



USD 251 NORTH LYON COUNTY NEWSLETTER

November 2011

COMMENTS FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

The challenging times for K-12 education are far from over, and in fact, may be just beginning. I strongly encourage everyone to closely monitor the actions of the upcoming legislative session and don't be afraid to ask how decisions in Topeka will affect the future of your local schools. Though few facts or details are available, it appears that the proposed changes to the school finance formula will continue to shift the financial burden from state to local taxes. This will almost certainly have a negative effect on our budget and will once again force the Board of Education to look at methods to maximize efficiency. Whether or not USD 251 survives these financial challenges will depend on how well the patrons of the district can come together and support decisions that are in the best interest of all district students. When it comes to our school district, it will be vital we approach the issues with our USD number being more important than our zip codes.

IMPORTANT DATES

November 10—No School—Teacher In-service
November 11—No School—Veteran's Day
November 23-25—No School—Thanksgiving Break
December 9—Senior Citizen Dinner at NHHS
December 21-January 1—Winter Break
January 2—No School—Teacher In-service
January 3—School Resumes

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

For a complete schedule of activities in the district, please either check the school calendar or our website at <http://www.usd251.org>. If you do not have a school calendar and would like one, please call the District Office at 620-443-5116.

CONGRATULATIONS!

The students and staff of USD #251 are to be congratulated for their outstanding 2011 Kansas State Assessment results! Not only did each of our schools achieve AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress), but we also earned 21 Standards of Excellence (SOE)!

Students in grades 3 – 8 and 11 were eligible to achieve the SOE in reading, math, and science. SOE is awarded at the grade and building levels. The percentage requirements for each grade are the same as those applied at the building level. KSDE applies a formula to calculate SOE. This formula is specific for reading, math and science as well as for grade spans. To receive a SOE award at the grade or building level, the building must make AYP in the "All Students" group; subgroups are not considered in calculating SOE. To receive a SOE award at the grade or building level, the building must have an accredited QPA status.

CONGRATULATIONS to Americus/NLC School for the following SOE: Reading – grades 3, 4, 5, 7, 8; Math grades 3, 7, 8; and Science grade 7. Reading Elementary – Reading – grade 4 and Math grade 4. NHHS – Reading grade 11 and Math grade 11.

All 3 buildings achieved the Building SOE in Reading and Math and Americus/NLC and Reading Elementary earned a Building SOE in Science! This is truly an accomplishment and something to celebrate!

CANCELING SCHOOL FOR WEATHER RELATED CONDITONS

We have had a beautiful fall . . . but in Kansas you never know what the weather tomorrow may bring, so this is a review of our procedures for canceling school due to weather related conditions. The decision to cancel school will be made as quickly as possible. This year will be using our new School Reach program to notify parents of school cancelations, as well as, notifying the following radio and television stations.

RADIO STATIONS

KVOE (1400 AM) • County 101 KVOE (101.7 FM) • KFFX (105 FM)
WIBW (580 AM) • 94 County (94.5 FM) • The WAVE (96.1 FM)

TELEVISION STATIONS

WIBW 13 • FOX 43 • KSNT 27 • KTKA 49 • KWCH 12

We contact these sources early in the morning, but have occasionally experienced some glitches where the closing is not listed in a timely manner. This is extremely frustrating for everyone so we encourage you to check multiple stations. WIBW also offers text message alerts. You can register on WIBW.com to receive school cancelation alerts on your mobile phone.

Thank you in advance for your patience and understanding in the difficult process of closing school because of weather conditions. Please keep in mind that our district covers a large geographical area and the road conditions can vary greatly within the district.



Reading



Principal's Pen

By Peggy Fort

Dear Parents,
I would like to thank all parents who attended parent/teacher conferences. Your support is very much appreciated. Parents at conferences represented ninety-seven percent of the students.

The character trait for November is Honesty-

**Being sincere and truthful: your actions match your word; also called integrity.
The color is brown.**



There were many fun activities during Red Ribbon Week held October 24 through October 28.

"Sock It to Drugs" was Monday's theme. Students wore crazy socks. Red ribbons were given to each student and staff to wear throughout the week. "Turn Your Back on Drugs" was the theme for Tuesday. Students wore their clothes backwards as a symbol of being drug free. Students also received a sucker. "We're Building a Drug Free Life" was Wednesday's theme. Students created bricks with their name on them and built a "drug free" brick wall. Students were encouraged to wear red and received drug free pencils. "Living Drug Free is no Sweat" was Thursday's theme. Students wore sweats, had a tug-a-war contest and prizes were given. The week was very educational and enjoyed by all.



Reading School held their fall festival on Monday, October 31. They began the morning with activities of rotation destinations. Each child was assigned a group of Apples, Leaves, Ghosts, Pumpkins, Owls, or Bats.

Each group enjoyed six activities throughout the morning. The activities the children enjoyed included pumpkin decorating and a story. Each child took a real pumpkin home. They also enjoyed a hayrack ride, paper bag pumpkin art, s'mores, an autumn obstacle course and Halloween Bingo with prizes.

After enjoying a lunch of Goblin Gobs (ravioli), Frog Hair (lettuce), Zombie Fingers (green beans), Broom Sticks (bread sticks), Bat Toes (pineapple) and Ghost Juice (milk), Mrs. Gay, our music teacher led the children in a fall music program for all to enjoy.

Students then dressed in their Halloween costumes and had a parade in the school and down town Reading where businesses gave each student a treat.

All classes then returned to their classrooms where they enjoyed their Halloween parties.

FIFTH GRADE WITH MRS. EDWARDS: Working with this year's fifth grade has been a real treat so far. We have been very busy. Some of the fifth graders want to report on what we have done so far this year.

- ◆ This year in social studies we have learned a lot about different types of early Indians such as the Olmec, Mississippians, Hopewell, Anasazi and the Mound Builders. We learned about their lifestyles, their cultures, and how they survived (or didn't!). We learned new words like kiva, maize, pueblo, and adobe. We've also learned some about the Ice Age, Beringia, and what A.D. and B.C. means.----Kailee McGuire
- ◆ In math the fifth grade has been learning a lot in their new Common Core math books. I think the Common Core math books are very advanced, but it is a great learning resource. The fifth grade is learning mostly about fractions and decimals. We are also learning how to add and subtract decimals, turn fractions into decimals, and much more! With a daily assignment and good attitude we will fly through fifth grade knowing that we succeeded in MATH! ---- Claire Crawford
- ◆ In science our fifth grade class has learned all about plate tectonics, rift valleys and so much more. We are now starting to learn about earthquakes. Once you get to the fifth grade you'll learn about them too!----Jarrett White
- ◆ In reading we have been reading animal stories. We also wrote an animal report. We all did different animals. We needed at least thirty facts on note cards about the animal we choose. We typed a rough draft and Mrs. Edwards read through and showed us the mistakes we made. Then we typed our final copy without all those misspelled words. We did a bibliography and drew a picture of our animals. I think that doing this assignment was really fun. I think we should be ready for sixth grade next year. ----Cameron Parks

SECOND GRADE WITH MRS. WILEY: It's hard to believe that the first nine weeks has ended already. Space-stars, earth, and moon was the theme to start the year. We did science, reading, writing, art projects, and listened to alien stories that all tied into the theme. We have also been listening to stories about American Tall Tale characters such as Johnny Appleseed, Pecos Bill, John Henry, and Paul Bunyan. Recently, we read and wrote stories about owls. Then we made an owl art project. The class really enjoyed the visit to the fire station for Fire Safety Week plus all the goodies the firemen gave each child. To tie in with Columbus Day, we will be learning about the globe and maps. The class has been reading lots of books. We will soon begin learning lower case cursive letters.

Music Notes from Mrs. Gay: The music classes are full of spooky songs and haunting sounds while they are getting ready for their upcoming mini Halloween concert. The concert was held on Monday, October 31st at 1:15 p.m..



Upcoming Music Events:

Winter Concert – December 12th, 7:00 pm



Science by Mrs. Heins

WOW! Where has the nine weeks gone? The Middle School science students have been extremely busy. The Eighth Grade has been studying the sun. We used our new piece of equipment, the Sunspotter, which acts like a telescope to locate the sun. From the image cast upon the paper, students were able to locate and count the number of sunspots currently on our sun Sol. The students noticed that the image moved across the paper and had to be realigned multiple times during the observation. After discussing this phenomenon, they reached consensus that the movement was due to the fact that the Earth rotates. Next we graphed the number of sunspots over a 100 year period and interpreted from the data that sunspots occur in an 11 year cycle. We then compared sunspot activity to solar flare activity. Finally we made pinhole cameras and calculated the diameter of the sun. It was amazing that a tube 56cm long, a pinhole in aluminum foil and grid paper could be used to find the diameter of the sun! Many of our calculations were amazingly close to the actual diameter of 1,392,530,000m. Discussion then focused upon those calculations that were too large or small. This was due to human error in estimating the size of the sun on the grid. Finally we used spectroscopes to break white light into the ROY G BIV spectrum.

Seventh Grade started their unit on plate tectonics. We began by reviewing conduction, convection and radiation which are tested term on state assessments. An activity from the ITSI-SU portal was used to reinforce the terms. Next we learned about a genius before his time, Alfred Wegner. Wegner used fossils, fit of continents, coal fields, mountain ranges, and scratches in rocks that showed continental glaciers to hypothesize that a giant continent called Pangaea once existed. The piece of evidence he lacked, due to technological deficiencies, was convection currents-which moved the continents. The students were amazed that it wasn't until the 1950's and 60's that new evidence came to light to support Wegner's beliefs. While the students considered this a long, long time ago, it seemed more recent to me. In addition we have modeled sea floor spreading as well as convergent, divergent and transform plate boundaries.

The Sixth Grade is just about to wrap up their unit on Standard 1 Inquiry. We have learned about equipment-how it is used and what it is used for, density, overflow cans, how to write a purpose, hypothesis, qualitative and quantitative ob-

servations, written a procedure, inferences and are currently working on creating data tables and graphs in Libre. All of their skills will be applied in a student designed lab next week when they design, conduct, and share knowledge to determine if age affects the height of a tennis balls bounce.

My first quarter health elective is about to end. The students have conducted many educational activities while learning about systems within their body. Several of the activities using probes came from the ITSI-SU portal. One activity the students performed was calculating lung capacity. This involved standard sized tubing-normal breathing and a small straw-breathing disorders. While reading, we learned that taller individuals have larger lung capacity than shorter individual. Data was compared and it was determined that this wasn't the case with this class. Our data showed that athletes had a larger lung capacity. (We had some mighty windy small individuals in our class.) The favorite activity to end our unit was the frog dissection. I have enjoyed working with this eager group of students. Enjoy your next elective.

2nd Grade by Miss Claiborne

Fall is here and we are very excited and thankful for the cool weather. We have been learning different strategies to add and subtract numbers. To help us remember some of the math facts we have been listening to different songs and watching different video clips. We are continuously working on manuscript handwriting throughout the school day and are working on writing neatly and putting enough space in-between our words. In reading, we have been reading very silly stories and working hard on our spelling words. In science we learned all about mammals, reptiles, amphibians and other animal groups. We have just been introduced to our home row keys and are working on our typing skills during computers. We are learning to read our library books and to take Accelerated Reader tests over them to help monitor our comprehension. The character trait for this month is "Respect", the class has been very conscious about being respectful to others.



From all USD 251 employees

Northern Heights

The logo features a detailed black and white illustration of a wildcat's head, facing left with its mouth wide open, showing sharp teeth and a red tongue. The illustration is positioned to the left of the main title.

Information for the November Northern Heights newsletter and website was gathered by the members of the Junior Class, as an assignment for English.

From the Counselor's Office

All the seniors have successfully completed a resume and application statements to request scholarship consideration, counselor Ed Bowen said. Also, all of the seniors have applied for post secondary colleges and vocational schools. The seniors also applied for, or are in the process of applying for, institutional scholarships. – Josh Duft

Red Ribbon Week

The seminar classes presented anti-drug skits for the Friday kickoff event. The themes for the weekdays were: Monday – “Be Bright, Don’t Lose Sight” and students wore sunglasses; Tuesday – “Be Comfortable, Be Confident” and students wore pajamas; Wednesday – “Stand Tall, Don’t Fall” and students wore funky shoes, and Thursday – “Be Proud, Be Loud” and students wore black and white. Speakers during the week were Dorothy Stevenson on Life Decisions, Cory Doudican from the Lyon County Sheriff’s Department on drug laws, and a speaker from Project Teen on “Anorexia and Addictions.” – Ashley Heston

Book Fair

The first ever book fair was held in the library through the end of the month. Lori Houck, the library media specialist, said the kids were excited for the event and many books were bought, including some on the library’s “wish list.” For some students, she said, this was the first time in four years that they’d had the opportunity to go to a book fair. – Kaitlin Centlivre

Girls’ Basketball

“Basketball Season is coming up,” said girls’ coach Tim Riemann. “The first practice will be Nov. 14. I’m very excited about the upcoming season.” The first game at home will be against Wabaunsee on Dec. 2, followed by the tournament at Herington. Riemann added, “Come out and support the Ladycats.” -- Reagan McClellan

Fall Play

“Just Another High School Play” is the title of the presentation on Nov. 12 by the Theater Class. Seniors Dakota Gibson, assistant director, and Hannah Robinson, stage manager, are the leads in the play. Tickets will be \$4 for adults and \$2 for students. – Luke Larson

Boys’ Basketball

Boys basketball coach Lanny Massey said, “We are planning a good season” despite being a relatively inexperienced squad. He encouraged fans to attend the home opener on Dec. 2. – Brandon Miller

October Students of the Month

The senior student of the month, nominated by NHHS faculty and staff, is Cort Huffman. The other students of the month are Hannah Berry, junior; Logan Fuller, sophomore, and Shayli Gentry, freshman. – Nathan Goodwin

Photography Field Trip

About 30 Advanced Art students went on a field trip Oct. 20 to the David Traylor Zoo and Cottonwood River Bridge in Emporia. They photographed animals and scenery and “It was a fun, peaceful trip,” according to Stantanna Stewart. The students were accompanied by their teacher, Christy Schmitz. – Kelsi Gadino

School Pictures

All students and teachers have had their pictures taken. Students should have brought their packets home. If you want to order pictures, the time to place the orders is now. – Austin Jennings.

Scholars’ Bowl

Thirteen teams competed in the Oct. 24 NHHS Invitational Tournament. Members of the Wildcat squad acted as moderators and aides for the event. Other moderators and judges were faculty and community members.— Hanna Berry

Football

The 2011 football districts started with Burlington at NHHS and Senior Recognition was held on Oct. 15. The Wildcats then played Council Grove and Osage City. – Jake Pearson

Senior players on this year’s team were Derek Fields, fullback, linebacker, offensive and defensive lineman; Mark Hanks, center and defensive line; Garrett Schumann, offensive and defensive lineman and punter; Dakota Gibson, offensive and defensive lineman, and Payton DeLong, receiver and defensive back. Cort Huffman has been manager of the team this year. – Megan Zimmerling

FCA

“I like FCA (Fellowship of Christian Athletes) because the students take turns picking the topics and giving the lessons, which makes it easier to relate to,” said freshman Megan French. About 20 students meet every Thursday morning before school. The student-led lessons are focused on real-life topics. The students are looking forward to attending another camp in the spring. Freshman Jordyn Harmon commended, “I am definitely looking forward to camp.... it’s inspiring and most definitely worth the time.” – Brittany Harmon

Therapy Dog

Heidi, Math teacher Lisa Preisner’s therapy dog, is back on campus this year. Heidi is a gray miniature Schnauzer that helps students. Mrs. Preisner said that the change to new math books this year has prevented her from bringing the dog as often as she’d like, but she plans on bringing Heidi more the next nine weeks. – Tyler Gragg

Industrial Arts Club

The new club is held after school in Scott Starkey’s woodshop. It is to teach students new techniques of workworking and metalworking. Club members also will repair and build new things for the school district. “The program provides students with a safe and fun way to learn about the Industrial Arts,” Mr. Starkey said. – Levi Isch