



June, 2014

Creating healthy, educated, ethical and productive citizens.

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FROM THE DESK OF MR. FRITZ

By the time you read this, graduation will have long since passed. I feel as though all of the work I do, and the work our teachers, aides, and the rest of the staff engages in is focused on that day-- graduation. It is my favorite day of the entire school year.

My second favorite day of the school year comes just three days after graduation, and that is the day I meet all of the 6th graders when they spend some of the afternoon in my building orienting themselves to what life as a 7th grader will be like.

Our 7th and 8th grade class officers, as their last official duty of the school year, lead small groups of 6th graders in discussions about what to expect next year at "the big building." They take tours of the various areas of the building that most of them have never seen, like the inside of their social studies classroom, and the locker rooms.

An enlightening part of their orientation comes from the questions they ask. I assign these young people their first bit of homework, and have them bring answers to the following to the orientation: What are you looking forward to in 7th grade? What concerns do you have about life as a 7th grader? What questions do you have for us?

So what do they look forward to? Sports is typically at the top of the list, followed by greater independence, and some even mention seeing their older brothers or sisters as a benefit!

What concerns them the most? I always hear numerous concerns about being shoved inside of lockers (trust me: this does not happen), about getting lost between classes, and having lots and lots of homework. And, yes, I see brothers and sisters mentioned in this category, as well!

The cycle of graduation followed by new 7th graders provides the ever-changing challenges and joys of working in education. While year after year I see the same behaviors among seniors as they graduate and the same questions and concerns from each different group of 6th graders, each individual student is unique and brings his or her own vibrant personality to our school. Summer may be here, but there's always a new school year just around the corner to look forward to.

FROM THE DESK OF MR. COSTELLO

After almost twenty-five years in education, I still find myself asking, “Where did the year go?” It’s hard to believe that ten months can pass so quickly. All the joys and the few struggles a school year brings seem to flash by. With it comes the realization that the planning for the upcoming year is well underway. I’d like to cover some of the highlights of the 2013-2014 school year with you and give you a glimpse of plans for the 2014-2015 school year.

One of the biggest changes this year was the acquisition of Children’s Garden Preschool. By securing the Preschool Grant through the Iowa Department of Education we have been able to expand our preschool to two classrooms and align our instruction to the Quality Preschool Standards. We’ve also expanded our preschool instructional materials and technology with the program. Our work isn’t complete yet, but we’ve made great strides in making a very good program even better.

As a district, we’ve implemented Character Counts as a guide for expected behavior in our school community. We dove in with monthly assemblies and Pillar Talks in classrooms. Mr. Knudson has been working with a group of elementary student leaders to help “spread the word” of using the Character Counts Pillars when making decisions. I think we’ve done a great job this year and I look forward to our new full-time counselor leading us in expanding the program.

Veteran teacher, Deb Nagle, is in her first year of implementing the Reading Recovery program. Reading Recovery specifically targets 1st grade students that are below their peers in reading fluency and reading comprehension. In our first year of implementing this program, there was some significant student success. We look forward to continuing the program next year and helping our students gain the skills they need to become good readers.

Five years ago, we made a leap into the world of 1:1 computers for students in grades 4-12. We also committed dollars to beef up our level of technology in grades K-3. This year we conducted an extensive review of our work over the past five years. One piece of this review included survey results from students and faculty. These results point to areas that we consider strengths and areas that we need some work. We’ve developed a plan for the upcoming year to address our weak areas and sustain our areas of strength.

These are just a few of the changes that occurred this year. We’ll continue to modify and adjust our programming to best meet the needs of our children and help them reach their full potential. Thank you for your ongoing support.



Go Vikings

FROM THE DESK OF MR. CROZIER

The Graduation ceremony on May 18, 2014 was a celebration for our community. I am very proud of the 36 students who completed the requirements for graduation. They are now ready to go out into the world. Some will continue their schooling at a post secondary school, some will enter the military, and some will enter the work force. I wish the best of luck to all the seniors who earned their diploma this year. Congratulations to all of you and your parents for a job well done.

It was a great pleasure to be part of awarding over half a million dollars in scholarships during graduation. Very few communities can say that they support their graduates to this extent. Be proud of your community and the people who have come before you that have set up these scholarships.

It is sad to say goodbye to six employees due to retirements this year. While they will be missed, I am happy that they can enter a new phase in their life. Thank you to all the employees and community members who came to the retiree reception.

Over the summer I will be working with the Worth County Sheriff's Department and the Northwood Fire Department on the district's crisis plan. This will include lockdowns, lockouts, evacuations, and shelter plans for all kinds of crises. In conjunction with these organizations, we will be looking at adopting the *I love you guys* Standard Response protocol. Our number one goal is to keep our children safe at school.

Congratulations to the following employees that will receive service awards from the district this year:

Keith Fritz 20 years

Doreen Cordle 15 years

Joleen Hansen 15 years

Denise Schacht 10 years

Brian Costello 10 years

Lee Okerlund 10 years

Ted Bieth 10 years

Brian Campbell 10 years

Elaine Hansen 5 years

Have a safe and fun summer.



Note From Mrs. Nagle, Curriculum Director and Talented and Gifted

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN HISTORY

History Day at N-K

National History Day is not just a day, but every day. The National History Day program is a year-long program that encourages research, writing, performance and analysis of a topic chosen by a student that relates to a theme. The 2014 theme for National History Day is Rights and Responsibilities in History.

Youth Division students Ethan Flatness, Ella Fritz, Kael Julseth, Spencer Smith and Camden Thompson presented their projects to local judges last month.

Junior Division students Chloe Luther, Peyton Pangburn, Julia Quisley, Jaela Parks, Kennedy Eskildsen, Lindsey Davidson and Meaghan Petznick competed at the Waldorf College regional event and were chosen to compete at the State competition in Des Moines earlier this month.

Senior Division students Matt Parcher, Chelsea Boyden and Jade Stubbe competed in April at the State Historical Society in Des Moines.

The 2015 History Day theme will be Leadership and Legacy in History.

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS OF CHARACTER



(left to right) Dante Sims, Caden Mattern, TeAnna Ausborn, Isabella Hoch



(Left to right) Emily Thorson, Kade Stambaugh, Seth Clapp, Cody Wahl

JR. SR. HIGH STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

Abbey Buchanan-Meyers, Paige Oleson, Kaitlyn Schaefer, Jocelyn Klunder, Sarah Yezek, Caleb Kliment, Maddie Avelar, Erika Heideman, Elexis Carrison, Elijah Coombs, Tyra Sledge, Warren Cooper, Morgan Johnson, Gavin Varner, Brandon Severson, Laura Hopperstad, Misty Miranda, Nick Lombard, Sarah Pederson, Shelby Low, A.J. Branstad, Jordan Wright, and Julia Quisley.



COUNSELORS CORNER BY AMY RENWICK

As we end out this school year, we leave with the focus of the Character Counts pillar of Citizenship. One of the founding principles of this pillar is the idea that a citizen should do their share to make their school & community better. As a member of this Northwood-Kensett community, staff are researching and exploring different ways to do the things we do at school even better than we already do them. I feel that we have many ideas in the works that could serve our N-K students better than we already have been.

For instance, we will be opening a Northwood-Kensett alternative program in August 2014. We have visited other area alternative school programs and have tailored the new program to best meet the needs of the students in our N-K community. We are looking forward to better serving students who need to recover credits and for whom the “regular” high school experience does not work.

At the beginning of May, we had our first ever Viking Way Leadership Summit. Fifteen presenters from our area visited to educate students on topics that closely relate to the Six Pillars of Character. We are grateful for these presenters and are looking to continue to grow community connections for the Character Counts program and for our school. If you are interested in contributing to the education of our young people, please contact me or Mr. Fritz. We would love to hear from you.

As I leave my office for the year, I plan to examine the practices of other schools and do other research on how to do my new job of 7-12 counselor to the best of my ability. For instance, we will no longer be providing the PLAN or PSAT test at Northwood-Kensett school. Not because we are reducing the opportunities for our high school students, but because we have decided the tests are simply not worth the high costs of administering them. Our students have many other indicators of how they will do on the ACT test if they need to take it for their post-secondary plans. We are going to continue to roll with the times, adding resources as they become available, and leaving behind resources that are no longer helpful. If you are curious or have questions about these changes, please let me know! Email is best: arenwick@nwood-kensett.k12.ia.us



It is the policy of the Northwood-Kensett Community 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 the Superintendent of Schools, 1200 First Avenue North, Northwood, IA 50459, Phone 641-324-2021, who has been designated as the district's Equity Coordinator and to coordinate the school district's efforts to comply with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504, and Iowa Code Section 280.3.

Go to www.nwood-kensett.k12.ia.us for the most up-to-date happenings at Northwood-Kensett Community Schools.

FROM THE PILE OFF MR. HARTMAN'S DESK

As the end of the school year rapidly approaches, I would like our student athletes and their parents to start thinking about our fall sports. Most of our athletes will need to get an updated physical sometime this summer. If you are unsure when your physical expires, you can always send me an email and I can give you the date. Our student athletes and their parents will also need to sign a Concussion Form for the 2015–2016 school year. Parents and athletes, it is very important that you get this taken care of before the start of fall practices. Without an updated physical and a signed concussion form your athlete will not be able to practice. This only puts them further behind and does not help them or the team get better. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by email.

I would now like to take a little bit of time to talk about our track season. We were able to host four track meets here this season, two of them in fair weather and two of them in poor weather. One of the great things about being the athletic director here at Northwood-Kensett is that we have many people that volunteer to help at our meets and they are there if the sun is shining or if it is cold, windy, and raining. I would like to take this time to thank those people and tell them what a great job they do. Because of their help, I believe we run some of the best track meets in the North Iowa area.

Here's a list of the people that helped at this year's track meets:

Mark Severson	Ryan Parker	James Eskildsen	Mitch Hanson
Shane Batton	Amber Julseth	Jeff Creger	Heather Rheingans
Craig Lease	Nathan Buehrer	Angie Creger	Dirk VanRyswyk
Aaron Carman	Troy Christianson	Lisa Christianson	Stacy Creger
Jake Hanson	Jen Costello	Kory Olson	Mike Read
Connie Low	Ron Brockman	Brian Lund	Brenda Davidson
Daryl Love	Brendan Ehlke	Jake Urbatsch	Kimberly Odegaard
Morgan Johnson	Beth Butler	Monte DeArmoun	Keith Fritz
Mike Reindl	Barb Reindl	Mike Kessel	Erik Butler
Garrett Olson	Dave Capitani	Ryan Severson	Bruce Tuthill
Gail Read	Kyle Waller	Teri Dahlby	Barry Wangsness
Greg Parks	Joe Fierova	Mike Crozier	Brian Costello
Sam Butler	Erika Heideman	Tom Fick	Logan Nielsen
Conner Elliot	Cade Tindall	Tom Yezek	Gabe Kramer
Shelby Low	Tyra Sledge	Hattie Davidson	Katelyn Jaspers
Brandon Brockman	Zach Costello	Josh Einertson	Ashlyn Schaefer

MR. HARTMAN'S DESK (cont.)

Scott Hengesteg	Calli Christenson	Jenna Schaefer	Aliyah Creger
Justin Read	Connor Harris	Warren Copper	Marcus Brandt
Brett Tyler	Gavin Paulsen	Taylor Jorgensen	Mackenzie Duvall
Paige Oleson	Taylor Kramer	Logan Benjegerdes	Samual Kliment
Kole Parks	Jacie Davis	Josie Einertson	Josh Fick
Jeff Yezek	Josh Jaspers	Laura Hopperstad	Ali Carman
Brianna Hepperly	Hailey Hepperly	Sarah Yezek	

As you can see it takes many volunteers to run a successful track meet and my job would be impossible without them, THANKS to each and everyone of you.

SECONDARY MUSIC NEWS INSIDE OUT/OUTSIDE IN

The work of the JH & HS bands and choirs is primarily conducted inside the four walls of our classrooms. The final product is displayed at concerts and events throughout the year. As a music department, Mrs. Reeder and I began work this year to review and reinvigorate our curriculum as part of a curriculum adoption cycle in place at N-K. We also investigated practices of other schools in our area and similar to our size to see how we can adapt our curriculum to better meet the constantly evolving needs of our students. Going forward into the 2014-2015 year, our incoming band director Mr. Barnes and I will be viewing and selecting materials, textbooks, software, etc. that will best match the needs of our students and the needs of the intended curriculum.

One thing that I have strived to do is to get our students out into the public to perform their music as much as possible. Over the years, I have increased the number of live National Anthem performances by members of the choir during home volleyball, basketball, and wrestling meets. I have begun a tradition of caroling both to the LRH and private homes with my 5/6 chorus each year during the month of December--the homes visited varies based on the friends/relatives/acquaintances of the students currently in choir. With the HS this winter, we had both band and choral Carol-O-Grams which could be ordered for individuals or groups of people. Over the years, students have also participated in a variety of community and area events from the Masonic Lodge Spring Fling to the Bolan Live Nativity program to the Worth County Relay for Life. All these events allow the public to see the products that these students have been working on and more importantly, allow students to see that their music has a varied and important role in society. "Taking the inside out" to a broader community helps to break down those four walls of our classrooms and allow students to make real and lasting connections with the work they do every day.

SECONDARY MUSIC NEWS (cont.)

One way that I think we can bring a higher quality of education to our music students is to bring in clinicians, choirs, bands, solo artists, composers, conductors and others from the outside world of music into our classroom. It is possible to do some of this through real visits, but I feel that we could vastly expand our possibilities if we were to pursue Skype or similar ways of connecting with outsiders in a virtual way. By “bringing the outside in” I feel that students will gain a much broader perspective on the role of music in society and the potential it can have in their own lives. This is yet another way to break down those walls that contain our classroom and allow students to grow their roots.

LAPTOP RE-ADOPTION: Looking Ahead to the 2014 – 2015 School Year

By Amy Renwick

3.5 school years ago, Northwood-Kensett schools rolled out MacBooks on a special “Rollout” night at the high school. Students were excited to get the shiny, new white MacBooks to use at home as well as at school. No one knew what opportunities, exactly, these laptops would bring, but we were interested to find out.

Now, at the end of May, those laptops don’t look nearly as shiny and new as the day they were placed in the students’ hands. Many of them are in need of repair, or at least a deep cleaning. Thankfully, staff and students will be issued a MacBook Air at the start of the 2014-2015 school year. Once again, shiny silver laptops will be distributed to our students, and we will be reminded of how fortunate we are to be a part of this school district & community, where adults are willing to “ante up” on their young people’s education.



While many districts in Iowa are going to one-to-one laptop models in parts of their schools, very few provide laptops to students as young as 4th grade. Our students have the opportunity to grow their technology literacy for several years before the average Iowa student uses a computer with any regularity. Our district has also re-adopted Apple laptops and the software that comes along with it. Many districts- in their first laptop adoption or the second- have opted for less expensive models that leave the laptop machines with limitations for students. The machines we have leased for the next few years will be more durable than the last ones we adopted. They will also be lighter and allow students to continue with projects and programs here at school that have been made possible by the laptop adoption.

VREP (Virtual Reality Education Pathfinders) is a program that is designed for engineering students or other computer-aided design students to begin working with imaging software and is made possible by the capabilities of the MacBooks. Students learn problem solving skills along side the technical skills. Additionally, Video Production class and the Big History Project are much more possible when each student has a dependable laptop for their regular use. The iMovie software that is included in our laptops is the best home-movie editing software available for student use, and we are happy to keep providing it as a tool for students and educators. These three courses were not offered 3.5 years ago and would likely be discontinued if we did not have the technology accessibility we enjoy in our district. In classrooms across the district, projects of many varieties are more frequently occurring and encourage more meaningful, relevant learning because laptops bring the world into the classroom. Information is a few keystrokes away, and creative possibilities are virtually limitless.

LAPTOP RE-ADOPTION (cont.)

In classrooms across the district, projects of many varieties are more frequently occurring and encourage more meaningful, relevant learning because laptops bring the world into the classroom. Information is a few keystrokes away, and creative possibilities are virtually limitless.

While 4-12th grade have MacBook Airs, the PreK-3 group will gain laptop accessibility, as well. A class set of MacBooks will be shared between two classrooms (with the exception that Pre-K & Kindergarten will share one cart) in addition to their classroom sets of iPads. Teachers will increasingly have the ability to blend teaching beginning computer skills with learning critical early skills, as well. As we maintain our commitment to preparing our students for a world outside the school doors, we will continue to grow and adapt to the way students best learn and focus on the kinds of classroom instruction that will allow our students to become lifelong learners and problem solvers-- necessary skills in a world where the jobs our Kindergarten students will hold have not been invented yet.