

Volume 17 Issue 1
Fall, 2022 - 2023

District Events:

Nov 23-25

No School;
Thanksgiving Break

Dec 2

No School

Dec 9

2 hour Early Dismissal-
Prof Dev

Dec 16

2 hour Early Dismissal
Prof Dev

Dec 19

School Board Meeting
6:00 p.m.

Dec 22

2 hour Early Dismissal

Dec 23- Jan 3

No School;
Winter Break

Jan 4

School Resumes

Jan 6 and 13

2 hour Early Dismissal-
Prof Dev

Jan 16

No School

Jan 17

School Board Meeting
6:00 p.m. *subject to
change

Jan 20 and 27

2 hour Early Dismissal-
Prof Dev

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From the Superintendent's Desk...

It's been a great start to the 2022-23 school year and our staff is committed to making your child's education the very best possible. We're seeing successes in the classroom, our activities, and in the community which always provides a sense of pride in our students.

Please contact your child's teacher and building principal if you ever have any questions regarding their education. Parents can stay in touch with their child's assignments, grades, attendance, and receive communications from the school through our PowerSchool program. It's a great tool to stay in touch!

Our HS Marching Band won numerous competitions this fall and recorded their 31st consecutive Division 1 ratings at State. The varsity football team had an excellent season as they made it to the 2nd round of the IHSAA football playoffs. The Independence FFA Chapter earned the right to compete at the State Soils competition at Iowa State University. The Independence JH and HS Bass Fishing clubs won State Championships while the Fall play was another outstanding success.

A high school initiative that has received a great deal of attention this year is the Oakwood Cemetery project. Our students took a day during Homecoming week and cleaned headstones at the Oakwood Cemetery here in town. This is a great community service project and our students take a great deal of pride in giving back to the community.

On behalf of the Independence administrative team, we thank you for your support and please contact us if you have any questions.



Russell Reiter,
Superintendent



School Improvement by Erin Burmeister, Director of School Improvement



**Erin Burmeister,
Director of School Improvement**

“Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning.” -Benjamin Franklin

Continual growth and progress are great words to describe Independence Community School District. We continue to grow and make progress in so many areas, including, but not limited to, academic achievement. In October, the Iowa Department of Education released new results for the online accountability reporting system called the Iowa School Performance Profile (ISPP). This is an online tool showing how public schools performed on required measures. “This is an important tool for parents, educators and other stakeholders to understand how their schools are performing,” said Iowa Department of Education Director Ann Lebo.

The Iowa School Performance Profiles don’t tell the full story about schools, however for Independence, it continues to add to our story of growth and progress in many areas. Our schools had been previously designated as schools in need of Targeted support for our subgroup, students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP’s). We are very pleased that our schools are no longer designated and all three of the buildings received an overall rating of commendable. For this subgroup, students with disabilities, at the Junior/Senior High, the overall score in 2019 was 40.89, it increased to 41.78 in 2021, and increased again in 2022 to 46.5. West has also continued to grow since 2019. In 2019 the score for this subgroup was 36.24, it increased to 42.51 in 2021, and increased again in 2022 to 47.07.

In addition, we saw progress and growth for students in the area of English Language Arts (ELA). For students at West Elementary, they scored in the 73rd percentile for growth in ELA as compared to other students in the state of Iowa. Students at the Junior/Senior High also made progress in this area. These students scored in the 68th percentile for growth in ELA. This growth and progress didn’t just happen, it came from a lot of hard work by dedicated professionals. Independence continues to grow and make progress with being closely aligned with the Iowa Core Standards. Teachers are very intentional with their instruction, making every minute of instruction count. Additionally, teachers are clearly communicating expectations with students by using learning goals and learning targets (I can statements).

Across the district, teachers have continued to strengthen instruction by using high leverage teaching strategies and paying attention to things that matter and will continue to move us forward. This includes student engagement, establishing rules and strong procedures, building relationships and communicating high expectations. In addition, providing high quality direct instruction, opportunities for practice and deepening lessons, and opportunities to engage students in cognitively complex tasks. All the while, providing feedback so teachers can monitor learning and adjust instruction as necessary and students can monitor their own learning.

All of this work is possible because of our growth and progress with strengthening collaborative structures for staff. Early out Fridays provide opportunities for teachers to meet more frequently with their colleagues, share ideas, plan together, create interventions, and provide feedback to each other and students. We must continue to grow and make progress as a district so our students can continue to grow and make progress.

For more information, and to access the Iowa School Performance Profiles, visit iaschoolperformance.gov.

Project Supply and Equipment Issues

As you have experienced supply issues, so has Independence Community School District. The supply issues are affecting everything from computer chips, sound equipment, general supplies and almost everything.

We ordered audio equipment and it took almost a year to arrive. Our new copiers were promised in June and finally arrived in November. We have orders which will not be filled until March of 2023. Many times, the delay is not the large piece of equipment, but the smaller accessory pieces of equipment.



**Steve Noyes,
Director of Technology**

The new sound board for the auditorium has arrived in Iowa for installation but will not be installed until the accessory components arrive. The wiring for the new auditorium mixer have already been run, the rest of the equipment probably will not arrive until January or maybe February.

The list ongoing school projects waiting for parts and pieces is long, but overall improving compared to last year.

Since 2023 is just around the corner (about six week), what is the outlook for equipment?

All of our vendors are expecting things to vastly improve in the new year. Many of the backlogs of orders are now being processed and the supply issues are improving. The goal is to order equipment and the equipment arrives in a short period of time; weeks-not years.

The school district has seen improvement for timeframe of ordering equipment and supplies.

Early indications of improved supply issues:

- Equipment arriving before originally promised
- Vendors shortening their expected ship and installation dates

We have actually had several surprises this year as our order was filled several months before the initial ship date. This is very exciting to see equipment and materials beat previous shipping expectations.

As all of us 'wait' for the supply issues, please understand we have several ongoing improvements and eventually the equipment will arrive.

As the weather is changing, ensure you are prepared to receive weather-related information by contacting your student's building with address, phone and email changes.

I know it is early but registration for 2023 will open Saturday, July 15, 2023.

East Elementary and the Early Childhood Center are off to a great start to the year. Staff and students are working at **Living the Mustang Way**. We are kind, grateful, respectful and responsible.

Preschool

This fall has been full of learning and fun. We have been working hard at learning to be a student, persisting in tasks, and helping each other. In October we held our annual fall Preschool Family Night Out event. We had almost 150 people attend. Wow! That is great participation. During the event, Officer Ben Ward and his K9 companion, Koda, came to show off some of their skills. We watched how Koda listens to Officer Ward and reacts to his commands. The participants also had the opportunity to color bookmarks and fall color-by-number pictures. Then for a tasty treat, we decorated pumpkin cookies. Yum! Vonnie from the Independence Public Library came to read stories, sing songs, do finger plays, and tell us about the library's new program 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten. The preschoolers are well on their way to achieving the 1,000 books goal. If you wish to know more about the 1,000 books program, visit the Independence Public Library website.



Kay Reidy, Principal



Kindergarten

Fall has been a busy time in kindergarten! We have been learning about using environmental print to help us learn about "Reading the World." Students have learned how to retell using favorite storybooks. We love to read and retell *The Carrot Seed* and *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*!

In math we have been working on building number foundation. At this time, we are focusing on answering "how many" questions, counting out, and comparing groups within 10. Students are also learning how to write a number to represent how many.

In November we will be learning about Thanksgiving and sharing things we are thankful for as kindergarteners. Please continue to encourage and reading and writing at home. Have a safe and wonderful Thanksgiving!



First Grade

If you need a Word Detective our first graders can help; as they have earned their Word Detective badges. Tricky words are no

problem for our Word Detectives. We have also continued to learn high frequency words in a SNAP! First grade has been working on solving addition and subtraction word problems in math.

We are looking forward to sharing our Family Turkey Projects this month with our classmates.



Second Grade

In second grade math we have been working on adding and subtracting within 100. For writing, we have been working on creating and editing complete sentences. We have also been working on planning out our writing before beginning to write our story. As for reading, we have been working on scooping up more words and choosing the "right fit books" to read. Finally, in second grade science, we have been working on discovering and learning about different types of animals and their classifications. We look forward to celebrating a sense of community during Stone Soup this month.

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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.

Greetings from West Elementary!



Cheri Reed, Principal

It has been a busy fall with a successful Parent-Teacher Conferences, setting and meeting our wellness goals, collaborating and strengthening our curriculum and instruction, visiting and learning in new environments with Fontana, growing our capacity in Professional Learning Communities, and continually asking, “How can we best meet the social, emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of all of our students?” Whew! What an incredible opportunity to learn and work with teams and a community completely dedicated to the success of the whole student.

When we talk about meeting the needs of the “Whole student”, we are talking about all of the educational opportunities and decisions we make in order to positively impact our students’ intellectual development. To achieve this, all of us play a vital role. In each interaction with students and with each other, we are modeling and building a foundation for our future learning success.

Thank you for partnering with us to make West Elementary the very best it can be. We appreciate your support and look forward to continuing a positive and productive 2022-2023 school year.

Go Mustangs!

Cherilyn Reed, West Elementary Principal

MUSIC

In the music room at West, students have been working hard on a variety of units and skills. 3rd grade students just finished up a mini-unit on Mariachi, learning all about the music and dance from Mexico.

4th graders are deep into their holiday music for their program on December 20 at 7:00.

5th grade students are finishing up their Recorder Karate unit where we’ve had several students become Black Belts, mastering 9 songs on their recorder. They will be headed into a unit about the musical *Annie* once Recorder Karate is finished.

6th grade students have been working on writing their own parodies to Miley Cyrus’s *Party in the USA*. Once those are presented, we’ll enter into our ukulele unit, learning some holiday tunes and how to fingerpick. Looking forward to more music and fun as the year progresses!

Third Grade

Third grade students have been learning about how to build their third grade reading life, which means picking good-fit books, checking for understanding, and staying focused on their reading. They have worked hard to write a small moment story about their lives, making sure they are telling their story in order with lots of details and complete sentences. Third grade students are excited about the new math curriculum! They have been learning about various ways to represent multiplication and how multiplication relates to the area of a rectangle. In science, they have learned about selection and how scientists use selection to make different plant varieties. The third grade students also enjoyed learning about agriculture from Mr. Haden's students. The third grade students are excited to be at West!



Fourth Grade

We were fortunate to have Fontana naturalist, Michael Maas, come and teach our students about the different types of rocks and volcanoes. It tied in well with our Birth of Rocks unit in science. All fourth grade classrooms are learning a new math curriculum resource (Illustrative Math). We jumped right in and have covered basic multiplication, factors, and multiples. We are currently working on how to find an equivalent fraction. Fourth grade students are learning new information about the Northeast Region including the states, capitals, and abbreviations of each state. Students who met their at-home reading goal of 400 minutes celebrated their accomplishment by playing kickball and participating in a fall craft! Please continue reading at least 20 minutes every night. Reading is the best way to increase vocabulary!



Fifth Grade

Reading/ Writing and Language Arts - Fifth grade students are working towards taking charge of their reading life. Students are learning how to respond to their reading by thinking analytically in their independent reading. Students will be thinking about the important parts of their book and supporting their ideas with evidence from the text. All year long we will be learning to dig deeper in our understanding about our reading. We are learning about themes in literature in the first unit of study.

Math - Fifth grade students are enjoying the new *Illustrative Math* curriculum resource. Unit 1 focused on concepts of volume. Students used blocks to build prisms, count its cubic volume, and to record an expression that represented their models. Students also learned how to use additive volume to find the total volume of combined prisms.

Social Studies and Science - Our 5th grade students are learning about how Native Americans adapted to their environments in social studies. In science, the students began to explore and question ideas about space such as gravity, specifically Earth's gravitational pull, apparent brightness of stars, and how seasonal changes are proof of Earth's orbit around the sun.

Sixth Grade

For five days of school this fall, our sixth grade students spent their days at parks in Buchanan County rather than at school, learning science, history, and math. Each of the five sections of sixth grade rotated through five different days of learning and team building experiences. The School of the Wild is a program out of the University of Iowa that promotes outdoor learning across the state of Iowa. School districts tailor the week to align with the resources available in their local communities.

Day one for some students began at Jakway Forest. While there, students learned how to identify trees and used math to determine the ages of trees. Nature walks in the forest allowed time to be calm and to appreciate the environment surrounding them, pausing to journal and sketch their observations. A stop at the bird blind was a new experience for many.



Survival skills was the topic of the day at Boies Bend where students practiced building small fires and shelters. Another new experience was creating a successful solar still to collect water. Each student also discovered a fossil (that may hold more meaning during our future geology unit) while walking along the riverbed at this park. They learned how to identify the poison ivy, and to our knowledge, were successful in staying away from it!

Most people probably don't know what a fen is, but our students do! At Rowley Fen, the students experienced its unique characteristics by jumping on the fen as well as learning about the environment of the prairie. Students had the opportunity to compare how the land was used in the past compared to now and discuss the effects on the prairie and wildlife. After exploring both areas, students were able to realize the similarities, differences, and importance of these diverse ecosystems in Iowa. What at first appeared to be a very modest location proved to be much more fun and educational than students expected!

Students returned to Jakway Forest park for a tour of the 1851 historic house where they learned about the history of the small town of Buchanan (that later moved to Aurora), the township of Buffalo Grove, and a bit about Buchanan County. While using a large-scale map model based on an 1875 map in the house, students learned that there were 120 schools in our county at one point in time! Going back further in history, students had the opportunity to throw wooden darts using atl-atls like our ancient ancestors thousands of years ago. The day also included practice with compasses with orienteering activities.

Although some of the students have had experience in canoes, this was the first time many of them paddled on a river. Students learned different strokes and took to the Wapsipinicon River with persistence and teamwork to trek a seven mile stretch of river. They were taught how to read the river: the depth, the curves, current, ripples, and more. Breaks were taken at sandbars where students discovered mussels (commonly referred to as clam shells). If time allowed, our Buchanan County naturalist shared more information about mussels and demonstrated water quality testing. Thank you to Jerry Franz for the use of his canoes to help explore the river.

Our students are more educated citizens of our county, learning to appreciate the beauty and opportunities that exist within our reach, and are eager to return to share the experiences with their family and friends. This unforgettable week could not have happened without a team of individuals supporting the sixth grade teachers. Thank you to the additional chaperones/educators: Naturalist Sondra Cabell, Naturalist Michael Maas, retired DNR conservationist Sue O'Loughlin, retired Sheriff Bill Wolfram, AEA Science Consultant Chelsie Byram, former Independence teacher

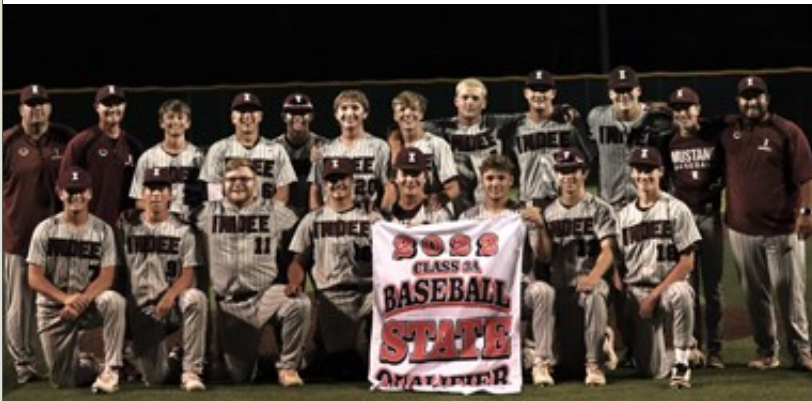
Mindy Jenkins, West Instructional Coach Heather Grover, and former student Jacob Kurt (certified EMT and trained in various outdoor programs). Other school staff helped in other ways: Cheri Reed, Jami Tekippe, Janel Rathbun, School Nurse Kelsi Donnelly, our cafeteria staff, and bus drivers. It was an unforgettable week of school, and one student commented, "I wish it was School of the Wild week all year long!"



It has been a busy fall (as usual) at the Junior/Senior High School. This follows a busy summer of baseball (state qualifier!), jazz band camp (54 students!), and summer lifting (140 students 7-12!). The summer lifting culminated in a "showcase" (Mustang Night Lights) on Friday, August 5 at Lyle Linebaugh Stadium, where kids had the opportunity to show their peers, parents, and community members what their work in the weight room this summer looked like.



Ian Kleman, Jr/Sr High School Principal



2022 Indee State Qualifying Baseball Team

Our Jr. High students have been busy with cross-country, football, and volleyball. The Jr. High Student Council put together a great assembly at the end of the first quarter and also led our Red Ribbon Week activities. Many thanks to our Jr. High Student Council and their sponsor, Ashley Foreman!



Mustang Night Lights Showcase Participants



Jazz Band Camp Final Performance

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The Sr. High Student Council has been active all fall, planning various activities, including homecoming week. The dance was shifted this year to the Saturday prior to Homecoming and was well attended by our student body. Big shout out to sponsor Andria Anderson and the Sr. High Student Council. Please see Mr. Hupke's article for info on our service day during homecoming week!

Our Marching Band had an outstanding marching season, capturing numerous 1st and 2nd place finishes. In addition to their halftime performances, I had the opportunity to watch them perform at Kingston Stadium in Cedar Rapids, a performance for which they earned a well-deserved 1st place finish. If you haven't seen our Mustang Marching Band perform at a competition, I encourage you to make time next fall to see them!

Our football team also had a very good season, which ended too soon for all of us (esp. our student athletes) at Humboldt, after a hard fought game in the state quarterfinals. Perhaps most impressive about watching the Mustangs play this season was the direct line from summer and fall work in the weight room to what happened on the field. If you see Austin Pink or Justin Putz, ask them about our Strength and Conditioning program, which is among the best in the state of Iowa.

The Bass Fishing Club, sponsored by Todd Reed, is a relatively informal club here at Indee, with students joining for various tournaments throughout the year. At the State Tournament in Prairie du Chien, our students took first place in both the Sr. High and Jr. High divisions. In other words, we dominated the field. Congrats to Todd and all our anglers!



Earlier in the fall, our students had the opportunity to greet 3 Marines as they walked through Independence on their way from Charlestown, MA (home of the USS Constitution) to Newport, OR, (3365 mi) raising awareness about POW/MIA and their families. Many thanks to Chris Juhl, who had some of her art students create posters we displayed as the Marines walked by. We had quite a few teachers take their students out to the "Old Highway 20" to encourage the Marines and I know the Marines appreciated that support. It was a great opportunity for our kids to be a part of something unique and meaningful for those Marines and the families of those still missing from war. You can learn more and follow their journey on [Facebook](#).

Finally, a big "Thank you!" to the staff, students, and Independence community for welcoming me into the school this year. It's been a great start and I'm excited to support all our students to do the great things they are capable of doing!

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Independence Jr/Sr High School Day of Service:

On September 21, 2022, the Jr/Sr High School students participated in a service project working together to clean tombstones, reset tombstones, and other odds and ends at Oakwood Cemetery. The students and staff who participated did an amazing job giving back to the community. Below is an email we received from a gentleman who heard of our recent Day of Service as well as some pictures of the staff and students in action. This Spring, our school is going to be working at doing a day of service titled, "Day of Action." This day of action may be of interest to you as you read this newsletter. Our goal is to assist in ways that may not be otherwise possible for community organizations. Example projects might include assisting with large scale cleanup, completing high volume tasks, etc. If you are interested in sharing some ideas, please feel free to contact Dewey Hupke at 319-332-0704, or email at dhupke@indeek12.org



**Dewey Hupke, JSH
Assistant Principal**

Date: Wed, Sep 21, 2022 at 9:05 PM

Subject: School activity in the **news**.

To: reiter@independence.k12.ia.us <reiter@independence.k12.ia.us>

Mr. **Reiter**: I was thrilled when I saw mention of a town from my neck of the woods making the **news** with something so positive. Scrubbing tomb stones isn't glamorous work but worthwhile none the less.

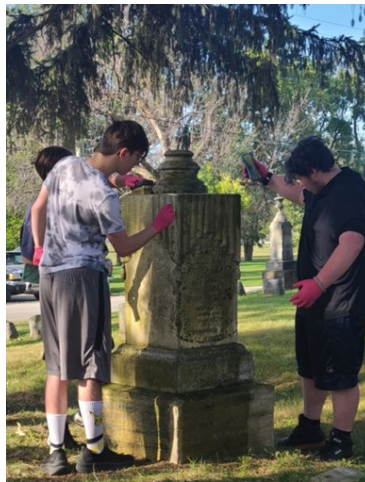
I'm 81 and not in the box yet but would be pleased if I were In an Independence cemetery and a group of young folks took time out of their busy homecoming week to "clean my stone".

Give them all a Big Thank You from all those that can't "Reach out".

A side note: I grew up in Arlington, Ia. Class of 1959. Our son is Dr. Buck, superintendent from Waukee so we have our ear to the ground when we hear of some School Dist. doing something "special".

I've written nearly 300 rhymes, even published 4 books of My stuff. I'll copy one below that might be appropriate for the occasion. I hope you find some enjoyment in it.

Oldbuck, 81, long time Iowan from Cedar Rapids, Ia.



This fall has been a busy time in the activities world. We have had sports, concerts, fall, play, music contests and additions, honor bands and choirs, FFA, pep band and many other activities that went on. We are now in the transition into winter sports and activities. All these events provide a great outlet for students to explore their passions while developing life skills, learning lessons, finding ways to handle adversity or stress, and making lasting memories and friendships. However, many of these events or contests would not be possible without judges or officials. Additionally, we need volunteers to help make these events and seasons happen. I wanted to use my article to plug the importance of officials and volunteers and encourage you to help in any way you can.

We are currently seeing a shortage in officials and judges. While we have been lucky in Independence so far, there have been a growing number of games cancelled across the state in baseball, football, and basketball due to the lack of officials on a given night. This season we actually played 1 varsity football game on the road with 4 officials instead of the normal 5. This shortage of officials has also caused other officials to work 4-5 nights a week leading to burnout. I can say that we have personally had a tougher time getting all of our games filled this last calendar year than any other time in the last 9 years. With more and more youth and club games being added and sports such as girls wrestling growing the need for officials will only grow in future years.

I wanted to write this article on what can be done to help solve this issue. First, we all need to appreciate that officiating is a service industry. While officials are getting paid many of them do it as a hobby, a way to stay connected to sports, and a way to give back. It is not something they have to do rather they know officials are important to providing opportunities to kids. Most officials have a full-time day job and sacrifice time away from home or vacation time to work our events. While many are far from perfect with the calls they make the games do not go on without them. As a society we need to appreciate the work of the officials regardless of the calls they make. This goes for youth sports, clubs, all the way to high school sports. Many young officials are not coming back as they have bad experiences at youth and lower levels. These places should be a place for new or inexperience officials to learn. Everyone has to start somewhere and the varsity level is not it. Youth and lower level games are a good training ground for new officials.

The other thing we can do is consider becoming an official or encourage others who would be good at it to become officials. I think baseball/softball can be a great summer job for former players. Basketball and wrestling are great jobs for students in college. Youth and lower levels pay well and allow for younger officials to still be free in the evenings or work on the weekends. I have provided some information below on how to become certified. If interested please take a look at the resources below or do not hesitate to contact me or a coach to help you get started. If you know someone who would be good encourage them to consider helping out. The game and contests need them.

<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/interscholastic-officiating>

<https://www.iahsaa.org/officials/>

<https://ighsau.org/ighsau-officials/>

<http://www.ihssa.org/judges.html>

Last I wanted to mention that none of our events or seasons can happen without volunteers. Over the years many of our events have grown, new activities have been added, or our current facilities have allowed us to host more. This has led to a greater demand for volunteers. We are always looking for volunteers to take admissions, work scoreboards, score books, timers, spotters, PA announcing, chain gang etc. Just as officials, these volunteers are crucial to us being able to over these opportunities to our students. If you have some area you would be able to volunteer or a sport/activity you are passionate about we would love to have you help out would be happy to train you. The support of current and past volunteers is greatly appreciated, but if you have not in the past please consider helping out if possible. If any interest feel free to reach out jputz@indeek12.org



**Justin Putz,
Activities Director**

Information from your School Nursing Department

Molly Beatty, RN
East Elementary

Kelsi Donnelly, BSN, RN, NCSN
West Elementary

Jennifer Eddy, BSN, RN
Jr/Sr High School

We are off to a busy start to the school year!
As we enter our winter months with cold and flu season upon us, here are some steps you can take to help keep healthy.

Protecting Physical Health

- Wash hands for 20 seconds frequently throughout the day.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow. Also remember to keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Keep your child home when they are sick. This is important for keeping other students from getting sick. Some illnesses are contagious even after your child is feeling better, so contact to the school to find out when your child can return.
- Staying up-to-date on childhood vaccines can prevent your child from missing school days.
- If your child has an existing health condition requiring care at school, make sure you talk with their school nurse to get a plan in place.

Dressing for the Cold

Winter weather is coming!! If you need assistance in getting any winter weather gear (coat, hat, snow pants, boots, and/or gloves) please reach out to your building nurse and they can assist you in getting these items.



Protecting Mental Health

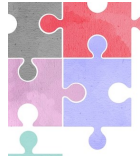
Taking care of mental health is just as important as taking care of physical health. Here are some tips to help you support your child:

- Communicate. Talk to your child about their day, and let them know they can always tell you if something is bothering them.
- Provide positive feedback. Let your child know when you notice them doing something well.
- Model coping skills. Talk to your child when you are experiencing an emotion, like sadness, and show them how you manage it in a healthy way.
- Practice physical activity. This can be a sport, taking the dog for a walk, or simply dancing around the living room.
- Get help if you are worried your child is struggling.** You can ask the school or their doctor for resources.



Val Maximovich,
Volunteer & Mentor
Coordinator

Independence Community Schools Volunteer & Mentor Program Update by Val Maximovich



The back to school mentoring event was held in September bringing the students and mentors back together. ISU Extension educator, Lori Dietzenbach made a great presentation about the life of a tree. Similar to our lives, the rings on the tree show how life has affected growth. Those attending made a tree of puzzle pieces while sharing their summer stories.



Piecing their story back together one "leaf" at a time" between mentors and students.



November is a time of Gratitude, Reflection and Connection

During November, we join others in recognizing what we are grateful for. It's a great time to shine a light on the nature of mentoring, show our gratitude to young people that are part of our lives.



I am grateful for the students and the mentors that are part of the mentoring program this year and years past. I also thank the teachers and staff that support the program and take the time to recommend a mentor. It's not always easy to balance the needs of each and every student.

A story to share about mentoring:

I received an email from an 8th grader recently, who struggles with his classes. He has had a mentor for five years and still can't wait to visit with him every week. The student asked in his email if "his relative in 4th grade could have a mentor". I said we will look into it, his response was "she has been getting in trouble so I was wondering if a mentor would help her like it helped me ". These responses remind of us why we do, what we do. *I am grateful.*

January is National Mentoring Month

Each January we come together to celebrate mentoring, we raise awareness for how one conversation, one experience and one mentor can change a young person's life!

Become a mentor!

Mentoring has a positive lifelong impact for both students and mentors. For the student it builds social skills, increases attendance, communication skills and so much more! For the mentor it builds leadership and management skills, expand professional networks, and provide an empowering opportunity to give back to the community. Take 30-45 minutes a week to let a student know that they matter!

BECOME PART OF THIS LEGACY – Please consider sending a gift of time or resources. All contributions are welcomed and greatly appreciated.

For more information: Phone Val Maximovich, Coordinator, 319-332-0626,
vmaximovich@indeek12ia.org or



mail to: Mustang Mentoring, West Elementary office, 1301 1st St W, Independence, IA 50644.

Please like our Facebook page [Independence Mustang Mentoring!](#)

Art

We have been working on our craftsmanship, creativity and responsibility during art classes. Our year started out focusing on the proper use of materials, cleaning up after ourselves and helping others. We have focused on how *color* and *line* make an impact on our art projects. Last month, Denny's Pumpkin Patch was kind enough to donate small pumpkins to our art classes. First through sixth grade classes completed an observational drawing focusing on *shape* and *form*. Students were able to observe, touch and draw the pumpkins. First and second graders used oil pastels and watercolor paints to add color while fifth and sixth graders used chalk pastels to mix and blend colors. Third and fourth graders drew colorful corn, and painted with watercolors and tempera paint. There is currently some student artwork hanging up at Ryan's Pharmacy. Be sure to check it out!



We're on the Web

<http://www.indeek12.org>

MUSIC - East

There has been a lot of learning going on in the music room at East! 2nd graders just wrapped up a unit on unpitched percussion instruments in which they sorted, played, and composed using percussion instruments like the tambourine, triangle, and hand drum. The kindergarten and first grade students have been working on becoming tuneful, beautiful, and artful while also learning and performing the musical opposites like fast/slow, loud/quiet, and high/low. All of the grade levels are preparing a song for the Veterans Day assembly, and the kindergarten and 2nd grade students are starting to learn their music for the winter concert on December 20 at 6:00 and 6:30! We hope to see you there!

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@indeek12.org

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@indeek12.org

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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