Volume 2 Issue 2 October, 2007

### **District Events:**

October 1—Middle School Open House

October 10—1:00 Early Release K-12

<u>October 16</u>—Fine Arts Subject Area Committee Meeting

### October 17-

Curriculum Coordinating Council Meeting

October 24–1:00 Early Release K-12

## Inside this issue:

September Fish!

Nominees

Board of Education Election	4
Bowl for KidsqSake	5
New Teachers at East Elementary	7
Middle School News	9
Back Pain & Backpacks	10

High School News

12



## **High School Assessment Committee**

By Devin Embray, Superintendent of Schools

Last spring the Independence School Board appointed a committee to determine who should assess the current high school to get a bona fide complete assessment of its needs. They each selected two individuals to sit on this committee. One that was in favor of the previous bond referendum and one that was opposed.

The committee met two times and set up a request for qualifications (RFQ) document that would be sent out to twelve firms across Iowa as well as some from Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois. Nine firms responded to the committee¢s request and they met again to

go over criteria to select the firms for interviews. OPN from Cedar Rapids, FEH from Sioux City, RDG from Des Moines, and Kane and Johnson from La Crosse, WI were selected for interviews.

These firms will be interviewed in early October with a finalist taken to the board of education in November as the recommendation for the assessment to be completed by. It will be up to the board of education to accept the recommendation and determine whether or not the assessment will occur. Should the board of education accept the recommendation and do the assessment we are



projecting that it would be completed by late February or early March.

The firm selected will need to bring back to the board the condition of the current high school as well as options for the board to consider based on the assessment. As the facilitator of this committee, I have nothing but praise for the work that they have completed thus far. Difference of opinion is respected and all feel that something needs to be done to improve our high school facility conditions.

The assessment committee is comprised of Ken Coulter, Gina Trimble, Mike Hayward, Beth Little, Lloyd Davis, Dana Vietor, John Bagge, Don Hoeger, Ed Armstead and Mike Donnelly. (Diana Muchmore resigned from the committee.)

## Website Calendar Very Useful

There is a lot of very good information on the district website. Many links and useful information about curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the district.

But an often overlooked resource is the district calendar. Listed on the calendar are upcoming events from each building and district. Simply click on the date or the event on the calendar on

the home page of the website and you will be given further details about the event. The calendar looks like the one on the right.

If you have events you want to see on the calendar, please give the building a call and we will see it gets included in the future!

www.independence.k12.ia.us

## **Mustang Pride**

## **September Fish! Nominees**

Steve Noves - Technology Director

Brenda Hearn - 4th Grade Teacher

 $\frac{\textbf{Jenny Cappel}}{\textbf{Center}} - \text{Special Ed. Associate} - \textbf{Early Childhood}$ 

Maureen Morehouse - Food Service

Judy Price - West Food Service

Linda Hanna - West Food Service

Wendy Schoenfield - West Food Service

Nadine Chesmore – West Food Service

<u>Lori Dietzenbach</u> – MS Special Education Teacher

Paul Brown - 8th Grade Science

Jason Drucker - HS Science Student Teacher

<u>Becky Frost</u> – HS Special Education Teacher

 $\frac{\mathbf{Amanda\ Bock}}{\mathbf{Teacher}} - 7^{\mathrm{th}}\ \mathbf{Grade\ Language\ Arts}$ 

Renita Wieland – West and MS Media Specialist

Ronda Hilbert – MS Special Education Teacher

Judy Wulfekuhle - MS Secretary

 $\underline{\textbf{Loren Staton}} - MS \ Custodian$ 

Kelly Duritsa - Food Service Director

<u>Audra Meyer</u> – East Special Education Teacher

 $\underline{\text{Micki Sand-Cohen}} - 1^{\text{st}}$  Grade Teacher



If you want to nominate your child's teacher call Mary at 334-7400

### Curriculum News! By Mary Cooksley

The school year has been very busy so far with curriculum work, professional development, and Subject Area Committee Work. The Social Studies, Spanish, K-5 Language Arts, Business/ Marketing, and Industrial Technology Subject Area Committees met in September. Training around the use of formative assessments was provided. (How we know students are learning along the way)

They were also provided training on a technique/ approach to look at student assignments to increase student learning. Teachers will utilize this new technique during their Learning Team collaborative opportunities when time permits. Another aspect of these Subject Area Committees this year will be to identify the necessary resources they need to teach the newly written curriculum. They will take part in a Vendor Day scheduled for October 10th. Here, many companies will showcase their products and teachers will

have the opportunity to explore and analyze the best products that will best meet the needs of students.

More Subject Area Committee work continues with 6-12 Language Arts, Family and Consumer Sciences, Physical Education, and Guidance. These areas will begin the work of aligning their assessments (tests, projects, etc) with what they are teaching (GLE's). This work will continue throughout the school year.

The Art and Fine Arts (Band and Music) Subject Area Committee will begin their work with identifying what they currently teach and begin the process to write their curriculum in October, with the writing of curriculum taking place during the summer of 200 8.

Professional development is underway as well. September 10<sup>th</sup>, Dick Shaefer provided all day training to staff about the Respect and Protect Program. He was well received by staff as well as parents. On

September 11<sup>th</sup> he met with building teams to discuss how to increase effectiveness at the building levels.

Technology is a major area of focus this year for teachers. Last year they created a Technology Integration Plan (TIP). A wide variety of topics will be investigated this school year they identified in their TIP plan - in the Spring a showcase of what they learned will take place. There are three days this year set aside and the first is on September 26th during the early dismissal.

I continue to be impressed by the dedication and hard work of the teachers in this district. Their commitment to students is unmatched. I have the pleasure of working with some of the most professional and knowled geable people. If you see a teacher, thank them for all they do!

# Fish Philosophy Principles

Make Their Day

Choose Your Attitude Be There Play

### How to develop a working relationship with your child's teacher

In Elementary and Middle School

by Mary Cooksley

### Put past experiences with teachers BEHIND you.

This is a new year with a new teacher. Regardless of the experiences you may have had in previous years, you need to start this year with a positive outlook. Believing you can have a positive working relationship with a teacher is the first step in making that partnership happen

#### Talk to your child about his or her teacher.

As you child what they like or dislike about class. Get a feel for how the class functions. This information will be helpful when you talk to your child teacher.

### Meet with the teacher early in the school year.

There are still opportunities to speak with the teacher before too much time in the school year has zoomed by.

### During your initial conversation, talk about your joint goals and expectations for your child.

You both want your child to succeed in school. Explain your expectations of the teacher and ask what they expect your role to be.

Whenever you speak to your child's teacher (and you should do so regularly) keep your communication positive, open, and honest.

### Your Child's Participation in School Activities Can Make all the Difference

**In Elementary and Middle School** 

by Mary Cooksley

Attendance is Fundamental. If your child is not in school, they cannot participate nor be successful!

Missing even part of the school day can throw off your child's participation for the rest of the day – they feel disconnected from the day's learning.

Encourage your child's interest in school activities and homework. Ask your child about their day and what they did in school that day. Find out what was exciting or what they learned. Get them engaged in their homework by having them explain their completed homework to you.

Take advantage of extra-curricular activities. Start with your child's interest. – Be Realistic about your child's participation! There aren't many activities at the elementary level as there are in the upper grades, but get them involved in the activities THEY are interested in. Some children want to take part in EVERYTHING, but there simply isn't enough time to do it ALL. Encourage them to choose those that most interest them.

Encourage, but don't demand or over plan. Keep in mind that extra-curricular activities are not the main focus of the school or their day. School work should always come first!



## **BLOOD DRIVE**

Blood Center

Wednesday, October 24, 2007

11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Independence High School Gym

514 5th Ave. S.E., Independence

### This drive is sponsored by the Independence High School Cheerleaders.

All first time donors are eligible to redeem a free t-shirt from the Blood Center of Iowa. Also, all who register will receive a special gift from BCHC.

- The Blood Center of Iowa has partnered with the Buchanan County Health Center to be the only supplier
  of blood and blood products to the hospital.
- Donors will receive credit for donations made with other blood collection organizations.

To schedule an appointment to donate, please contact a cheerleader or schedule online at <a href="https://www.bloodcenterofiowa.org">www.bloodcenterofiowa.org</a>



### **Great Idea!**

Show interest in your child's activities!

Quick Tip: If you need to speak to your child's teacher, send a note to school with your child.



If you are interested in further information, brochures are available at the Central Office in the form of brochures.

Call Mary at 334-7400 and they can be sent to you or you could pick them up!
We would love to see you!

## **Mustang Pride**

### SUP: It's Teen Read Week - H2CUS!

### Translation (What's up? It's Teen Read Week - Hope to see you soon!)

Teen Read Week is coming up October 14-20. RLY. AAMOF, we're practically ROTFLUTS in joyful anticipation. BTW, LOL @ your library is the theme of TRW, a national literacy initiative aimed at teens, their parents, librarians, and educators.

In the event you have difficulty deciphering that paragraph (I bet the kids reading this could understand it quite well, by the way (BTW)), this is what it said:

Oh My Gosh, Teen Read Week is coming October 14-20. Really. As a Matter of Fact, we're practically Rolling on the Floor Laughing, Unable to Speak, in joyful anticipation. By the Way, Laughing Out Loud is the theme because "Laughter can boost your endorphins, lower your blood pressure, heart rate and improve your immune system, not to mention lighten your mood."

Thus, with this year's theme, teens can enter their school and public libraries for a visit that will produce a smile and happy thoughts, if not have them laughing out loud! (LOL)



Teen Read Week is designed to encourage teens to:

- ♦ Make time to read for the fun of it.
- Use their local library to discover their interests and select their own materials, and
- Get reading materials and participate in events at their school or public library to foster the habit of reading regularly.

For more about TRW and ideas to get teens reading, visit <a href="www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/teenreading/">www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/teenreading/</a> teenreading.htm



Teen Read
Week is coming
up

October 14-20.







### BOARD OF EDUCATION ELECTION

by Charmaine Wickwire, Director of Finance/Board Secretary

Did you ever wonder about the responsibilities of School Board members? After serving as a School Board Secretary for fifteen years I can attest that those responsibilities are diverse, complex, and vast!

In the early years of my service I observed Board members painfully deliberate over the decisions that were put before them and asked myself why in the world would anyone want to put themselves through all this pressure...pressure from the public...pressure from parents...pressure from staff...pressure from students...pressure from administration...and yes, even pressure from each other.

The more I contemplated the question the more frustrated and confused I became. Then one day it hit like, "I should have had a V-8!" The answer is so simple, THEY CARE. They care about the public, the parents, the staff, the students, the administration and yes, even each other regardless of their viewpoints.

The education of the students in the Independence School District is always foremost in the minds of each School Board member. They want the best educational training we can possibly provide, which in turn makes Independence a community that can use the school as a draw to community development.

I want to publicly take this opportunity to thank every person in this district who has "cared" enough to run for the School Board or to serve on the School Board.

I invite you all to attend a Board meeting sometime during the year and observe your School Board at work. Don't come to figure out "why" they make decisions, we already know that. Do come to see how hard they work at providing a suitable direction for Independence Community School's students!



Big Brothers Big Sisters Bowl for Kids' Sake Sunday, November 4, 2007

### What is Bowl for Kids' Sake?

Bowl for Kids' Sake is about having **fun** to help kids!

It is Big Brothers Big Sisters' most important fundraising event of the year.

Funds raised go directly toward matching children with caring Big Brother and Big Sister volunteers in our school district and Buchanan County.

### You can be a sponsor, a bowler, or both!

If you are a sponsor, you get the reward of knowing that your support is helping put Big Brothers and Big Sisters in children's lives.

If you are a **bowler**, you get to enjoy a fun outing with friends — as well as the satisfaction of knowing you're making a big difference to kids in your community.

Mark your calendar!

November

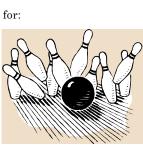






### How does it work?

- •Form a team of 4-6 bowlers
- •Each team raises \$500
- •Come to Lucky 10 Lanes on Sunday, November 4th for:
  - •2 FREE games of bowling!
  - •FREE shoe rental!
  - •FREE pizza!
  - •Great door prize drawings!
  - •Lots of laughs and fun!!!









## Principal's Corner — Mary Jean Blaisdell

Another is under way and ito great to see all those smiling faces at our doors each day! The weather will be changing to cooler temperatures soon and ito time to think about jackets and warmer clothing.

The beginning of the school day is an important time. Although the day officially begins at 8:30, students are let in the building much earlier than that. In classrooms at that time, coats are taken off and hung up, book bags are put away and students get materials ready for the day. This time in their classroom is often spent in quality time interactions with their teacher and friends. Individual issues such as notes from parents about rides home, illness issues, or other concerns

are taken care of at this time. Students who arrive later miss out on this opportunity to prepare for their day and have no time to talk with their teacher.

One of the best ways you can help your student succeed at school is to be sure they arrive on time! Better yet, be sure they arrive when students are allowed in the building at 8:10. In addition, if your student is eating breakfast at school, please be sure they are arriving in time to sit and eat for at least 10 minutes. Breakfast is no longer served past 8:20, so students need to arrive before 8:10 in order to have time to eat.

Reading continues to be an area of priority for us as we provide opportunities for students to progress from their instructional level towards their reading goal by developing strategies for attacking new words and understanding what is read. Parents can help with reading by spending at least 15 minutes a day reading to their child (or having them read to you)! Math is also an area of priority. We continue to develop strategies for learning math facts and understanding mathematical concepts. Parents can help with math by using math in the world around them daily (such as counting/adding objects at home).

Beginning of the year assessments occurred in September. These assessments measured reading accuracy and comprehension, fluency, and phonemic awareness. These tests help us determine what direction instruction should take for each student. Similar tests will be given in January and again in April to determine how much growth has occurred for each student. Testing results will be shared with parents at conference time.

In-service time for all teachers is important to the progress of your child. September@s early dismissal inservice was spent setting goals for our learning teams and learning new technologies for use in the classroom with students. We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to improve the educational experience of your children.

### The Kitchen Corner

Parents, grandparents and other visitors are welcome to join their student for lunch at times. Please remember, however, that the kitchen may not have prepared enough if you wish to do this as a last minute thing. If you plan to join your student for lunch, please call the school a day in advance so that the kitchen can plan for enough food. If you plan to bring in food from a local fast food restaurant (such as McDonalds or Pizza Hut) please be prepared to eat with your student in another room so that other children are not feeling left out of a special treat.



When packing a cold lunch for your student, please be sure that a healthy lunch is prepared so that students can get the nourishment needed to meet the demands of their day. Please DO NOT include pop or kool-aid drinks in cold lunches.

## **Less TV Opens Doors to Literacy**

### FAST FACTS

- American children watch nearly three hours of television every day.
- Children spend more time in front of the tube each year than they do in school
- Children who watch six or more hours of television per day score significantly lower on reading proficiency tests than those who watch one hour or less
- Studies involving more than 400,000 students find that television is bad for academic achievement.

### TAKE ACTION

- Limit TV-viewing at home. Make rules about school nights and mornings. Take the TV out of your child's bedroom
- Always make books available to your children. Take trips to the public library. Give books as gifts.
- Read with your children. Ask them about the books they are reading. Encourage your kids to try new genres and writing styles.

Consider living without TV.

### **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

Oct 10 12:50 Dismissal In-service

Oct 22 Red Ribbon Week

Oct 23 Picture Retake Day

Oct 24 12:50 Dismissal In-service

Nov 14 12:50 Dismissal In-service

Nov 19 12:50 Dismissal Parent Teacher Conferences 1:30-8:00

Nov 20 12:50 Dismissal Parent Teacher Conferences 1:30-8:00

Nov 21-23 No School

Nov 26 Classes Resume

Nov 28 12:50 Dismissal In-service

## WANTED!

### Mileage Club Volunteers Needed!

If you would like to devote
15-30 minutes each week
outside at recess to
help students reach their
goals in the Mileage Club,
please call East
Elementary to volunteer
your time!

### **Mentors Needed!**

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

### Wanted: Substitute Associates:

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

## **Welcome New Teachers at East!**



Mrs. Bonefas

East Elementary

Special Education

Teacher



Mr. Burns
East Elementary
2nd Grade Teacher



Mrs. Heubner
East Elementary
Reading Recovery



### **Second Grade Scene**

The year has started out on a very positive note with the implementation of our school wide STARS program. We have many exciting events happening in October in second grade. Our students have been doing a short science unit on Frogs and Toads, and on October 3rd and 4th, Sandra Cabell, Fontana Naturalist will give a presentation to

our students about Frogs and Toads. We will soon begin a community unit, and our focus will be on the community of Independence. We will take a field trip to the Wapsipinicon Mill on October 15, and students will learn the history of the mill and also the history and the importance of the Wapsipinicon River. If you are a native of Independence

and know some interesting facts about Independence, please send them our way. On October 30th the students will go to the Gallagher Bluedorn theater to see a play based on the children's books by Leo Lionni. Please continue to encourage your children to read each night, and review addition facts.



## Kindergarten Corner

Kindergartners at East Elementary have been off to a busy year! Our students learn many things through hands on activities and play. Math tubs help students learn counting, sorting, and patterning. Through play our students also gain valuable social interaction and begin to make appropriate behavior choices. During group

instruction and seatwork time, students practice body basics, line basics, academic skills, and extend their attention spans.

September and October will bring three activity-based field trips! We will visit Fontana Park to experience the changes that fall brings, as well as learn about how animals prepare for winter. At the Independence Fire Station we will learn about fire safety and equipment. Ask us about stop, drop, and roll! Our BIG outing will be to see, "Leo Lionni Stories", at the Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center at UNI in Cedar Falls. We are so excited!



Students in Mrs. Meyer's Class act out Little Miss Muffet.

### **First Grade Focus!**

First Grade students at East Elementary have enjoyed a hands on start to the new school year. Each classroom studies the life cycle of insects.

This year the students were able to observe monarchs and painted ladies evolve from caterpillars to chrysalis to adult butterflies.

Butterflies were released in the East Elementary butterfly garden and at Fontana Park.

All six classrooms took a field trip to Fontana and caught insects in the field and in the forest.

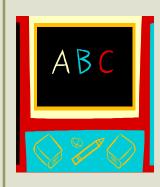
Did you know some beetles lay their eggs in the flower of oak trees, an acorn forms around them, they turn into larva (grubs) inside the nuts and chew a hole in the nut to create an "exit" door?



An Open House was held at East Elementary on Thursday, September 20th.

First grade students and families were able to view the classroom and discuss daily routines, including, helper jobs, literacy centers, and student work.





O P

E N

H O U













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

We continue to collect General Mills Box Tops, Pop Can Tabs, and bottle caps and bag tops from Kwik Star products. 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!

## **Hello from the Middle School!**

Hello from the Middle School! September has been an exciting month for us. We closed out August with the first Parent University here at the Middle School. While there were many presenters, two of the evening's best were Ronda Hilbert and Paul Brown. Ronda discussed the basic, student-focused educational philosophy that is promoted at the Middle School, while Paul, as Middle School Activities Director, elaborated on the various opportunities middle-schoolers have to try new experiences and represent the school in multiple areas. Coffee was also available to the parents and quite a sampling of up-scale and tasty pastries provided by Food Service Director. Kelly Duritsa. The next Parent University night is slated for January seventeenth and hopefully it will be even better than the last.

On September sixth the Middle School kicked off its Magazine Sales Drive. The students have been working hard and in return have been receiving prizes such as rainbow wigs, lighted sunglasses, stuffed animals, and raspberry noisemakers. The final turn-in is on the eighteenth with the grand prize being a lunch and limo ride for the highest selling group of students.

On the tenth and the eleventh, the Middle School hosted Respect and Protect

meetings for staff and for parents. Dick Schaffer and Morgan Forness presented the concepts of the Respect and Protect program to the groups and answered any questions that came up.

Special thanks are due to Greg Moen & Ruth Duritsa for securing the grant that allowed these events to occur.

The volleyball, cross country, and football seasons are underway at the Middle School as well. Volleyball is coached again this year by the veteran combination of John and Terri Neal. Thus far the teams have played West Delaware and plan on competing in September against Oelwein on the eighteenth with eighth grade hosting and seventh grade visiting. The teams will also be competing against Benton on the twentieth, Maq. Valley on the twenty-fourth and Vinton on the twentyseventh. Cross country, coached by Greg Moen, has competed in the North Fayette meet and also will be competing on the eighteenth at Vinton, the twenty-second at Indee and the twenty-fifth at Jesup. Football, coached by Paul Brown, Byron Reeder, Ron Fank and Brian Reidy, is rolling along as well. On the eleventh, the team played West Delaware with the seventh graders being the road team and the eighth graders being the home team. On the eighteenth, the team will



**Dave Ross** 

be playing against Oelwein, with the seventh graders competing at Indee, while the eighth graders will be at Oelwein. They end the month of September playing Beckman on the twenty-fifth.

As we progress further into the school year, many opportunities for growth; intellectually, physically and emotionally, will be available for Indee middleschoolers. It is my hope that each and every one of them embraces these opportunities and makes the most of them. I opened the year with a word I wish I had coined. That word is Yogowypi. It is a mnemonic that stands for "you only get out what you put in." My hope is that this year everyone in the Middle School "puts in and gets out" all that is possible.

YOGOWYPI!

Dave L. Ross

### October

1st Middle School Open House 7:00—8:00pm

2nd VB Marion 4:15pm 7th-Indee 8th-Marion

FB Benton Comm. 4:15pm 7th-Indee 8thVanHorne

CC W. Delaware 4:00pm @ Hart Ridge

4th VB CPU 4:15pm 7th-Urbana 8th-Indee

9th FB Vinton-Shellsburg 4:15pm 7th-Indee 8th-Vinton

10th 1: 00 Dismissal Staff Development

11th VB Beckman 4:15pm 7th-Indee 8th-Dyersville

23rd Picture Retakes

24th 1:00 Dismissal Staff Development







#### Back Pain and Backpacks by Teri Schloss, RN and School Nurse

Does your child lean forward when carrying their backpack? Do they often struggle to take their backpack on and off? Are they complaining of back pain or numbness? If you answered yes to any of these questions, chances are your child is using their backpack incorrectly. Carrying a backpack that is too heavy or only using one shoulder strap can cause muscle strain which can lead to lower and upper back pain, neck pain, poor posture and can also interfere with their circulation and nerves. Carrying a backpack that is too heavy can also change the way a person walks and can increase their risk of falling.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that children carry no more than 10-15% of their body weight in their backpack. For example if your child weighs 80

pounds, his backpack should weigh no more than 8 to 12 pounds. Use vour scale at home to determine how much your child should be carrying.

The AAP recommends backpacks with the following components:

ÉA lightweight pack that doesnøt add a lot of weight to your childøs load.

ÉTwo wide, padded shoulder straps.

ÉA padded back, which can provide increased comfort as well as protect your child from being poked by objects in the pack.

ÉA waist belt which can help distribute weight more evenly.

ÉMultiple compartments which can also help distribute weight more evenly.

In addition to the above recommendations, assisting your child in proper use of their backpack is also helpful. Make sure they are not carrying any unnecessary items (CD players, video games, etc) that will add extra pounds to the pack. Make sure they are using both shoulder straps. Encourage them to bring home only the items that are needed for homework or studying each night. As with any heavy item, have your child bend at the knee and grab the pack with both hands when lifting the pack to their shoulders.

If your child continues to have back pain or has numbness or weakness in their arms or legs, talk to your familyøs health care provider.





"I would like to thank Wal-Mart in Independence for donating the cameras and processing the film for our class. -Dan Dedering,



Special Needs Instructor

### Pictures Tell the Story by Dan Dedering, Special Needs Instructor

My name is Dan Dedering and children have often referred to me as Mr. D. I taught for many years in the State of Wisconsin. I now live in Independence with my wife and children. I am very happy to be part of the Independence School Community. I enjoy working with children of middle school age and look forward to putting names with the faces of the students that I pass in the hall each day.

I am excited about a classroom project that I am trying for the first time. We often talk about our interests, family, and personal activities in class. We are putting together a visual representation of those experiences using cameras. Each student was issued a disposable camera and asked to take pictures of their experiences as they live their daily lives. I will have those pictures developed and each student will create a writing project utilizing the pictures they

took. Selected pictures will be used to develop paragraphs with topic sentences and supporting details, as each student describes the picture. We enjoyed brainstorming ideas before the cameras were issued and look forward to displaying the finished projects as the students share their work with classmates. I would like to thank Wal-Mart in Independence for donating the cameras and processing the film

## **Hello from the Middle School Media Center**

Keeping our students interested in reading is one of our goals. Therefore we will be promoting Book Fair again this fall from Sept. 26th - Oct. 3rd, during school hours. We encourage all to stop in during Middle School's Open House on Oct. 1, from 7:00-8:00 pm. Through our sales, we are able to add many new books to our collection. We are proud to have the newest and most current titles that keep our students excited about reading!

Box Tops for Education is also one of our fund-raiser. Students may bring in Box Tops to their advisors. Our first turn in day will be in Nov. It's amazing how quickly Box Tops turn into a considerable sum of money when everyone pitches in. The funds that are collected will be going toward technology.

We are still collecting ink cartridges. From work or from home, we'll take whatever you can get your hands on. Thank you for your continued support to make our Media Center the best that it can be!



## 7th Grade Language Arts by Amanda Bock

This year of 7th grade Language Arts is going to be filled with lots of activities and projects. The focus of seventh grade Language Arts is to study various genres of literature and work on writing and speaking skills. Right now we are beginning with our Greek and Roman Mythology unit. The students will finish this unit with a Myth Puppet Show. The students will make one of the myths we've studied into a puppet show, making their own

puppets and performing it in front of the class in groups of 2-3 students.

Throughout the year there will be other projects including some with technology. This seventh grade class will be the first class to use a Mimio Board. This piece of technology allows a white board to become interactive with a computer and an LCD project. The students will be able to put on computer presentation by just touching the wall (white board) and without having to touch

a computer. In simpler terms, this technology makes the wall a touch screen.

This year's class will also be corresponding with a Peace Corp volunteer in Uganda. We will be learning about the work he is doing as well as what life is like there. Through this correspondence, the students will have a chance to work on their writing and researching skills.









## 8th Grade U.S. History/POP by Corinne Love

In U.S. History we created collage posters as part of our review of the five themes of geography. We will make our compasses to reinforce the importance of this instrument in the Age of Discovery. At the end of the month, we will learn about the 13 colonies, and our liberty pole project will help each student learn more about a particular colony and compare it with the modern state it became.

In Pages of the Past (POP), we have made pirates logs and created our own pirate code to help us understand the Golden Age of Piracy. Each student has chosen a notorious pirate and create a poster that illustrates the pirateøs career.

As in all subjects at Independence Middle School, grade level expectations will have to be met in both U.S. History and Pages of the Past, a course developed for in-depth study of some historical events not explored in U.S. History.

In U.S. History your childs grade is divided into four categories: daily, packet, project and test. In Pages of the Past, the students grade is divided into daily work and tests and projects.

Checking on the progress of your son or daughter has not been as easy as in the past because the grade book computer program is not up and running. If you have questions, please e-mail me (clove@independence.k12.ia.us) or phone me at school (334-7415). We hope to have the computer program working in the next two weeks.

The magazine campaign is wrapping up in our advisory/homeroom. We have decided to call our advisory group Love® Looney Tunes. Each student has identified with one of the Looney Tune characters. Soon our Looney Tune poster will adorn our wall outside our advisory room.

Nine students volunteered to help Mr. Moen on a Monday night to watch younger children for parents who came to listen to a guest speaker talk about our õrespect and protectö behavior policy. They volunteered without pay. This shows what a great bunch of students I have in my advisory group. I look forward to meeting you at Open House.

## **Professional Development**

### by Karl Kurt, Principal

Parents and community members should feel extremely proud of the effort and work that our teachers put into their professional development opportunities and the goals that our teachers identify in their yearly Individual Career Development Plan (ICDP). I have had the opportunity to discuss many of the goals that our staff has identified and I am very excited. There continues to be a huge emphasis on Reading Comprehension, and increasing the knowledge and use of various

instructional strategies. I have also seen an increased focus on integrating technology into our curriculum. It is great to see our teachers set goals and outline action plans in an effort to meet the needs of our students and help improve academic achievement.



## Professional Learning Teams by Karl Kurt, Principal

In line with our professional development opportunities our staff often meet in Professional Learning Teams. Professional Learning Teams (PLT's) are vehicles for educators to work in cooperative groups to identify issues and goals, research professional literature, share experiences and problem solve in real situations directly related to student achievement.

They are specifically designed to:

- improve collaboration among individuals, support staff and administrators;
- develop relationships among the participants;
- improve instruction for students and
- enhance the curriculum.

Professional Learning Teams focus on teacher learning as a way to address student needs and improve student learning. The team members work collaboratively in a disciplined manner to focus on a curriculum, instruction, and assessment.



## Freshmen Parent Night by Karl Kurt, Principal

We held our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Freshmen Parent Night on September 20<sup>th</sup>. A big thank-you to those parents who were in attendance. We truly appreciate your efforts to become informed and for making efforts to help ensure that our students are armed with the necessary information and skills to be successful upon their graduation from Independence High School.

### October Calendar

- 1 10<sup>th</sup> FB at Oelwein JV/V VB (H) Wapsie Valley 9<sup>th</sup> VB at Oelwein
- 2 CC at West Delaware Invite 9th/JV/V VB at Benton Community
- 4 9<sup>th</sup> VB (H) Vinton-Shellsburg
- 5 9<sup>th</sup>/V FB at Benton Community
- 6 CC at North Linn Invite
- 8 10<sup>th</sup> FB (H) Benton Community
- 9 JV/V VB at CPU
- 10 1:00 Dismissal
- 11 CC Wamac at West Delaware V/VB at Wamac Tourney –Marion 9th VB(H)Oelwein
- 12 9<sup>th</sup>/V FB (H) South Tama
- 13 V/VB Wamac Super Tourney
- $15-10^{\rm th}~FB$  at South Tama
- 17 PSAT Test Youth for Christ Concert 7 p.m.
- 18 CC Regionals
- 19 9<sup>th</sup>/V FB at Grinnell
- $\begin{array}{c} 22-10^{\rm th}\;{\rm FB}\;({\rm H})\\ {\rm Grinnell} \end{array}$
- 24 1:00 Dismissal End of Term 1
- $\begin{array}{c} 25-9^{\rm th}\;FB\;(H)\\ Vinton-\\ Shellsburg \end{array}$
- $26-10^{\mathrm{th}}\!/\mathrm{V}~\mathrm{FB}$  at Vinton-Shellsburg
- 27 CC State

### "Improving Today for a Better Tomorrow"



### Independence Community School District

1207 1st Street West Independence, Iowa, 50644

Phone: 319-334-7400 Fax: 319-334-7404

### **District Mission:**

Educating people to be life-long learners and respectful, responsible citizens

### **District Vision:**

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

### **District Values:**

Compassion

Perseverance

*Honesty* 

Respect

Integrity

Responsibility

Responsibility

We're on the Web http://www.independence.k12.ia.us

## **Mark Your Calendars!**



- October 10th 1:00 Dismissal K-12
- October 24th 1:00 Dismissal K-12
- October 22nd—26th Red Ribbon Week
- October 24th End of Term I High School