



VIKING DISPATCH

April 2017

Creating healthy, educated, ethical and productive citizens.

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From the Desk of Mr. Fritz, Jr. Sr. High Principal

The monsoon season has arrived in North Iowa, it seems, with rain in the forecast most days. And we know what that means at school: canceled track meets, more field trips, and even more standardized testing.

"Why do we test so much?" some parents have asked me. Hopefully my reply provides some perspective, because students and parents only see what is in front of them, not what is happening behind the scenes.

Actually, for every test we give from the Iowa Assessments (the bubble sheet tests with No. 2 pencils) there is another test that we don't give. Reading, math, science, and social studies (for some students) are all that we do. That's because those are our priorities, and we want to preserve as much time for students to be engaged in learning in relation to how much time they're being tested.

MAP tests come next, and those are the computer-based assessments in just reading, math, and science. Unlike the Iowa Assessments, MAP tests aren't timed and rather than waiting weeks for the results to come to me in the mail, students see their scores on MAP tests immediately and teachers see all of the results plus other interpretive information the very next day.

"Wait a minute!" shout those same parents from Paragraph 2. "You *just* tested my child in March with the old bubble sheet test, and now you're testing them in the same subjects again! What do you mean, 'preserve learning time'?"

And that's true: one fairly big test occurs right after another fairly big test. But we needed most of the school year under our belt to best measure student learning, and no student wants to be pulled in over the summer to take a test, so we do the second set of tests in April. And we're required to administer and use a second assessment, besides the Iowa Assessments. For N-K, in most grade levels, that second assessment is the MAP test. So although this one assesses the same subjects as the Iowa Assessments, each test does so in very different ways, giving us a more full picture of each students' strengths and challenge areas.

So until the legislature in Des Moines figures out exactly what the schools in the state of Iowa must do differently, we will continue to balance the requirement to use two different assessments with two other critical elements: the need to preserve as much time in the classroom as possible for our students, and the need to use assessments that don't just meet a state mandate, but that also provide valid and useful information for N-K's educators to best understand their students' strengths and weaknesses and adjust accordingly for their success.

From the Desk of Mr. Costello, Elementary Principal

A Better Way of Reporting Student Progress

Have you ever wondered what that grade represents on our report card? Over the past year or two I've fielded questions from parents asking what type of work actually goes into these grades. My response has always been to review the updated grades on JMC and spend some time with the classroom teacher to get a good handle on what the grade represents. I'm not sure this is the best response, but the truth is our teachers grade differently from one classroom or one grade to the next. Usually grades are determined by averaging performance over the entire quarter. Sometimes grades often include factors such as behavior, homework completion, effort and extra credit. These differences make it difficult for to answer parent questions directly. But, more importantly, the lack of detail in our report cards make it difficult for parents and teachers to identify strategies to support student success.

If we believe the purpose of report cards is to provide accurate information and provide feedback to students and their families on the student's progress towards meeting grade level standards, then we need to make a change in how we track student progress and report it. This has been the basis of on-going meetings that I have had with a task force of elementary teachers this year. Based on our discussions and research, we believe we must move to a "Standards-Based Reporting" process. We've made the commitment this change will occur next school year.

The shift to a Standards-Based Report Card does several things that will benefit students, teachers, and families.

- It ensures consistency from classroom to classroom
- It provides more accurate representation of student progress in meeting grade level standards
- It provides much greater detail to parents about how their child is performing in school

We have a lot of work yet to do to get this accomplished by fall, but we are committed to this work. I'll keep you updated on the highlights of this shift. In the meantime, stop in or call if you have questions.

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.

From the Desk of Mr. Crozier, Superintendent of Schools

Public Meeting Held on March 21, 2017 Regarding Facilities

I would like to thank all the community members who attended the public meeting regarding facilities on March 21, 2017. The information gained at the meeting will be valuable to the board of education when making decisions going forward regarding our facilities and the financing of projects. The board will have discussion during the April meeting regarding our next steps and scope and schedule of projects. If you would like a summary of the meeting you can view the presentation slides on our website www.nwood-kensett.k12.ia.us or read the article in the Northwood Anchor. It is our responsibility to do and provide the best we can for the children of our district.

Summer Improvement Projects:

We have a long list of projects that have been approved for this summer. At the elementary building we will finish off the air-conditioning of the 1954 building. This will provide air-conditioning to the 1st – 3rd grade rooms, the multi-purpose room, and the cafeteria. We will be putting in new controls for the heating and cooling system throughout the elementary building. When these two projects are complete our elementary HVAC system should be more efficient and this will provide a better learning atmosphere for our students. We will be replacing over 700 square yards of carpet in the elementary. Outside the playground blacktop will be resealed.

At the secondary campus we will be replacing all the parking lot lights with LED fixtures. This will provide more lighting output and higher efficiency. We will also be replacing the outdoor concession stand lighting to LED. Four more cameras will be added to the secondary building boosting our security. The sidewalk at the football field will be extended south of the home bleacher down to the end of the track and onto the shot put area.

The handicap accessible door openers will be replaced at the main entrance at the elementary and a new handicap accessible door opener will be installed at the high school office. Two new drinking fountains at each building, with water bottle fillers, are going to be installed.

Go Vikings

Guidance Corner: by Mrs. Amy Hansen, Jr. Sr. High School Counselor

The Importance of Being Prepared for College Entrance Exams

The ACT Test is only one week away, and nine Juniors and I have spent one period every day this week working through the John Baylor ACT Test Prep curriculum to prepare for the test. This is probably my 10th or more time listening in on these training videos, and every time I do so, I think of how much a student's extra effort can pay off in the long run, if they choose to devote some extra time to college planning.

When I took the ACT test in high school, I just filled out the form and took it. I didn't do any prep work, and I didn't bother to take it again. I got a good enough score to be accepted to ISU, my 1st choice of a college, and that was good enough. I stopped there. Now, I see how John's tips could have greatly assisted me in learning how to most effectively take that test, because the ACT test is not only about what a student knows, but how efficient a student is at taking the test.

In nationwide literature about college entrance testing, much is mentioned about the expense and efforts that families and students in more metropolitan areas routinely sink into test preparation. Generally, our students take a more relaxed approach, often taking the test once without much preparation. I am proud of these nine Juniors and the extra effort they're making, and I know that the extra effort has the potential to help boost them to noticeably higher scores than they would have gotten without the preparations they've made.

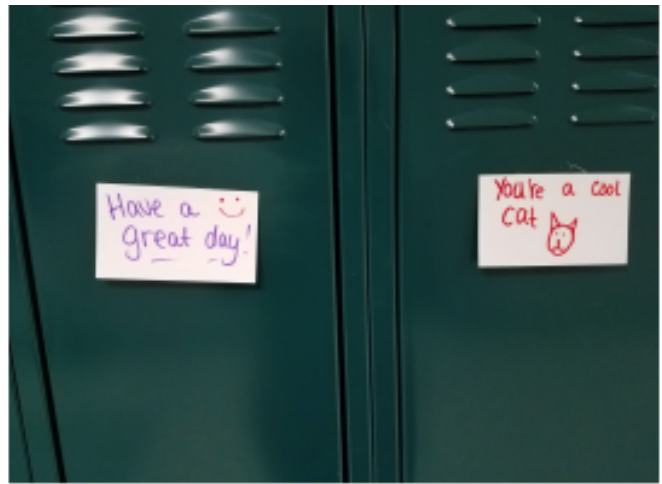
If you'd like to learn more about college entrance testing and preparation, don't hesitate to contact me to learn more!

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

The last day of school for the 2016-17 school
year at Northwood-Kennett CSD will be May
26th provided the weather cooperates and
we do not miss any more days due to
inclement weather.

Guidance Corner: by Mrs. Ashley Williams, Elementary Counselor

The 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th grade Junior Viking Way members have been working on ways to spread caring and kindness around the school. They made positive notecards for each student in the elementary. These notecards included messages such as “You’re a Star,” “Have a great day,” and “I’m glad you’re here today.” These notecards were posted on every locker in the elementary.



In Guidance, we have been talking about careers and what jobs the students want to do. The 6th grade students have been working on their career projects for the project fair. These projects include researching the career of their choice and putting the information into a keynote presentation. These presentations allow the students to explore the careers of their choice and to see what is required in order to pursue that job. These presentations will be on display at the 6th Grade Showcase on Thursday, April 6th from 5-6pm.

Throughout the month of April, we will be focusing on the Citizenship character trait. Each year, we choose an organization to support. This year, we have chosen to fundraise for the Ronald McDonald House. We will be collecting pop tabs, change, and needed items for the Ronald McDonald House in Rochester, MN. This fundraiser allows the students to work together for a common goal of helping others. It also helps to show that by working together, we can achieve great things.

Nurses Corner: Sports Physical Clinic-New this year.

I have some exciting news for all students participating in sports! We will be hosting a Sports Physical Clinic at the High School for all student's FREE of charge. A sports' physical is required for all athletic participants and is valid for 1 year and one month after the issue date. We will be holding the clinic on 3 different days to accommodate schedules and to make sure we have time to get all those participating ample time. We would like to have current 6th & 7th graders get their physical completed May 3rd, current 8th & 9th graders May 10th, and 10th & 11th graders May 17th. If this assigned day doesn't work, please let Mr. Hartman or myself know and we can try to get them on a different day. The clinics will start after school; coaches will be cooperative in letting their athlete's participate.

I encourage you to keep a close eye on your emails, as more specific details will be sent out once we get closer. A consent to treat form is required to be filled out in order for your student athlete to participate; this will also be sent out in an email. We ask that you help your child fill out the health and family history section on the physical form as well. Copies of the treatment consent and blank physical forms will also be found in the High School office. Please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Hartman or myself with any questions. Submitted by Heather Rheingans, RN.

News from the Classroom

The Year in the Life of a Sixth Grader by Ms. Annette Orvedal

As we head back to school we have students not only busy getting into the routine of classes and friends. They are busy with football and cheerleading which they like to talk the most about. The year started with a new edition of our Diversity of Life unit in science, Ancient History in Social Studies, Every Day math, and stories to increase our comprehension and interests.

As the Fall continues, October brings our first field trip to Hormel Nature Center in Austin, Mn. We had a chance to get involved with nature as we hiked and gathered data about about water quality.

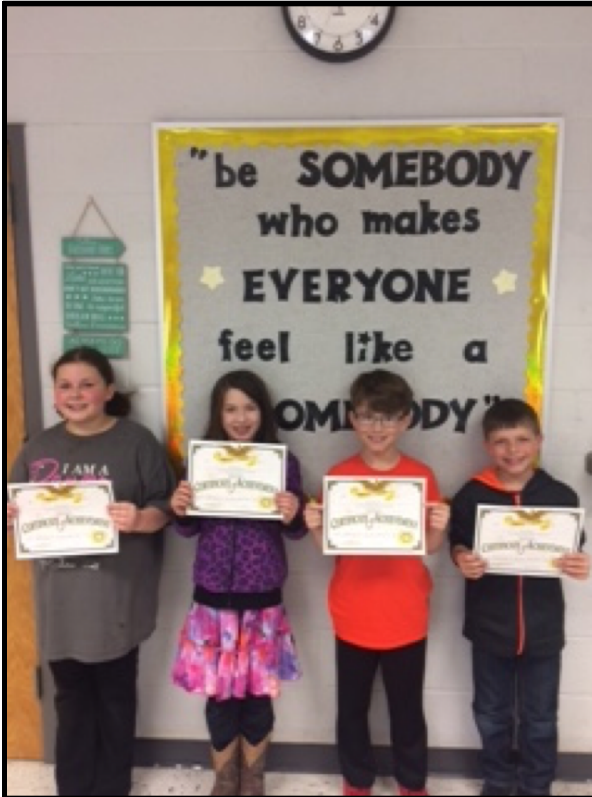
In winter our Egyptian unit concluded with our pyramids and papers about pharaohs, mummies, and daily life. The rest of the student body enjoyed looking at our pyramids in the library. We were also lucky enough to squeeze in great weather for our second field trip to Hormel Nature Center for a day of survival skills (fire building), and bird habitatsFun was had by all!!! Dr. Suess's books inspired students to be creative as they decorated the doors of the elementary. We end the month with Steben's Theatre performing the play "Anansi the Spider" for the elementary staff and student body.

April brings the Invent IA project for some of the sixth graders. We had many really great inventions and we had very good presentations selling the idea why we should get that invention. We still await the result to find out who will be sent onto the next level. We also have a new activity for some, BOB, Battle of the Books. It will be exciting to see how our hard work turns out. As Spring springs into action we are busy with careers for the Project Fair. The public is welcome to come and share our projects on April 6th from 5-6 pm in the elementary building. They will be setting up their projects to share with you in the hallways.

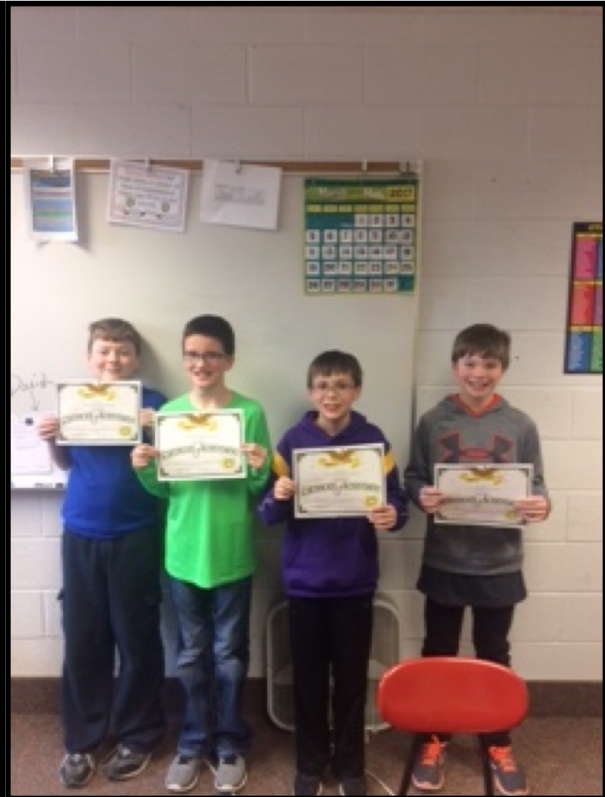
With spring comes 4-H leaders and master gardeners planting of our garden at the fairgrounds. We are lucky enough to have master gardeners in the area who help us learn and supplies us with vegetables and flowers. Please come to Worth County Fair and check it out. June 14-18th.

Character DOES Count!

Grades 3-6 Students of Character for March



Left to right: Kamryn Backhaus, Madison Espinosa, Brady Christianson and William Bielefield



Left to right: James Urban, Jackson Foss, Nicholas Hanson and Damon Reverson

Jr. Sr. High School Students of Character for March

Gideon Rollene, Olivia Stille, Kennedy Eskildsen, Cody Wahl, Gavin Paulsen, Sidney Quam, Jamie Steinman, Grace Skellenger, Callie Christiansen, Kaden Mayberry, Matthew Parcher, Rachel Hill, Marcus Brandt, Wyatt Willand, Brett Bachtel, Drake Tiedemann, Cameron Campbell, Jesslyn Sims, Molly Hunchis, Sydney Welch, Nathan Cordle, Olivia Treslan, Jade Stubbe, Ethian Tasker, MacKenzie Hakes and Hayden Moore.

CURRICULUM UPDATES

Teacher Leadership Program - Update

By Kimberly Odegaard and Beth Butler

The Teacher Leadership Program has had a busy year. Here is a snapshot of what's been happening in each of the Teacher Leader roles.

Director of Curriculum and Innovation (Kimberly Odegaard):

- Professional Development has continued to focus on the work of our PLC's with an added emphasis on unpacking and prioritizing our English/Language Arts and Math standards. Our next step will be to aligning the standards across grade levels.
- Work has also occurred around leveraging technology for engagement and rigor.
- Literacy curriculum adoption committee has spent time evaluating current literacy curriculum, discussing our district's needs in regards to literacy instruction, researching curriculum options, and observing literacy instruction in different school districts.
- Social Studies curriculum adoption process is beginning with implementation of the updated curriculum occurring in the fall of 2018.

Instructional Coach (Beth Butler):

- 12 coaching cycles (coach works one-on-one with a teacher), each lasting 6-8 weeks, standards-based goals
- Classroom data collected by teacher and coach show student growth in goal areas
- Attended various PD opportunities to grow/learn as a coach, and also to assist with district-wide PD goals
- Hosted a Coaching Lab in December, hosting another in April

Mentor Teachers (Dave Capitani, Steve Hartman, Alyssa Hanna, Heidi Vansteenburgh):

- Meet regularly (often weekly) with mentees to discuss various topics
- Observe mentees once each semester and observed by mentees once each semester; follow-up with post-observation discussion
- Meet monthly for a book study with mentees
- Helping mentees begin Teaching Portfolio

Model Teachers (Monte DeArmoun, Deb Faugstad, Laura Crippin, Jake Urbatsch):

- Present mini-lessons at the start of each inservice focused on staff-suggested topics
- Classroom doors open for observations -- 7 have occurred formally
- Attended a workshop on "Learning Labs" in January
- Learning Lab hosted by Deb Faugstad in February; Jake Urbatsch in March and April

JR SR HIGH SCHOOL NEWS



Some of the NK Math Club Pi Day Committee prior to the academic pep rally: Front row: (left to right) Miranda Stambaugh, Tegan Cotter, Mackenzi Duvall, Jessica Trospen

Back row: (left to right) Mackenzie Costello, Calli Christiansen, Brett Bachtle, Paul Gibbins (Regional STEM manager from ISU), Mary Irons,

Mrs. Willert (NK Math Club Advisor)

Photo and insert provided by Mrs. Willert.