



# Northwood-Kensett Community School District VIKING DISPATCH

November 2017

Creating healthy, educated, ethical and productive citizens.

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### School Board Members

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John Anderson

## FROM THE DESK OF MR. CROZIER

### New District App:

You can now download the Northwood-Kensett Mobile App in both the Apple Store and Google Play Store. Knowing that our website can be hard to read and navigate on a cell phone drove the decision to create a mobile app. The app is free of charge, go download it now. The name of the app is Northwood-Kensett CSD.

### Enrollment

The certified enrollment number for our district this year is 508.07. This is up from last year, at 500. This is positive for our school budget, especially in a time when the state revenues projections are down. Open enrolled out students are up at 37 students and open enrolled in students are also up at 35. If you add the Minnesota students to the mix (10) we have more students coming into our district than going out. We will also get a credit of 18 students for the operational sharing of four positions with other districts. With our budget being enrollment driven, the operational sharing dollars continue to be a big help to the finances of the district.

### Industrial Arts/Agriculture Building and HVAC Project Update:

The administration and teachers have completed three visits to schools that have recently built new or remodeled their shop areas. Planning for our building is underway, and we should have the design complete soon. They have also been busy working on the design of the HVAC system. We will be putting these two projects out for bids in January.

## FROM THE DESK OF MR. COSTELLO

First quarter has come and gone. I hope you were able to make it to Parent/Teacher Conferences.

Teachers shared a number of things with you. One item that was discussed is the reading progress your student is making as measured by the 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. Pay particular attention to see if your child is reading at benchmark. If your child is reading below benchmark we are providing the following supports:

### **Progress Monitoring:**

All students who are performing below benchmark 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:**

If a student performs below benchmark on two consecutive screenings they receive intervention(s) to remediate their reading difficulties. The intervention(s) is required to continue until the student meets grade level expectations.

If you have questions, I encourage you to visit with your child's teacher. If you would like more information, please visit the Iowa Department of Education website at [www.educateiowa.gov](http://www.educateiowa.gov).

Finally, a quick note about winter clothing. The cooler weather recently hit. With the lower temperatures and windy conditions, it's important for kids to dress appropriately. Sweatshirts and fall coats should be worn outside and, as the temperature drops, heavier coats, mittens/cloves, and head protection will be expected. Our nurse has a limited number of spare coats and gloves in her office, so please do not rely on us to provide these.

Thanks,  
Brian Costello

**To help minimize lost clothing, please write your child's name inside label so that we may attempt to return clothing to its rightful owner. We no longer house a lost and found clothing department at the elementary and as colder temperatures arrive, the amount of lost clothing multiplies around the building.**

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 Keith Fritz Secondary Principal, [1200 First Avenue North, Northwood, IA 50459](https://www.google.com/maps/place/1200+First+Avenue+North,+Northwood,+IA+50459), Phone [641-324-2021](tel:641-324-2021) x101, [kfritz@nkvikings.com](mailto:kfritz@nkvikings.com) 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. For issues with Section 504 Contact Brian Costello Elementary Principal, 504 Coordinator, [1200 First Avenue North, Northwood, IA 50459](https://www.google.com/maps/place/1200+First+Avenue+North,+Northwood,+IA+50459), Phone [641-324-2021](tel:641-324-2021) x201, [bcostello@nkvikings.com](mailto:bcostello@nkvikings.com)

## FROM THE DESK OF MR. COSTELLO

**Elementary Pillar of the Month Photo's!**

Fifth and sixth grade October Pillar of the Month students chosen by their teachers for exhibiting quality character traits are pictured to the left:

**Left to Right:**

Damaris Peterson-Ms. Hagen  
 Breyden Hoepfner-Mr. Parks  
 Walt Kelly-Mr. Severson  
 Julian Luther Ms. Orvedal

If you see these students out and about, please take a moment to congratulate them for a job well done.

Third and fourth grade September Pillar of the Month students chosen by their teacher for exhibiting quality character traits are pictured to the right:

**Left to Right:**

Sophia Butler-Ms. Peters  
 Alec Ducommun-Mrs. Vansteenburgh  
 Makia Gutierrez-Mrs. Hill  
 Jade Fierova-Mrs. Ubben

If you see these students out and about, please take a moment to congratulate them for a job well done.



## FROM THE DESK OF MR. FRITZ

## Standards-Based Grading, Part Two

What's wrong with the traditional methods of grading, like totaling up the number of **points** a student earned in a quarter or semester, converting those points into a **percent**, then converting that percent into a **letter grade**?

Measuring student performance and levels of mastery is necessary, because if we don't then we never know how well the student is learning the content of the class. No argument here! The problem with a points-only system is that we never see which parts of the learning a student knows well and which parts they don't--all we see is a 38/50 at the top of the test, or something like that.

Traditional grading is easy to spot because it typically involves:

- Simple letter grades
- Assessments based on teacher-defined criteria
- A single overall grade based on a combination of related and unrelated assessments of skills, knowledge, performance and conduct over a period of time

It results in a very limited measure of a student's abilities. The "A" on a child's report card might thrill parents, but this grade cannot convey any precise information.

Efficient? Yes. Helpful to the teacher/parent/student for seeing which concepts need more work? No.

Are we about learning, or about efficiency? I argue that we are about learning!

Standards-based grading overcomes this problem. The essential qualities of standards-based grading involve:

- Rubrics with meaningful labels
- Assessments based on specific district or school-wide standards
- Multiple grades per student: one for each standard that reflects the student's ability related to the standard at a certain moment in time

What we end up with are much more informative and useful measures of a student's progress and struggles, so that the focus switches to *learning* and away from just *earning points*.

Please, call me or drop by to talk with me about this--I want to be as frequent and open with communication as possible as we work toward implementation.

## From the Pile on Athletic Director Steve Hartman's Desk!

As I am sitting in my office writing this news article, there is a definite chill in the air and most of the trees have lost their leaves. That only means one thing, it is late fall and our fall sports are coming to an end.

I would like to thank all the volunteers who helped out at our volleyball and football games this year. It takes many volunteers to make our athletic programs here at Northwood-Kensett successful and there's no way that I can thank them enough for all their hard work. With their help this fall, we were able to host many varsity, JV and junior high games without any problems.

I would also like to thank the fans, student body and the parents of our student athletes for following our teams so well this fall. I have received many compliments from opposing coaches, athletic directors and from the officials about how well our fans have followed our teams and cheered them on in a positive way. It is quite heartwarming to get an email from an opposing coach complimenting our fans and students on their actions during a heated contest.

And finally I would like to thank our coaches. We may not have won every game this year or made it as far as we would have liked in the tournaments and playoffs but their hard work and dedication to our student athletes is a great asset to our school. They not only teach them the game of football, volleyball or cross country but they also teach them many life lessons.

As you know in the last few years we have put a big emphasis on sportsmanship. If you have attended one of our parent and student athlete sportsmanship meetings in the past four years, you know that I have shared our sportsmanship ratings from the Iowa Athletic Association. The officials at our contest rate our coaches, players, and spectators on a scale from 1 being Excellent and 4 being Unacceptable. This fall, our sportsmanship rating has once again seen improvement. Our coaches' rating this fall was 1.10 well below the state average of 1.45. The player's score was 1.13 while the state average was 1.36 and our fans rating is 1.23 and the 8 player average is 1.45. It is great to see that our sportsmanship is improving and I want to thank you for it.

# Go Vikings

## Meet the staff!

### **Teacher Leadership Program Update** **By Kimberly Odegaard & Beth Butler**

After a successful first year of the Teacher Leadership Program at Northwood-Kensett, we're excited to continue supporting students and teachers. The Teacher Leadership Program consists of a Director of Curriculum & Innovation, an Instructional Coach, Mentor Teachers, and Model Teachers. Over the course of the next few months, we will introduce these teacher leaders and share their experiences thus far.



#### **Deb Faugstad, Model Teacher**

**Years of Experience:** 37 years

#### **Where/What I've Taught:**

Marshalltown High School - Remedial Writing  
Northwood-Kensett - High School English/Language Arts

**Favorite Part about Northwood-Kensett Schools:** Northwood-Kensett is a community of support from students, parents, teachers, support staff, administrators, and the larger communities of Northwood-Kensett. Working together, we are able to provide a first-class education for each student in our district.

#### **My Role in the Teacher Leadership Program:**

I am a model teacher in the teacher leadership program. This means that my classroom is open for teachers to observe classroom activities and teaching strategies and to reflect on best practices in the classroom. I also help plan and implement professional development for the staff. Model teachers also serve on the district's Executive Leadership Team and provide leadership for Professional Learning Community (PLC) teams.

#### **How I've Noticed the Teacher Leadership Program Impacting Student Learning:**

The Teacher Leadership Program has resulted in more collaboration among staff for the benefit of the students. Teachers are actively engaged in reflective conversations about teaching and learning.



## News from the Classroom

Greetings from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Classroom: Mrs. Wagner & Mr. Urbatsch

Pictured above (left to right) Ray Thompson holding a darkling beetle, Maya Johnson and Dominick Authier each holding a mealworm, and Leaha Diamond with two darkling beetles.

The second grade students are currently studying insects in science class. They are learning about the needs of insects, how to identify an insect, and the life cycles of insects. Each student was asked to put together a collection of at least 10 different insects. The collections were shown in the elementary display case for the other students to see during the month of October. The students have also had the opportunity to observe and take care of live insects in the classroom. These include mealworms, painted lady caterpillars, and a praying mantis (A big thanks to Jesse Luther for bringing it into our classroom!).

## Elementary Counselor Corner by Mrs. Ashley Williams

In Guidance throughout October, we have discussed and completed activities surrounding the Trustworthiness and Respect pillars of character. Our sixth 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.

Throughout the month, each classroom selects students who have shown their character to be put into a monthly drawing. One student from each room is selected at our assembly. The students get to choose a friend to sit with them at a special Character Counts table at lunch, and also they get a certificate celebrating their positive choices, actions, and behavior.

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. The students have learned how the different parts of the brain help us make plans and decisions, keep our memories, and control our feelings!

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.

Turning Leaf Counseling services are also available to students in our district. If you would like more information, 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](mailto:awilliams@nkvikings.com) or by phone at 641-324-1127 ext. 216!





## Jr./Sr. High School Counselor's Corner

by: Amy Hansen

Lately, I've been working on Northwood-Kensett's 7-12th grade plan for College & Career Readiness. I've learned that our 7-12 staff already does a great job of providing a wide variety of experiences to students to assist them in becoming college and career ready. I'm also teaching 8th grade English for the first time in six and a half years, which has given me a renewed perspective on the classroom's potential to help students become responsible and employable adults.

Even though I'm assessing students using the English/Language Arts Iowa Core Standards this year, I'm often reminded at how important other, non-academic skills are for preparing students for their adult lives. I am fortunate to teach students who are critical thinkers and who have creative minds. I was very impressed with the body of work that students submitted for their recent short story writing project. The stories were creative, well-developed and enjoyable to read. As their English teacher AND their school counselor, I'm constantly thinking of all the skills that are a part of both the classroom and the skills of a valued employee:

Using time wisely- Students are often tempted to engage in off-task behaviors when given time to complete assignments during class. However, developing the self-discipline to remain on task is important for the world of work.

Respect & maintaining a good relationship with your supervisor- Teachers often have a similar job to a work supervisor— They assist students who don't know what to do and lead the group toward a common goal. Students who have a hard time showing respectful behavior toward their teachers may also struggle to get along with their supervisors in the not-so-distant future.

Responsibility for work- Sometimes, students are asked to work for a prolonged period of time on one piece of work and submit it by a deadline. This is a common practice in many workplaces. Students who fail to do complete part of the whole task are unable to satisfactorily complete the work asked of them, and students who don't submit any work at all are unable to be assessed for their skills. Failure to complete part or all of the work asked of them will continue to be problematic in college and/or the workplace.

There are even more parallels that can be made between the world of work and the classroom. I regularly discuss those parallels with students, and I hope that parents also communicate this type of message to their students.



## MANNA FOOD DRIVE

The Holiday season is fast approaching, and the Northwood-Kensett Elementary School is again collecting items for Manna of Worth County in place of a gift exchange.

Items will be collected from the classrooms each Thursday and will be counted and graphed by the 5th and 6th graders during math class. Our last day of collecting will be November 30. This is an excellent way for students and parents to demonstrate the pillars of Character Counts, as well as our 5th and 6th grade doing hands on math activities with the collected items.

The following items are most needed: canned meats, meals in a box, canned fruit, pasta meals, canned soup, peanut butter, baby items, toothpaste, toilet paper, laundry detergent, and cash donations for perishable items. Also, as you plan your donation, please check the expiration date of your items. This will help Manna with the management of items we donate.

If you have any questions please call Mr. Parks at (641) 324-1127.

Thank You for your donation!



## Nurses' Corner by Heather Rheingans, RN

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.

## Math Counts (page 1 of 2)

**“Would You Rather?” Kim Borowczyk and Lori Willert**

**Would You Rather?**

Receive a one time payment of \$1 million

**OR**

Receive 1 penny on day one, 2 pennies on day two, 4 pennies on day three, and so on for 1 month

Be able to justify your answer using mathematics.

A ‘fun’ way to get students talking about math in the classroom is to pose a question or give a task that encourages students to think outside of the box and think deeply about mathematics. One such task is to pose a “Would you rather?” question.

An example scenario is, “Would you rather receive a one time payment of \$1 million or would you rather receive 1 penny on day one, 2 pennies on day two, 4 pennies on day three, and so on for one month?” For a student to decide which option is better, one must deeply think about the pattern involved in the second option. Many (not all) patterns presented in mathematics and in real-world scenarios are linearly related; this instance is not. Discussion then occurs among students. Some students try to find a pattern and others just work their way toward finding a total. Afterwards, whole group discussion occurs in which justification of the option chosen is brought up, keeping in mind that there is more than one way to justify the option chosen.

So ask yourself, “Would you rather receive a one time payment of \$1 million or would you rather receive 1 penny on day one, 2 pennies on day two, 4 pennies on day three, and so on for one month?”



## Math Counts (page 2 of 2)



Worth County Development Authority (WCDA) Funds were used to purchase a class set of TI-83 Plus graphing calculators for the Advanced Math students to use. These calculators are permitted for use on the ACT tests. Students recently have been learning to plot points of data and graph linear, quadratic, and exponential lines of regression (lines that best fit data).