



Northwood-Kensett Community School District

VIKING DISPATCH

November 2016

Creating healthy, educated, ethical and productive citizens.

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FROM THE DESK OF MR. COSTELLO

It's that time of year for Parent/Teacher Conferences. I want to draw attention to an item that will be discussed in detail for students in K-3. Teachers will share with you the progress your student is making through the use of our FAST Assessment. This is the universal screener in reading that we use to meet the Early Literacy law. This law requires that Iowa's school children read at grade level by the end of third grade. As a result, rules were put into effect in order to improve reading within the state. We are required to assess students in the fall, winter, and spring. The results of these screenings will be shared with you.

Pay particular attention to see if your child is reading at benchmark. Students are identified as persistently at risk when:

- 1) their reading skills are below grade level on screening tests and,
- 2) they are making minimal progress.

At our school, we are doing the following, as required by Iowa law, to support students who have been identified as having substantial reading difficulties:

Progress Monitoring:

All students who are identified as persistently at risk are required to receive weekly progress monitoring. This allows schools to monitor the improvement students are making toward end-of-year goals (i.e., spring benchmark) given the intervention they receive.

Intensive Interventions:

All students identified as persistently at risk are required to receive intervention to remediate their reading difficulties. This intervention is required to continue until the student meets grade level expectations at the next screening period.

If your child is persistently at risk by the end of third grade, we will ask you to have your child participate in an intensive summer reading program that we hold here at Northwood-Kensett. If you choose not to enroll your child then your child will be subject to retention. By law, a student is considered for retention if:

- The student is persistently at risk in reading at the end of third grade and is not proficient in reading;
- The student does not qualify for good cause exemption, and
- The student does not attend and complete an intensive summer literacy program.

I encourage you to visit with your child's teacher about this law. If you would like more information, please visit the Iowa Department of Education website at www.educateiowa.gov.

Sincerely,
Brian Costello

FROM THE DESK OF MR. CROZIER

Enrollment

The certified enrollment number for our district this year is 500. This is down from last year, at 503. While we wish enrollment numbers were up, it is not a great decline. There is one bright side to the enrollment picture; our open enrolled out students are equal to our open enrolled in students at 29. If you add the 22 Minnesota students to the mix, we have more students coming into our district than going out. We will also get a credit of 15 students for the operational sharing of three positions with other districts. With our budget being enrollment driven the operational sharing dollars will be a big help to the finances of the district.

The elimination of NCLB and the implementation of ESSA

During 2016-2017, NCLB will be phased out and the new Every Student Succeeds Act will begin implementation. This is welcomed news for schools. The Federal Government has loosened the controls and requirements on schools. For more information regarding ESSA go to page 10.

Information Survey.

We would like to collect some information from our patron regarding communication methods we use and how we can improve. We know that our OneCall works well, but would people rather receive a text instead of a call? We also realize that our website is not user friendly from a cell phone or tablet. We would like to know if people would be interested in a mobile app. Please go to this link and fill out the survey to give us your input. <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfmoGCGvqWwR5UMofl-ljzujZBhiyfwIQnvL8-hYHCWlmyQrw/viewform>



FROM THE DESK OF MR. FRITZ

True story: when I was a kid, I liked taking the Iowa Tests. I looked forward to them, loved everything about them: the bubble answer sheets, the #2 pencils, the vocabulary section--all of it. I was a weird, weird kid.

Not much has changed now that I am an adult. Still weird, still like tests. And I wanted to devote some time this month giving you advance notice that the Iowa Tests (love them or hate them) are going away. As a matter of fact, this is probably the last year our students will take them.

Instead, a new test is required called Smarter Balanced. The designers of this assessment say that it will provide better information for teachers and parents, because teachers can check students' progress throughout the year, and end-of-year tests measure what students know and how much they've improved.

They also say that using computer adaptive technology, the tests are customized to every student. When a student answers correctly, the next question will be harder, and a wrong answer will lead to an easier question. This format lets students show what they know.

So far it sounds just like the MAP tests we administer two to three times a year, right? But while it's close, it's not quite a MAP test, and while the end-of-year tests sound like Iowa Tests, it's not quite that either.

And that's because of the third component: Students take the test online and must *research, write, and solve problems*. These questions measure the critical thinking skills students need for college and careers.

Here is where these tests become very different from MAP or Iowa Tests. The Smarter Balanced assessments will take longer than students are used to, because they demand higher levels of thinking. Scheduling them will be different, because they take time to complete. As with many changes, there will be some discomfort. Eventually, the weird kids like me who enjoyed testing themselves against an assessment to see how well they can do will grow to look forward to these new Smarter Balanced challenges, as well. And this will become the new normal.

We'll do our best to keep you informed along the way.

Go to www.nkvikings.com for
the most up-to-date
happenings at Northwood-Kensett
Community Schools.

TEACHER LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Teacher Leadership Program Update

By Kimberly Odegaard and Beth Butler

As the first quarter of the school year comes to an end, the teachers were asked to reflect upon how the Teacher Leadership Program has impacted their teaching and students' learning. Here is what a few teachers had to say:

- “I feel more support to come up with strategies that will benefit students.”
- “As a special education teacher, I see the benefits in the classrooms I attend with my students.”
- “Through coaching opportunities, I was able to improve a part of my curriculum that our students enjoyed & excelled at. “
- “I have found the presentations [during monthly in-service] to be informative and helpful.”
- “I was able to sit in a couple of other classrooms, which helps reinforce some things I do, and give me new ideas. That learning benefits my own students in turn.”
- “It’s been very beneficial for me to have a mentor during my first year of teaching.”
- “Being able to talk through day to day problems and get another perspective [is helpful].”
- “[It is nice to have help with] extra focus in on content area and assessing growth.”
- “I’ve been able to think through my ideas and find ways to support my students more.”



THIRD GRADE NEWS

In third grade we introduce and practice multiplication tables. In this article we'll touch on why kids need to learn math fact fluency. But first, what does that mean?

Math facts fluency refers to the ability to recall the basic facts in all four operations accurately, quickly and effortlessly. When students achieve automatic recall with these facts, they have attained a level of mastery that enables them to retrieve them for long-term memory without conscious effort or attention.

So why focus on math facts?

Math facts fluency leads to higher order mathematics

By memorizing their facts, students free up their working memory and can devote it to problem solving and learning new concepts and skills (Geary, 1994). Quite simply, a lack of fluency in basic math fact recall significantly hinders a child's subsequent progress with problem-solving, algebra and higher-order math concept.

Fluent math facts mean less confusion

Math facts are important because they form the building blocks for higher-level math concepts. When a child masters his/her math facts, these concepts will be significantly easier and the student will be better equipped to solve them faster. If the child spends a lot of time doing the basic facts, he/she is more likely to be confused with the processes and get lost in their calculations.

Math fact memorization affects performance not only in math

In later elementary, students have longer and more complicated computations to complete to check their understanding of various concepts. At this stage, if a student does not have his/her math facts committed to memory, he/she will spend a disproportionate amount of time figuring out the smaller calculations and risk not completing the test. This not only affects their performance in math class, but will also in other subjects, such as science and geography.

Less math anxiety

Math can be compared to languages in some ways. Just like you have to learn to combine letters into words and words into sentences – and we have strategies like phonics and sight words to help kids to learn to read - math facts are the foundation blocks for learning the next level of math. There is rote learning involved in both language and math mastery. Math anxiety starts when children fall behind and can't keep up. To avoid these anxieties, students' early elementary years should focus on learning the foundation math skills needed for later years – math facts are among those important math skills.

Taken from K5 Learning Blog (<http://www.k5learning.com/blog/why-do-kids-need-learn-math-facts>)

ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR

Fall sports have come to a finish and we have a little time before the winter activities begin. I would like to take this time to thank everyone that helped out this fall with volleyball and football games. There are many people that help and I will do my best to list them in this newsletter.

Some of those that helped with volleyball at the score table are Brenda Davidson and Sheila Bratrud as our scorebook keepers, Kimberly Odegaard as the libero tracker and Beth Butler did our announcing. Our line judges were Anna Hanson, Mandy Olson, Nikkole Koenig, and Kate Hartman. I know that there were so many parents and high school student that helped with our JV and JH games that I do not have the names of but if you were one of those people, Thank You! And of course I would like to thank our coaches Heather Rheingans and Morgan Johnson, and our two volunteer coaches Monte DeArmoun and Kate Hartman.

Helping at our football games with the chains this fall were Aaron Carman, Jeff Moretz, Andy Julseth, David Hengesteg, Tim Thofson, Brian Schutz, Monte DeArmoun, Ron Hengesteg, and Jesse Renteria. Doing the announcing were Doug Fallgatter, Terry Steinmetz, and Doug Krull. Our clock operators were Scott Severson, Mark Severson, Clif Davis, and Darin Kliment. Ken Abrams, Chuck Stock, Jeff and Beth Greve helped take tickets at two of our home games this fall.

I want to send out a big thanks to the Northwood Fire and Rescue Department for being at all of our home varsity games and am very happy that we did not have use their services this fall.

I would also like to thank the post prom committee for running the concession stands at our events this fall and keeping our gym and outdoor complex very clean throughout the year.

I know that there are other people that help out at our events that I have not listed. These are the people that step in and do the little things that you and I don't always see but help make Northwood-Kensett a great place to work and to raise our children. Thank you very much.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

By: Amy Hansen

I've heard some families say that they aren't going to fill out the FAFSA, because they don't think they'll get any financial aid. While that may be true for a small percentage of American families, the odds are certainly in your favor to fill out the FAFSA.

For the first time FAFSA opened on October 1st using taxes from 2015. Before, it opened on January 1st and used taxes from the year that had just ended. Families are able to complete the FAFSA without worrying about getting taxes filed early. They are able to compare their financial aid packages from a few colleges before making a final decision and can make those important decisions with more information earlier than we were able to do before this change.

If families need help filing the FAFSA, a financial aid representative from NIACC will be here on Thursday, November 3rd to assist with that. You do not need to attend NIACC to take advantage of this opportunity. You can contact me at ahansen@nkvikings.com to set up an appointment. Additionally, the Iowa College Aid Network (ICAN) will be here November 15th to inform students— especially Juniors & Seniors— and their families about the financial aid process. I require students to attend, because they are the ones who are ultimately responsible for the financial choices that they will make for their college careers.

I look forward to seeing families at these two upcoming events! Please check out my Road Show flier for more information on opportunities available on conference night (Nov. 3rd.)

COUNSELOR'S CORNER (Continued)

By: Ashley Williams

In Guidance throughout October, we have discussed and completed activities surrounding the Trustworthiness and Respect pillars of character. Our fourth grade classes put on an assembly explaining what respect means, and how we can show it every day. As we move into November, we will continue to talk about Respect, as well as Responsibility.

In addition to discussing our pillar of the month, we have also continued to discuss the concept of a growth mindset in grades 1-6. A growth mindset is a positive way of thinking about things. We have discussed how doing challenging work and activities helps us to grow. We also discussed how we can learn from making

mistakes. I am continuing to form small groups focused on various topics. As we progress into the school year, we will begin groups covering topics such as study skills, organizational skills, and test taking skills to help all students be successful! I run several student groups throughout the school year. If you feel like your student would benefit from taking part in a particular group, or if you have a suggestion for a group topic, please let me know.

As always, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. You can reach me by email at awilliams@nkvikings.com or by phone at 641-324-1127 ext. 216!

JR. & SR. HIGH STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

Brianna Hepperly, Emma Davidson, Natalie Cordle, Spencer Smith, Caden Schrage, Silas Girouard, Dali Cansino, Carter Severson, Jenna Weitzel, Paige DeArmoun, Emma Logeman, Tyra Sledge, Jesslyn Sims, Alex Shoger, Addyson Bachtle, Bethany Gentz, Bella Efflandt, Reina Trosper, Carly Hengesteg, Clara Davidson, Ivy Rollene, Sarah Pederson, AJ Branstad.

NURSE'S CORNER

By: Heather Rheingans

Colder temperatures are upon us, and as much as I hate to admit, it will only continue to drop until next spring. Now is a good time to dig out your student's winter wear and check to make sure that coats, snow pants, and boots still fit and are in working order. I am always surprised when I do this to find out how much my own children have grown since last winter.

When accumulating snowfall starts, snow pants and boots are not only a necessity but also a requirement for recess at the Elementary. If students do not have these items they are expected to stand by a wall or play on the blacktop, if there has been an area cleared off. This is to protect their legs and feet from getting wet which results in an increased risk for frost-bite. I do have a limited supply of boots and snow pants to lend out if a student forgets or a tear occurs, unfortunately I do not have enough to supply all students.

Ears and fingers are the most susceptible areas to get frostbite so a warm hat, ear warmer, or ear muffs and waterproof gloves are also extremely important.

If you are experiencing financial hardships and are having difficulty funding these items, please do not hesitate to contact me or one of the school counselors to discuss options for you.

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS OF THE MONTH



From Left to Right: Teagan Johnson, Chase Preece, Teagan Hackenmiller, Grace Bryant.



Left to right: Alec Ducommun, Hayzin Jacobson, Jessika Ausborn and Loghan Nelson

MR. CROZIER (Continued)

Every Student Succeeds Act **in Iowa**

Iowa Department of Education Fact Sheet

What is ESSA?

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. This update, which received bipartisan support in Congress and was signed by the President in 2015, replaces the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). ESSA restores a more reasonable balance between the role of states and the federal government in accountability for the success of all children.

While the more prescriptive NCLB brought focus to equity for all students, transparency, and accountability in K-12 schools, ESSA maintains this focus while providing more state and local control. Under ESSA, the federal government sets expectations, and states determine how schools will reach them.

What does ESSA do?

- Maintains annual assessments
- Increases state flexibility to design school accountability systems, school interventions and student supports
- Removes federal mandates related to educator evaluation
- Increases state and local flexibility in the use of federal funds
- Limits authority of the U.S. Secretary of Education to issue mandates

What will ESSA mean for Iowa?

Iowa will maintain rigorous standards and assessments that measure how students are meeting the standards, and the state will be required to identify the lowest 5 percent of schools based on performance. However, the federal government no longer sets annual targets for schools to reach, prescribed labels for sanctions, or prescribed models for turning around schools.

The Iowa Department of Education will develop the state's ESSA plan to create a cohesive system of accountability and support for the success of students. The Department will consider stakeholder input throughout the development of the plan.

Programs under NCLB remain in effect for the 2016-17 school year. For states such as Iowa that operate without a NCLB waiver, ESSA provides flexibility in school interventions and supports. Accordingly:

- Iowa has frozen the Adequate Yearly Progress status of all districts and schools, which will continue to implement the same interventions developed in the 2015-16 school year.
- Iowa school districts are no longer required to offer parents the option of choosing a different school (school choice) or contracting with an external vendor for free tutoring/support (supplemental education services). Iowa developed a transition plan for ensuring alternative supports to students in high-need schools: www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/every-student-succeeds-act



MR. CROZIER (Continued)

Every Student Succeeds Act **in Iowa****ESSA Timeline for Iowa****August**

Convene state advisory committee.

September-November

Engage stakeholder groups and hold nine public input meetings across Iowa.

November-January

Develop plans for each component of ESSA. Complete initial draft of state ESSA plan for public feedback.

February

Vet ESSA draft plan with advisory committee and stakeholder groups and hold additional public input meetings.

March-July

Post revised draft plan publicly and submit it to the U.S. Department of Education.

What has Iowa done on education policy in recent years?

- 2008:** Iowa Legislature adopted statewide standards for what students in kindergarten through 12th grade should know and be able to do in mathematics, English-language arts, science, social studies, and 21st century skills, such as financial literacy.
- 2011:** Executive Order 74, issued by Governor Branstad, created a Governor's STEM Advisory Council with the goal of increasing student interest and achievement in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
- 2012:** Legislation created a comprehensive early literacy initiative that provides intervention to struggling readers in kindergarten through third grade and aims to make sure students reach reading proficiency by the end of third grade.
- 2013:** An education reform package adopted by the Legislature and signed by Governor Branstad created a statewide teacher leadership system that taps into the expertise of teachers to improve classroom instruction and raise student achievement.
- 2014:** Executive Order 83, issued by Governor Branstad, created an ongoing review process for Iowa's academic standards, including public comment, to identify areas for improvement. Through this process, the State Board of Education adopted new science standards in 2015.
- 2015:** The Branstad-Reynolds Administration launched the Future Ready Iowa initiative, designed to build Iowa's talent pipeline by ensuring citizens have access to the education and training required for in-demand jobs in the state.
- 2015:** The State Board of Education adopted administrative rules implementing a new state assessment, which Iowa students will take for the first time in the 2017-18 school year.
- 2016:** Legislation was adopted to modernize career and technical education programs statewide and to provide Iowa students equitable access to high-quality programs.

How can Iowans stay involved in ESSA?

- For developments, go to the Iowa Department of Education's ESSA webpage: www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/every-student-succeeds-act
- Ask questions or submit comments in writing to ESSA@iowa.gov.

