty, RN
East Elementary
319-332-0533

Kelsi Donnelly, BSN, RN
West Elementary
319-332-0589

Jennifer Eddy, BSN, RN
Jr/Sr High School
319-332-0720



Independence Community Schools **Volunteer & Mentor Program Update** **by Val Maximovich**



JANUARY was National Mentoring Month

Mustang Mentoring Mentors & Students cooking up good ideas!

Celebrated by Cooking with Chef Jordan on Thurs., Jan. 23!



*Helping each other!
Braeden tying on his
mentors cooking apron...*



Hands on Learning!



Getting directions from the Chef!

The menu included a zucchini humus wrap, roasted cauliflower, veggie dip, fruit dip. They also learned how to clean fresh fruit and vegetables. Thank you to all the mentors and volunteers for your participation, and to Bank Iowa for sponsoring the event with a Community Caring Grant!



The Mentors and Advisory Committee members have been greeting sports fans once a month during Dec.

Jan and Feb. at concessions at the high school. It's been a great time to visit and serve some great food!

***Thank you to our mentors and volunteers
that volunteered!***

Career Choices and Volunteering ?

Once a quarter, Val Maximovich, Volunteer & Mentor Coordinator, visits with 8th graders in Careers class all about the importance of volunteering! The best part of the class is asking the students how many people/students/adults they actually “TALKED” to in their first two hours of school. When recruiting volunteers and in making a career choice that is a very important skill to master. This quarter has been the greatest number of people they talked to, with an average of 20 people, per student, per hour. Keep up the good work!



MENTORS NEEDED! Call today!

It's only takes 30 minutes a week, during the school day, during the school year to make a difference in the life of a child! Contact Val, 319-332-0626 or email vmaximovich@independence.k12.ia.us, or download the volunteer registration form at <http://www.independence.k12.ia.us/district-departments/volunteer-information/>



Please like our Facebook page Independence Mustang Mentoring! You will find more photos there from our events and upcoming dates!

Only the Junior Senior High School will offer walking hours.

Junior Senior High School - Enter Main Doors

Monday through Friday - 5:30 a.m.-7:30 a.m. and
7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

Buildings will be closed to walkers when...

- there is a school activity in the building
- there is no school
- there is a late start (morning walkers only)
- there is an early dismissal (evening walkers only)

Due to safety and to keep floors clean and dry, please bring shoes other than your street shoes for walking.

Access Card Request

Due to safety and security concerns the District is requesting all building walkers request an Access Card for entry into the building.

- the Access Cards are free, please return card when finished
- request an Access Card from the JSH office starting November 1, 2019
- the building secretary will record your name and give you an Access Card with Lanyard
- card will only work during published hours

Check the District website for details!



EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

It is the policy of the Independence Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy please contact: Erin Burmeister, Director of School Improvement, 1207 1st Street West, Independence, IA 50644, (319) 334-7400 or eburmeister@independence.k12.ia.us

The board requires all persons, agencies, vendors, contractors and other persons and organizations doing business with or performing services for the school district to subscribe to all applicable federal and state laws, executive orders, rules and regulations pertaining to contract compliance and equal opportunity.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

It is the policy of the Independence School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact: Erin Burmeister, Director of School Improvement, 1207 1st Street West, Independence, IA 50644, (319) 334-7400 or eburmeister@independence.k12.ia.us

ANNUAL NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Independence Community School District offers career and technical programs in the following areas of study:

Agriculture

Business

Family and Consumer Science

Industrial Technology

Marketing

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