



# Northwood-Kensett Community School District

## VIKING DISPATCH

October 2013

Creating healthy, educated, ethical and productive citizens.

### In This Issue:

From the Desk of Mr. Crozier	1
Note from Mrs. Nagle	2
From the Desk of Mr. Fritz	3
Students of Character	3
From the Desk of Mr. Costello	4
Fourth Grade Fun	4
Science News	5
Counselor's Corner	5
Nurse's Corner	6

PO BOX 289

1200 1st Ave N.

Northwood, IA 50459

#### Phone:

(641) 324-1127 (Elementary)

(641) 324-2021 (Superintendent)

(641) 324-2142 (High School)

#### Administration

Michael R. Crozier, Superintendent

Brian Costello, Elementary Principal

Keith Fritz, Secondary Principal

#### School Board Members

Larry Hovey

Susan Kliment

Cindy Pangburn

Roger Harris

John Anderson

### FROM THE DESK OF MR. CROZIER

Since beginning the job as superintendent I have had the opportunity to meet with many people in the district. I have read to the third graders, sat in on a student council meeting, attended the first quiz bowl, met with the Farm Bureau, and attended many athletic contests. I am impressed with the support of our school from all the stakeholders. I will continue to meet with people in our district to understand their desires for our students' education. Please feel free to call and set up a meeting with me or just stop by the office. All of the information I hear

will be used in formulating a long-term plan and vision for our district.



The 2013-2014 school year has begun successfully. It is incredible how quickly staff and students transition into their school routines and the business of learning so easily. I want to thank our staff for all of the assistance they provide our students during the school day. It is truly amazing how fast the time goes as

well. The first midterm has come and gone and it will be conference time before we know it. The end of the first quarter is October 21.

#### Hosting of the Bully Event

The Bully event hosted by the district was a huge success. It is great to see our students taking an active role against bullying in our school. I was very proud of our students and staff for providing this event to surrounding communities. Thanks and congratulations to all the N-K students and staff that made this event happen.

All school districts in Iowa are to have an anti-bullying/anti-harassment policy in place. Harassment and bullying of students and employees are against federal, state, and local policy and are not tolerated by our school district. The school board is committed to providing all students with a safe and civil school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect. Our Board of Education and our staff take this very seriously. We do have a specific Board Policy in regard to Anti-Bullying/Harassment.

#### School Improvement Advisory Committee:

Our District Advisory Committee will have its first meeting of the school year on November 7, 2013. This committee is made up of community members, parents, teachers, administrators, and students and meets twice a year. The goals of the District Advisory Committee is to help our school determine our student achievement goals, review curriculum, consider new course proposals, and to help us brainstorm areas/ideas that can help us be a better school.

## Northwood-Kensett CSD District Advisory Committee 2013-2014

*The following is a list of our District Advisory Committee Members for the 2013-2014 school year. Please feel free to contact any one of these members if you have questions or ideas for helping to make our school district better.*

School Employees		Community Partners	
Brian Costello	Elementary Principal	Mike Dierenfeld	Business
Keith Fritz	Secondary Principal	Shayne Hoch	Law Enforcement
Deb Nagle	Curriculum Coordinator	Pastor Martin	Clergy
Mike Crozier	Superintendent	Dennis Johnson	Business
Amy Renwick	Technology Integration Specialist	Janelle Johnson	Business/ Prevention Grants
Nikkole Koenig	Educator	Mindy Tenold	Business
Deb Faugstad	Reading Chair	Sue Waller	Business
Brian Campbell	Culture/ Climate Chair	Christine Hengesteg	Business
Greg Parks	Math Chair	Marcia Tweeten	AEA 267
Kimberly Odegaard	Science Chair	Parents	
		Julie Hannemann	Elementary Parent
Students			
Taryn Van Ryswyk	Secondary Student	Luis Garcia	Secondary Parent
Katie Schiltz	Secondary Student	Board Members	
		Larry Hovey	Board Member
Mitchell Athey	Secondary Student		
		Susan Kliment	Board Member
Cole Benson	Secondary Student		
Peyton Pangburn	Elementary Student		

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

#### Iowa Future Problem Solving 2013-2014

Northwood-Kensett students in grades 4-12 are preparing for the FPS season. Social Isolation, Desertification, Surveillance Society and Land Transportation are the topics for this year.

Northwood-Kensett Future Problem Solvers will host the AEA 267 Practice Bowl on Saturday, December 14, 2013 at the NK Elementary School.

The Practice Bowl begins with team packet writing and concludes with a skit in which each team portrays the final solution to the problem the team created from the scenario.

Besides the team packet writing, students in grades 4-12 also have the opportunity to create scenarios based the topics for this year and submit their work for recognition during the State FPS Bowl at ISU.

## FROM THE DESK OF MR. FRITZ

### The Principal's Perspective

How often have you heard someone claim that student achievement is lower than it used to be because of increased poverty, or because of substance abuse among teens, or because of more students coming from single parent households, or because of a number of other reasons?

These circumstances do have an impact on student achievement, there is no doubt about it. However, we have all also heard stories of students, classes, and schools who have apparently conquered obstacles like these and gone on to accomplish great things. It is possible to transcend negative circumstances to attain the goals we've set for ourselves, and that others have set for us.

For the last year or so, I've been studying the topic of grading as it relates to student achievement. I've been seeking answers to questions like, What are the most effective methods of measuring and communicating student achievement, and what are the least effective (or even toxic) methods? What is the proper use of a letter grade or a percent on an assignment, and what does it really mean to the student, or to the college looking at their transcript? Should homework be graded? Why do we mark down on an English project, for example, when it's turned in late--after all, turning it in late is not an indicator of how well the student understands Shakespeare, but rather how irresponsible the student was.

There are two experts in the field of educational assessment from whom I've learned much already: Rick Wormeli and Doug Reeves. This school year some teachers and I will be studying the work of these two men, among others, to evaluate our grading practices and look for ways to improve them to most effectively support student achievement.

For example, in one of his books Doug Reeves states, "...accurate, specific, and timely feedback is linked to student learning....feedback is not only more important than most other instructional interventions, it is also more important than socioeconomic status, drug use, nutrition, exercise, anxiety, family structure, and a host of other factors that many people have claimed are overwhelming." The use of feedback--which is much more than just putting a letter grade or a number at the top of the paper--is one method of evaluating student work that can overcome the negative effects of all those barriers I named at the start of this article.

In my corner of the district newsletter this year, then, I will be keeping you updated both on our progress as we work hard to improve our grading practices, and also helping you to learn more about why some of our traditional grading practices are beneficial for students, and why some simply are not beneficial and should be changed or eliminated.

As always, I encourage you to contact me if you have questions about the work we do with your young person. You can follow me on Twitter @PrincipalFritz, send me an e-mail at [kfritz@nwood-kensett.k12.ia.us](mailto:kfritz@nwood-kensett.k12.ia.us), call me at the school or just catch me at a game sometime. I look forward to

Go to [www.nwood-kensett.k12.ia.us](http://www.nwood-kensett.k12.ia.us) for the most up-to-date happenings at Northwood-Kensett Community Schools.

### Students of Character — The Viking Way

By Brian Campbell,  
Culture/Climate Chair

Doing what's right, especially when no one's watching. In a lot of ways that sums up the goal of our Character Counts program. We're off to a great start at Northwood-Kensett! The elementary program is in full swing of incorporating Character Counts skits and lessons to reinforce our new character education program and the junior-senior high had their first monthly assembly to kick off the year. There is also a new group of amazing young people at the high school called the Viking Way. This group of student ambassadors is responsible for planning our monthly Character Counts activities at the junior-senior high. And although our group is just getting started, there are plans to have elementary students work with the Viking Way group to reinforce our character education programming -- kids helping kids to do what's right, especially when no one's watching!

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. understood why character counts most. In one of Dr. King's speeches he said, "We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character -- that is the goal of true education." As we think about Dr. King's statement and we look at who we most respect, I would bet that we are drawn to those people by forces beyond intellect and success. I know in my case the people I admire the most have strong character strengths and I appreciate how they treat me as a human being.

A person's character is one's habitual way of behaving. Everyone has a character of some sort, but not everyone "has character." Character is not the same thing as reputation. Character is what you are. Reputation is what people say you are. Abraham Lincoln compared character to a tree and a person's reputation was its shadow.

No one is born with good character--it's not hereditary. Yet everyone, regardless of background, enters the world with the opportunity to become a person of exemplary character. Character can be developed. Developing students of character--The Viking Way, is off to a great start at Northwood-Kensett Schools!



## FROM THE DESK OF MR. COSTELLO

### Welcome to the 2013-2014 School Year

Thank you for everything that you have done to make the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year run so smoothly. The students have come back to school eager, excited, and ready to learn.

Each school year we experience changes. The changes can come with new students, new staff, new curriculum, or new programs. I'd like to spend this month writing about a new program to our district, which was the adoption of the Children's Garden Preschool. For many years, the Children's Garden Preschool was a private preschool serving children within our district. In 1998, the state of Iowa introduced the Voluntary Preschool Grant in an effort to provide families better access to quality preschool programs. Since that time, the school has kept in close contact with the preschool board about the possibility of merging the preschool program into our K-12 system. This past year, after a parent and community input meeting, the preschool board voted to approve the merger.

We haven't sat idle as we embarked on a smooth merger between the two programs. A strong team of instructors and classroom support personnel have been hired and they have met with every family that has a three or four year old registered. We currently have forty-five four year olds and twenty-five three year olds in our program. This is the largest four-year-old class in memory!

The Children's Garden of the past was one of the foundational pieces of our community for a number of years. We look forward to building on the successes of the past and paving the road to new successes in the future.

Educationally,

Brian Costello



September 2013 Students' of the Month include Eijah Hendrick (Gr 3), in Mrs. Crippin's class, Haydan Pectorious (Gr 3), in Mrs. Hill's class; Jason Hanson (Gr 4) in Mrs. Vansteenburgh's class and Hayden Moore (Gr 4) in Mr. Park's class, Nathan Hannemann (Gr 5) in Mr. Severson's class, Blake Hagen (Gr 6) in Mrs. Cordle's class, Lindsey Davidson (Gr 6) in Ms. Orvedal's class and Brylee Hoepfner (Gr 5) in Ms. Hagen's class.

**STUDENT OF THE MONTH (ELEMENTARY):** Student of the Month Award is given to our third through sixth graders. The purpose of this award is to promote good citizenship. The criteria for receiving this award is handing in all assignments on time and being considerate of other classmates.

## FOURTH GRADE FUN

Edmodo, Spelling City, Pearson Reading, Book Adventure, Fossweb, TCI; these are just a few of the websites N-K fourth graders have learned to navigate since the start of the school year. They are so excited about their first year with laptops! Mr. Parks and Mrs. Vansteenburgh are excited about the learning opportunities the computers bring to their students.



N-K has upgraded to the 3rd Edition of Foss Science this year. Fourth graders will be busy raising red worms and hatching Painted Lady Butterflies. These activities are designed to educate the class on Earth's systems.



## SCIENCE

## COUNSELOR'S CORNER BY AMY RENWICK

### A Great Start to the Year for Science at N-K

The science department at Northwood-Kensett has had a busy past couple of years. Two years ago we began the process of renewing our curriculum. Through out the process we reviewed several curriculum options and selected the options we felt were best aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards. We also chose the options we felt incorporated STEM (science, technology engineering, and math) education.

The decision was made to purchase the updated version of the FOSS curriculum and continue using this in all grades at the elementary school. This curriculum is purely inquiry based and teaches students problem-solving and critical thinking skills, encourages them to be self-directed learners, and provides ownership of their learning and increases student interest in the subject matter. The FOSS curriculum also provides extensive opportunities to integrate technology into the classroom. For the first time, we are also implementing the FOSS curriculum at the junior high level as well. FOSS has replaced the textbook based curriculum we have used in the past. We are very excited about this! The 7th and 8th graders all expressed how excited they were to get to continue with FOSS into the junior high. In their words they love that they get to "do" science every day and they get to perform investigations to help answer the questions they have.

As FOSS is not offered at the high school level, the decision was made to purchase the updated versions of our current curriculum for grades 9-12. The updated versions all provide extensive opportunities to incorporate technology into each class as well as offer digital textbooks, which we purchased. The companies also reorganized their curricula so they align with the Next Generation Science Standards.

With the new curriculum already being implemented, the science department is off to a great start of another school year. I've heard many elementary students talking enthusiastically about the insects they are catching and learning about and the mealworms they get to keep on their desks or the worms they have been raising and the food chains they are creating. The junior high students are creating ecosystems in their classrooms and taking pictures of the moon cycle. The high school biology classes can be seen almost every day out side the school in the prairie while the chemistry and anatomy classes are working on investigations at the lab tables. We are looking forward to the best year yet at Northwood-Kensett.

Don't forget parent teacher conferences will be held on October 24 and **November 5** from 4:00 – 7:30 PM at the Elementary and 5:00-9:00 pm at the Secondary building.

**Notice change of date due to the IGHSAU Regional Volleyball Schedule**

Go to [www.nwood-kensett.k12.ia.us](http://www.nwood-kensett.k12.ia.us) for the most up-to-date happenings at Northwood-Kensett Community Schools.

### Cyberbullying: Your Role as a Parent

Recently, the staff at Northwood-Kensett schools has increased efforts to reduce bullying for our students. While we can impact students' lives within the school walls, we need parents' help to reduce bullying outside of school. One big way that parents can do that is by being aware of what is going on with his/her child online.

One of the top tips that can be given to parents is to monitor your child's social media accounts such as Facebook. It's a good idea to know what websites they are visiting, and who they are communicating with while on those sites. If you have a Facebook or other social account, you may want to add your child as a friend to see what he/she posts.

Monitoring your child while they are online helps in several ways: First, that is a good way to detect potential online predators early. Secondly, if you see other people displaying bullying behavior towards your child, you can save the evidence and report it to the proper folks. If your child is the one exhibiting bullying behavior, you can use your knowledge to stop the behavior and prevent it from escalating.

Many parents struggle with whether they should monitor their child's texts and online activities. Most parents monitor where their child goes when they leave their home. Likewise, your child is virtually out of the house when he/she sends texts and surfs the internet. If you wouldn't want your child being treated badly at school or out with friends, then it makes sense that you would help prevent them from being treated badly online.

If you would like to learn more, please contact Amy Renwick at school or visit <http://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/prevention/index.html>

Picture Retakes will be October 29.

They will start at the elementary at 8:30 and go to the Jr/Sr HS when they are finished at the elementary

## COUNSELOR'S CORNER BY RUSS KNUDSON

Greetings from the Guidance Department. I will be reporting by age groups the activities involved with the Guidance Department for the coming month of October.

### K-3

We are watching a series of short presentations that align with our Character Counts Pillars. The series is titled "Auto B Good". The presentations demonstrate what the behaviors "look like" that are defined under the pillars in Character Counts. Each short presentation is accompanied by a series of activity pages. Students work on the pages in class as time is allowed after a classroom discussion. The emphasis for October is Respect.

### 4&6

Students in Guidance classes will be working in conjunction with County Health to continue their personal development work through the Life Skills Series. The topics may vary but most likely focus on personal safety, substance abuse prevention and skill training in the area of social competencies.

### Grade 5

Grade 5 is working to develop skills to deal with cliques. Most social groups have them, but they can be a negative aspect of a school if students lack skills to deal with them. Everyone needs to belong to a group. No one needs to become a slave to those groups. There are healthy and unhealthy ways to be a clique member.

### Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior

Much of my October focus in guidance is aimed at sophomores. They will be offered two chances to practice becoming more competent at taking standardized tests. Every student must take them sooner or later and a natural test taker will take them and do well. A student who is not a natural test taker can learn strategies and gain confidence by taking the opportunity to practice before they become high stakes. Sophomores will be offered a chance to take the PLAN (Pre-ACT) test on Oct. 9. The test is paid through Guidance WCDA funds and is free to all sophomores. They will also be offered the opportunity to take the PSAT or (National Merit Scholarship) test on Oct. 16. The cost will be \$14.00. The results of these tests will help them make better course selection decisions for the next two years and will also aid in deciding what training they will need in order to enter the job market.

Freshmen will be given the opportunity to participate in Teen Screen. This is a Mental Health/Suicide Prevention screening sponsored by the United Way. It takes only a couple of hours and hopefully identifies if students are not at-risk for suicide in the present or future years. We have participated in this program for at least 5 years with excellent results.

The last part of my article deals with the Life Skills Portfolio, which is developed by each student over junior and senior high school. I have had several parents indicate that their child or they have not known what is involved in this graduation requirement. Parents and students may access the HS Course Handbook found on the school main Web Page on the right hand side. Scroll down under "Current Highlights" and you will find it. The Life Skills curriculum is outlined on pages 51-56. Every student in high school has a document that can be accessed through their Google drive or for seniors on their progress reports (semester 2) that outlines their present status and tracks their progress. Parents need not be alarmed if their child has an F, F & P stands for pass and fail. There is no letter grade. They will not earn a P (passing) level until they have reached the end of the senior year and acquired at least 80% of the portfolio competencies. Seniors are averaging about 35% to 40% as of the present time. This is slightly above the average for the last 8 or 9 previous senior classes.

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## Information for School-Aged Youth



If your family lives in any of the following situations:

- In a shelter, motel, vehicle, or campground
- On the street
- In an abandoned building, trailer, or other inadequate accommodations, or
- Doubled up with friends or relatives because you cannot find or afford housing

**Then, you have certain rights or protections under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act.**

**You have the right to:**

- Go to school, no matter where you live or how long you have lived there. You must be given access to the same public education provided to other students.
- Continue in the school you attended before you became homeless or the school you last attended, if that is your choice and is feasible. The school district's local liaison for homeless education must assist you, if needed, and offer you the right to appeal a decision regarding your choice of school if it goes against your wishes.
- Receive transportation to the school you attended before you became homeless or the school you last attended, if you request such transportation.
- Attend a school and participate in school programs with students who are not homeless. Students cannot be separated from the regular school program because they are homeless.
- Enroll in school without giving a permanent address. Schools cannot require proof of residency that might prevent or delay school enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes while the school arranges for the transfer of school and immunization records or any other documents required for enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes in the school of your choice even while the school and you seek to resolve a dispute over enrollment.
- Receive the same special programs and services, if needed, as provided to all other students served in these programs.
- Receive transportation to school and to school programs.

**When you move, you should do the following:**

- Contact the school district's local liaison for homeless education (see phone number below) for help in enrolling in a new school or arranging to continue in your former school. (Or, someone at a shelter, social services office, or the school can direct you to the person you need to contact.)
- Tell your teachers anything that you think they need to know to help you in school.
- Ask the local liaison for homeless education, the shelter provider, or a social worker for assistance with clothing and supplies, if needed.

### Local Area Contacts:

### State Coordinator:

If you need further assistance, call the  
National Center for Homeless Education  
at the toll-free Helpline number:  
**1-800-308-2145**



## NURSE'S CORNER BY HEATHER RHEINGANS

This year I will be starting vision screening checks for all Kindergarten, third, and 6th grade students and will also be screening students based off of teacher referral or parent request. I will need volunteers to do this efficiently and effectively, so if you feel you have a few hours of your time you could donate to help this out I would greatly appreciate it. I don't have a date set-up yet but looking to do this sometime in November. Please contact me by e-mail or phone for more details or to get your name on the volunteer contact list.

Also, just a reminder that I am posting a monthly blog that is linked on the school's web site. If you have time please go and check it out! I'm always open to suggestions so if there is something that you would like to see more information on and feel that the school community would benefit, let me know benefit, let me know.

## N-K NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

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.

**Parent Access:** You may access your child's grades and lunch account information via the JMC tab on the school's website. JMC is the Student Information System that we use to record student information. This would allow you to access your child's current grades as well as their lunch account activity. To take advantage of this feature, you would have to call or email the office and we would input a password of your choice if you have not already done so. There is a tab that you can check(alert notifications) that would automatically send you an email notification if your student is marked tardy or absent. This would also serve as a reminder to call the office to notify us if your child is absent or tardy for any reason, as is outlined in the student/parent handbook. In order to receive the notification that your child was marked absent or tardy, we would need a working email address. Most grades and notifications regarding your student will be sent electronically when possible in order to conserve paper. Please feel free to take advantage of this wonderful feature.