

**Volume 10 Issue 2**  
**Winter, 2015 - 2016**

**District Events:****February 15**

School Board Meeting -  
Independence 5:00 p.m.

**February 19**

No School

**February 22**

No School-Prof Dev

**March 21**

School Board Meeting -  
Independence 6:00 p.m.

**March 24 - March 28**

No School

**March 29**

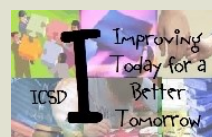
No School - Prof Dev

**April 18**

No School - Prof Dev

**April 18**

School Board Meeting -  
Independence 6:00 p.m.

***From the Desk of Jean Peterson, Superintendent***

As of this writing, February is right around the corner. Another school year is going very fast! Our students continue to progress academically. Our Iowa Assessment scores are back and our teachers are taking time to analyze our students' scores. Knowing this information helps to inform their instruction. Our teachers and support staff work extremely hard to help each individual student do the best he/she can.

In addition, we have had many teams and individuals recognized for their accomplishments over the past several months. Our marching band has continued their tradition of excellence and received top honors in several competitions this fall.



**Jean Peterson,  
Superintendent**

As superintendent of this school district, I am dedicated to making sure we utilize our resources for the benefit of all students, but I cannot do this alone. This is certainly a team effort with teachers, students, parents, classified staff, and community members making this a reality.

We also always need to keep our school's mission at the forefront of everything we do. The mission of the ICSD is: "Educating people to be life-long learners and respectful, responsible citizens." I see evidence every day of our staff helping to make this mission a reality for our students.

**2016-2017 Calendar Committee**

Our Calendar Committee consists of the following people this year:

**District**

Jean Peterson, Superintendent

Justin Putz, Activities Director

Kim Chesmore, Director of Transportation

**School Board Member**

Eric B. Smith

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## **East Elementary**

Danielle Meyer, Principal  
Julie Flickinger, 1<sup>st</sup> grade  
Donna Miller, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade  
Kelly Dolan-Lange, Parent

## **West Elementary**

Dewey Hupke, Principal  
Brenda Hearn, 4<sup>th</sup> grade  
Kay Reidy, 4<sup>th</sup> grade  
Gina Homan, Parent

## **Jr/Sr High School**

John Howard, Principal  
Josh Payton, Assistant Principal  
Tracy Curtis, Math  
Amy Gustafson, Math  
Tia Shaffer, Family/Consumer Science  
Todd Wheelock, Parent

This committee has met twice so far and is making good progress on the design of the 2016-2017 school calendar. We also sent out a survey asking for people's input on next year's calendar. We ended up having 383 people fill out the survey. Of the 383 people responding, 217 were parents, 7 were community members, 55 were staff members from the Jr/Sr High School, 45 were staff members from West Elementary, 36 were staff members from East Elementary, and there were 18 in the Other Category. The committee really appreciated getting this kind of input and feedback from so many people!

Our hope is to get feedback from each of the buildings and then hold the Public Hearing in regard to next year's calendar sometime before the March Board Meeting. The Board would then need to officially approve the calendar at their March 21<sup>st</sup> meeting.

## **2015-2016 School Board Goals**

The school board held a work session in Brandon this past fall. The focus of that work session was for the board to review and update their goals for the school district.

The goals they established were as follows:

1. Obtaining and sustaining academic excellence
2. Responsibly manage fiscal resources
3. Establish a strong public relations/marketing program
4. Establish a long term facility plan
5. Create an exemplary activities department

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The board also reviewed and updated the steps/strategies, resources needed, and the outcomes for each of the goal areas. These goals and action steps can be found on our school's website. Please go to our Home Page and click on the District Information tab. The Board of Education is listed under that tab. Click on Board of Education and it will take you to their 2015-2016 goals page.

## **Early Literacy Legislation**

Many of you have probably either read about or heard about Iowa's Early Literacy Legislation. Reading assessments are part of a comprehensive statewide literacy initiative that focuses on making sure Iowa students are successful readers by the end of third grade. Early intervention is critical for struggling readers. Reading assessments serve as a screening tool to identify students who are struggling and to get them the help they need to get back on track.

Schools screen students in kindergarten through third grade three times a year, in the fall, winter, and spring. Students perform either above or below the target score. Students who score below the target score on one screening assessment are provided with regular monitoring to ensure they stay on track. They also may be provided with additional reading instruction, called intervention. Based on two consecutive screenings, schools then determine for all of the screened students whether they are "adequately progressing", "at risk", or identified as having a "substantial deficiency". Interventions are provided for those students identified as being at risk having a substantial deficiency.

I am writing about this now because under Iowa law, schools will provide intensive summer reading programs starting in May, 2017, for students who have a substantial deficiency in reading at the end of third grade. Students who have a substantial deficiency in reading at the end of third grade must complete the school's intensive reading program to advance to fourth grade, unless they qualify for an exemption.

Our school currently does a good job of monitoring our students' reading and communicating their progress to parents. For the past two summers, we have already offered a summer reading program for all students in grades K-3 who are non-proficient or have a substantial deficiency in reading. We will continue to provide such a program as we move forward too. We feel this extra summer help is really important to help all of our students be successful readers.

As we learn more about this Early Literacy Legislation, we will be sure to get this communicated out to everyone.

## School Improvement by Danielle Meyer, Director of School Improvement

### Teacher Leadership Compensation Grant

The goals of the Teacher Leadership and Compensation are:

- Attract able and promising new teachers by offering competitive starting salaries and offering short-term and long-term professional development and leadership opportunities.
- Retain effective teachers by providing enhanced career opportunities.
- Promote collaboration by developing and supporting opportunities for teachers in schools and school districts statewide to learn from each other.
- Reward professional growth and effective teaching by providing pathways for career opportunities that come with increased leadership responsibilities and involve increased compensation.
- Improve student achievement by strengthening instruction.



Danielle Meyer,  
Director of School Improvement

We have done a lot of work to prepare for the TLC grant. The committee, which consists of the building principals, superintendent, and teachers from each building, meet this month. There will be four new Instructional Coaches. East, West, Jr/Sr High will all have a full time coach. The district will also hire one K-12 Special Education Coach. These coaches will serve as a support for all our teachers. The grant will also allow for the district to hire 11 curriculum leaders. Teachers will serve in this capacity in addition to their teaching responsibilities. The district will also hire five mentor teachers to help support our newly hired teachers.

### Curriculum/ Professional Development

The district has spent some time this year updating the curriculum cycles. The goal of the Independence Community Schools is to have a guaranteed and viable curriculum. This means that it does not matter which teacher your child gets that they will master the exact same skills in each grade level. This guaranteed and viable curriculum should be set around Essential Learnings. These are the skills that we feel each child must know in each grade.

During Professional Development days the teachers have spent time meeting in Professional Learning Communities (PLC's). A PLC is an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. PLCs operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous job-embedded learning for educators. Much of the work of our PLC's is based around teachers coming to an agreement amongst a grade level team or content area team on determining the Essential Learnings. Once that is determined they will figure out the success criteria for students to master these learnings.

## School Registration 2016-2017

by Steve Noyes, Director of Technology

You might be thinking why are we reading about registration in February? Do I need to do something for registration right away? Yes - Every family needs to have a PowerSchool Parent Portal account. The district requires 100% of families to have Parent accounts for 2016-2017 Registration. We only have about 30% of district families with an account as of January 22, 2016.

The District used InfoSnap for several years. We have switched to GrantWood eRegistration. eRegistration is tightly integrated with PowerSchool and will allow for more timely information going into PowerSchool. As part of our switch to eRegistration, we also will switch to RevTrak for registration fees. The great news for parents (fees will not be cheaper), you will be able to see transactions in PowerSchool Parent Portal.



**Steve Noyes,  
Director of Technology**

As of this writing the registration fees for 2016-2017 have not been set but are planned for February 15, 2016, as part of the regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting.

There are additional benefits of eRegistration and RevTrak, which include:

- All-year access to update demographic information
- All-year access to check on fees and all transactions
- Fee management built into PowerSchool
- RevTrak is expandable and the district office will be able to accept credit/debit cards
- All parent registration data will reside in PowerSchool, not split between InfoSnap and PowerSchool
- No need for SNAP codes and individual registration letters
- You may contact the district for all registration questions and never be referred to InfoSnap
- Transaction receipts are available in PowerSchool Parent Portal

In order to take advantage of our new eRegistration program, parents must create PowerSchool Parent Portal. You are able to do this at anytime and we strongly encourage you to create an account before March, 2016. If you already have a PowerSchool Parent Portal account you do not need to recreate the account. Some parents believe they have a parent account but are actually using the Student PowerSchool account. If you log into PowerSchool with your email address or parent username, you have a parent account. If your login name is your student's username, you need to create a Parent account.

Creating a Parent account only takes about 10 minutes, but you must contact your child's building to have instructions and user information emailed/sent to you. This letter is required to create a parent portal account.

Once you create or confirm your Parent PowerSchool portal account, you will be ready to create a RevTrak account. RevTrak requires a separate account for payment but uses your PowerSchool account information to authenticate you and your children. RevTrak is a separate program and will bear the responsibility of processing credit/debit cards, checks and echecks for district and building fees.

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## Principal's Corner by Danielle Meyer, Principal

Some of our staff and students took some time to give back this holiday season. The activity was such a success that the bucket was overflowing when their time was done. It was such a great experience we are thinking of making it a yearly event.



**Danielle Meyer,**  
ECC/East Elem Principal



## Preschool Registration

We are registering children for Preschool for the 2016 - 2017 School year. Please stop in to the Early Childhood Center or call 319-334-4780 to get your child's name on next year's roster. There is a packet for you to fill out, plus a \$25 registration fee. We still have openings in mornings and afternoons; the mornings do fill up quickly. Call Liola Ciesielski with any questions or concerns you may have.

## Kindergarten

In Kindergarten, students are learning about bar graphs. Ms. Forsyth's class used their favorite color to demonstrate how a bar graph can be used. We are increasingly using hands on activities to engage students.



## Positives

At East/ECC we take pride in recognizing the positive in our children. One example is that is having our classes earn Mustang medallions from their teachers. Students earned a variety of rewards. Pictured is Dennis Corkery serving as a guest reader in a second grade class. Below are some of the other rewards students can earn.

### TIER 1

20 Popsicle/Class Picture

30 Star Sticker

40 Extra Recess

50 Guest Reader

60 Popcorn Party

### TIER 2

20 Photo booth

30 Parachute

40 Hat Day

50 Lunch in Room

60 Bouncy Ball

70 Bingo/Game



## 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 the PE teacher, Brian Loughren at East Elementary to volunteer your time!

### Mentors Needed!

If you are interested in being a mentor and volunteering your time to work with a child for approximately 30 minutes each week on a regular basis, please call and let us know!

### Wanted:

### Substitutes

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

**We need YOU!**

## Decoding

Ms. Griswold's second grade class was working on decoding. Code.org offers an elementary school curriculum that allows even the youngest students to explore the limitless world of computing. Students can create interactive games, stories, and art that they can share with anyone.



### 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.



Greetings from West Elementary!!

West Elementary is off to a great 2016! Our teachers have been working very hard to help provide the best education to our students. The teachers have also shared different events along the way.

Our West Elementary students in grades 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> now have the opportunity to participate in archery. There are 53 students in 4<sup>th</sup> grade through 6<sup>th</sup> grade participating. Of those students, 49 participated in an archery tournament hosted by Jesup. This was a first time event for all of those students. Even with the new environment, many of our students did very well and came away with more confidence, not only in archery, but also in their abilities to become better people!

Thank you to our volunteer coaches: Jess Ender, Chris Luloff, Al Klever, Travis Butters, Larry Spece, Al McGraw, Dave Wilson, Steve and Kriss McGraw.

West Elementary has recently completed our winter STAR Assessment. The STAR assessment is one of the ways teachers can monitor the academic progress of our students. While visiting with teachers regarding this assessment, we have seen many students making great progress. This is great news and proof our students/staff/parents have accepted the responsibility of doing what is necessary to help students be successful. Thank you for your support of our school.

~Mr. Dewey Hupke, Principal



**Dewey Hupke,  
Principal**

## Third Grade

Third graders are concluding work on writing narrative compositions and will begin composing opinion pieces. They participate in Daily 5 and work on reading strategies in small groups in addition to receiving an additional thirty-minute block of targeted reading intervention three times per week. Throughout the second trimester, students have completed math units on multiplication and division, place value in whole numbers and decimals, and are currently studying geometry. They also receive two additional thirty-minute periods of differentiated math instruction each week. In Social Studies, students studied the various types of communities, developed geography skills and studied Earth's continents and oceans. We invited guest community members into our classrooms to teach Junior Achievement lessons targeted on life skills involving money management as well as city zoning and planning. Students are currently beginning a science unit on nutrition and digestion.





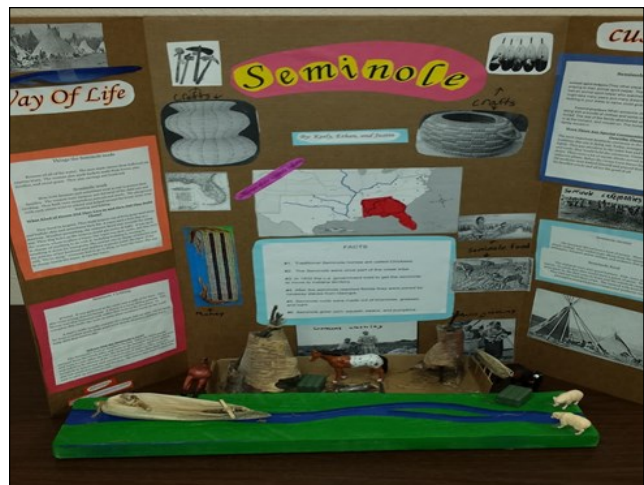
## 4th Grade

In fourth grade, new reading genres continue to be introduced. We are also continuing to work on multiplication and division facts, as we are learning multi-digit multiplication and long division. The processes can be a struggle, but the students are eager to learn the steps involved. The respiratory system is the focus in science (make sure your child shares how the model lung that s/he will make in class works and represents the different parts of the respiratory system). The upcoming focus in social studies will be the land and resources of the Midwest region. We hope that the students are sharing what they are learning at home!



## 5th Grade

The 5th grade classrooms have been working diligently during the month of January. In the fifth grade classrooms the students have been working on geometry concepts and fractions during Math instruction. In our Reading units, the students have been studying different types of text structures, as well as trying their hand at writing summaries using each text type. Fifth graders are working on their at-home reading goals each month. Those who met this month's goals went sledding on January 29th. Lastly, the students have explored The Age of Exploration in Social Studies and in Science we have discovered such fields as the skeleton, electricity, and the prairie.



## From Mrs. Berryhill, TAG Coordinator for West Elementary

In the month of November, ECLIPSE students from West Elementary participated in the Noetic Learning Math Contest. The Noetic Learning Math Contest is a semi-annual problem-solving contest for elementary and middle school students. The goal of the competition is to encourage students' interest in math, to develop their problem solving skills, and to inspire them to excel in math. Students are given 45 minutes to solve 20 problems.

This title is awarded to the top 10% of participating students in the country. Students receive a National Honor Roll medal and a certificate. \*Team member with highest score receives a team medal as well. Honor Roll and National Honorable Mention students are listed on the Noetic website.

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade: Talan Conrad\*  
Cael Post

5<sup>th</sup> Grade: Sydney Schwartz\*

4<sup>th</sup> Grade: Carson Bantz\*  
Ryan Goldenstein\*  
Corbin Naylor

6<sup>th</sup> Grade: Ryan DeBoer\*

The following students received National Honorable Mention. This title is awarded to the top 50% of participating students in the country.

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade: Tyler Wieland, Levi DeBoer, Brady Kurt, Michael Decker, Roman Johnson, Addison Loughren, and AJ Kitner

4<sup>th</sup> Grade: Blake Gates, Zachary Jimmerson, Sydney Schroeder, Lucas Williamson, Jaxon Latwesen, Kaiden Glaspie, Havana Griffith, Carter Fangmann, Kaden Kremer, Caleb Takes, Drew Beatty, J.D. Huffman, Alicia Krusey, Hannah Snyder, and Abby Peyton

5<sup>th</sup> Grade: Ceraphine Franck, Caitlyn Hoglan, Kylee Jacobsen, Matthew Wieland, Wyatt Kresser, Layla Walker, Emily Erdelt, and Sophie Brown

6<sup>th</sup> Grade: Nick Homan, Marcus Beatty, Laura Smith, Lauren Troutman, Nate Copenhaver, Teegan McEnany, Lily Giddings, Grace Huang, Seth Stacy, Alexis Fitz, Dylan Kurt, and Ian Pelton

More detailed information about the Noetic Learning Math Contest can be found at:

<http://www.noetic-learning.com/mathcontest>

## 6th Grade

The current topic of study in sixth grade science is simple machines. Students are beginning by exploring the advantage of using levers. The experiments involve the students figuring out the best placement of the load, fulcrum, and effort. A spring scale and the use of Newtons allow them to form educated conclusions. Students will examine everyday tools that are levers such as scissors, hammers, and even their own arms to determine if they are Class 1, Class 2, or Class 3 levers. A unit on pulleys will follow, and then later students will explore wheels and axles, screws, and inclined planes in simple machine centers. By the end of this study, students will determine that all simple machines have both advantages and disadvantages.

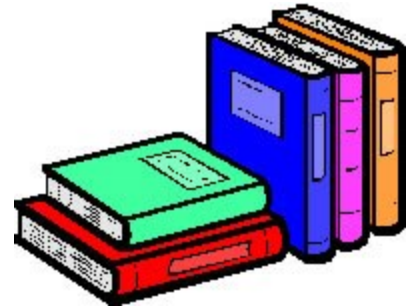
As part of our genre study of historical fiction, sixth graders are learning about the time period known as the Middle Ages. We have read short literature selections that have included pieces about Robin Hood and King Arthur. In addition to that, each student has been reading a novel that takes place in this time period, and we are learning about the characteristics and events of that particular time in history during social studies. This will include topics such as the feudal system, castle life and structure, knights, and medicine. We will compare and contrast historical fiction to other fiction, in addition to biographies and works of nonfiction. Be prepared to hear about the crazy meals and other bizarre aspects of daily life in the Middle Ages.



## Book Fair

### West Elementary Book Fair- Huge Success!

Thanks to the support of parents, students and community members, the West Elementary Book Fair held in November was once again a great success. Our book fair sales for two days was slightly over \$4,000. This gave us a profit of about \$2,000 in Scholastic Dollars to spend through Scholastic. Sixty-five books were taken from the book fair before it was sent back. Twenty of those books were given to students as prizes. The remaining profit will be used to order additional library books and materials.



Thank you to those who participated in our Classroom Wish List this year. With your generosity, 16 books were given to teachers to use in their classrooms.

## Reading Incentive

On January 29<sup>th</sup>, many students were able to enjoy an afternoon of sledding as a reward for working hard at reading at home. Here are some pictures of the event!



Again, we want to thank all of you in the community for your support of our students and staff members. We know it takes the support of the citizens in our community to help make a school be successful.

Mr. Hupke 😊



### “Why”



**Josh Payton,  
JSH Assistant Principal**

“Why” may be one of the most powerful words in language and “why” may be one of the most maddening words in existence when coming from a three year olds constant barrage. The purpose of the word we ask ourselves and why a toddler asks is the same, we seek to

understand our world and find a deeper meaning. Working with students and my own children, when faced with a discipline issue or situation I always look at the “why”, “why would my child behave that way?” or “why would they make THAT decision?” To understand motivation of behaviors, we work to understand what the response is to the behavior.

Reinforcement is how we get behaviors, providing a positive or negative consequence will reinforce the desired behavior,

depending on what is more impactful to the student will reinforce the behavior to happen or not happen over time. If an unwanted behavior is exhibited, it’s important to follow up the consequence with why the behavior is unwanted and then teach the desired behavior, then give the positive reinforcement when the desired behavior happens. Everything comes back to the “why” or the motivation for us to behave the way we do. When working with your student, attempt to reinforce the positive, consequence the negative and celebrate the victories!

**“Tell me and I forget;  
show me and I remember;  
involve me and I understand.”**

**— Anonymous**

## Sound Off...I Think

By Mr. Howard



**John Howard,  
JSH Principal**

Every once in a while I have enough energy to stay up on Sunday nights and watch “Sound Off” on Channel 13. This popular call-in show, devoted to sports, is hosted by Keith Murphy and Andy Fales and contains segments such as ‘What’s Bugging Andy, Look-a-Likes, Big Ol’ Fish, and (often) Murphy’s Law. But the segment of the show which applies most to this Winter 2016 edition is called “I Think”. During these few minutes, both Keith and Andy simply express their opinions on a plethora of sports topics beginning with the words “I Think”.

So, what does this have to do with Independence Jr/Sr High School? Well, I decided to write my own “I think” list for our school. Hope you enjoy.

I think our facilities are some of the best in the state of Iowa. I marvel at them, even after almost two years here.

I think more students should dress for the weather. There are such things as pants, coats, gloves, and hats.

I think our staff does a tremendous job each and every day to meet the needs of students.

I think our students work hard, show tremendous commitment, and work to Live the Mustang Way.

I think the musical “Anything Goes” will be a smashing success.

I think our Iowa Assessment scores were good this year. What a credit to our students, staff, and parents.

I think we will have multiple state wrestling qualifiers, and our team will make the state wrestling duals.

I think our paraprofessionals and administrative assistants do wonderful work daily.

I think our conference should play varsity basketball girl/boy double shooters.

I think more students and staff need positive recognition.

I think our speech teams are really good!

I think our lunches are much better this year. I have gotten a lot of compliments from students and parents.

I think our transportation department needs praise every day for getting our students to and from school and to and from activities.

I think more people should attend the Mustang Foundation Banquet. It is a great celebration of everything Mustang.

I think our Booster Club and Music Boosters do much more than people realize.

I think we need to do all we can to increase our enrollment.

I think more people should follow me on Twitter (JohnHoward1996) for school announcements.

I think our decisions, over the last few years, to enhance our school safety have met their goals.

I think more people should follow the district Facebook page.

Finally, and probably most importantly, I think Independence Jr/Sr High School is an excellent learning environment and “Together, WE Can Reach the Top.”

So, due to time and space reasons, my list is now complete. For those who were counting...there are twenty. The point of this Winter Edition was to mimic the portion of “Sound Off” entitled “I Think”, and I did that for Independence Jr/Sr High School. I told everyone what “I Think”. Go Mustangs!

## Activities

**By Justin Putz, Activities Director**



**Justin Putz,  
Activities Director**

As I sit here on a snow day, 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 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 are some of Independence Activities Successes from this year to date:

- Ryan Adams qualified for the State Cross Country meet. He is only the fourth male qualifier in the last 25 years.
- The volleyball team played in their third consecutive regional final.
- The football team qualified for their second consecutive play-off appearance and started the season 8-0.
- 3 fall athletes were selected for all-state teams.
- The marching band won 3 contests.
- The Independence color guard had an undefeated season and was selected as the most outstanding color guard at each contest they participated in.
- The wrestling team won the Wamac East title and had 3 individual Wamac tournament champions.
- The wrestling team currently has four wrestlers rated in the top ten in the state.
- The boys and girls basketball team each went 3-0 in their non-conference games.
- The Independence band and vocal programs had 6 all-state performers this year.
- The junior high band had NEIBA honor band with two selected to participate in All-Iowa 8<sup>th</sup> Grade honor band.
- Two vocalists were selected to be in the semi-finalist at the Dorian Vocal Music Festival.
- The large group speech program qualified 38 students participating in 8 events for the state competition.

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 in a little over half a 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.





Val Maximovich,  
Volunteer & Mentor  
Coordinator

## Independence Community Schools **Volunteer & Mentor Program Update by Val Maximovich** **2015-16 School Year**

### **January was National Mentoring Month!**

National Mentoring Month was celebrated in many ways! It all began on Mon., Jan. 4, with Mayor Bonnie Davis attending Mentor Monday at Em's Coffee Co. Many mentors were in attendance for the Proclamation signing declaring January National Mentoring Month in Independence, Iowa. We had a great time sharing "conversation cards" and "adult coloring sheets".



**MUSTANG  
MENTORING**



The fun continued for the mentors and mentees at the movie "Penguins of Madagascar" on Sat., Jan. 16 at the Starlight Theatre. We had a really cold day, but Frosty the Snowman was able to come visit and get pictures with all of us!



Thank you John Klotzbach, Independence Bulletin-Journal for your awesome coverage of the event!

On Friday, Jan. 22, all mentors were invited to be honored at "Hot Dog Friday" at the St. James Episcopal Church. They each received a Volunteer Recognition certificate signed by Gov. Branstad. The certificates were awarded by Val Maximovich and Dianne Hepke. They are all appreciated spending time with their child and making a difference in their lives!



We were also privileged to have a "Mentoring Month" display at the Independence Public Library. It was a great opportunity for the community to see what the program is all about. Thank you, Laura Blaker, Director, Library Board and staff for making that possible!

On January 23 we were able to participate in the Mustang Foundation fundraiser, and serve a scrumptious "chocolate cherry torte". A special thank you to everyone at table #13 for their support of the Mentoring program!

Thank you to everyone for their continued support, and be sure to take just a moment out of your day to thank your mentor! *"In Real Life" it matters.*

*Just a reminder Mentor Mondays continue Mar. 7, Apr. 4, May 2, and June 6 at Em's Coffee Co., 324 1<sup>st</sup> St E, 4 to 5 p.m.! Come join us!*

In March we will recognize another Mentor of the Year at the annual Chamber banquet on Sat., Mar. 12. Be sure to be watching for who will be honored this year!

Be sure to like us on facebook  at Independence Mustang Mentoring and follow us on twitter at #mentorirl 

If you would like to be a **mentor or a volunteer**, please contact Val at 319-332-0626, email [vmaximovich@independence.k12.ia.us](mailto:vmaximovich@independence.k12.ia.us), or download the volunteer registration form at <http://www.independence.k12.ia.us/district-departments/volunteer-information/>

PowerSchool and RevTrak are required accounts for you to be able to register for 2016-2017. You may and are encouraged to create the Parent PowerSchool account as soon as possible. We will be sending out instructions in April for the RevTrak account, but everyone needs the Parent account created before the RevTrak account will function.

**We re on the Web**  
**<http://www.independence.k12.ia.us>**

Since I am writing about accounts, all K-12 parents will want to create a Canvas account for 2016-2017. I wrote in November about Canvas and we are expanding its use to K-12 for 2016-2017. All parents will be able to see important information within Canvas. Each building will be using Canvas in various ways, but the district will emphasize Canvas for next year.

Another account is SchoolMessenger. If you have a Parent Portal account, you are able to manage SchoolMessenger information from the Parent Portal. Remember, SchoolMessenger allows you to add more phone numbers, email addresses and text message information.

The final account is the Lunch account. The Lunch account allows you to add money for student meals. Please contact Annette Harbaugh in the Food Service department to create an account.

To sum up this letter, (in case you just skipped to the end):

- Parents need to create a Parent Portal Account, one account per family. To create this account, contact your child's building to request a letter.
- Parents need the Parent Portal Account to create a RevTrak account in April once RevTrak is fully functional and tested.
- Parents may use the Parent Portal account to manage SchoolMessenger.
- Parents may create a separate Canvas account and will be strongly encouraged as we approach September, 2016.
- Parents may create a separate Lunch account to pay for food service fees.

All of these various accounts can be confusing, but they all start with a valid PowerSchool Parent Account. Please create your account soon.

Have a great spring and feel free to contact Steve Noyes, [snoyes@independence.k12.ia.us](mailto:snoyes@independence.k12.ia.us) with any questions.

#### **EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY**

The board will not discriminate in its educational activities on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, gender, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status.

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.

The board is committed to the policy that no otherwise qualified person will be excluded from educational activities on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, gender, socioeconomic status, marital status, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. Further, the board affirms the right of all students and staff to be treated with respect and to be protected from intimidation, discrimination, physical harm and harassment.

#### **NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

It is the policy of the Independence School District not to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, 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: Danielle Meyer, Director of School Improvement, 1207 1st Street West, Independence, IA 50644, (319) 334-7400 or [dmeyer@independence.k12.ia.us](mailto:dmeyer@independence.k12.ia.us)