

**Southwest
Schools**

Southwest 'Rider News

February 2010

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Special points of interest:

- Feb. 2 - Parent/Teacher Conferences @ Bartley 2:00-8:00 PM
- Feb. 2 - NO SCHOOL
- Feb. 7 - Dessert Theater @ High School 2:00 PM
- Feb. 8 - School Board Meeting 7:30 PM
- Feb. 19 - NO SCHOOL Spring Break
- Feb. 28 - Elementary Dessert Theater 2:00 PM

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT - Dave Hendricks

Board of Education Elects Officers

At their regular monthly meeting, January 11th, the Board of Education held election of officers for 2010. Duane Teter was re-elected president; Crinda McConville was re-elected as vice-president; Steve McConville was re-elected treasurer; and Steve Daffer was re-elected as secretary.

The board meets regularly on the second Monday of each month and meetings are conducted according to accepted rules of order, Board of Education policy and the statutes of the state of Nebraska. These are open meetings and the public is encouraged to attend. All meeting minutes are published in the *Indianola News*, the official publication of the district. Board meetings are alternated monthly between the elementary school building art room in Indianola and the Jr/Sr high

school building library in Bartley.

Procedures dealing with Board of Education meetings are available to patrons of the district in the form of a brochure. If you are interested in learning more about board meetings, please contact the superintendent of schools by telephone or mail and a copy of the brochure will be mailed.

Short and Long Range Board Planning Session

The Board of Education will meet Wednesday, February 24th for a short and long-range planning session in the Jr/Sr high school library at Bartley. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 5:30 P.M. and is open to the public. The board will first review progress and accomplishments made since last year's planning session and then begin to formulate future goals. The board will discuss prioritizing these goals at the regular April

meeting before final approval in May. A summary of approved short and long range goals will be made available to the patrons through the school newsletter after being approved.

Board of Education Election Information

Patrons of the district will elect three individuals to the Southwest Board of Education during the November 2nd, 2010 General Election. To be a qualified candidate an individual must be a registered voter of the district. The term of office is for four years and begins with the January 2011 board meeting. All school board members in Nebraska serve without pay. For more detailed or additional information, please contact Superintendent Dave Hendricks at 308.692.3223 or dhendric@esu15.org.

Filing deadlines are: Incumbents – February 15, 2010 and all others – March 1, 2010.

Parent Teacher Conference

Tuesday, February 2, 2010

2:00 PM - 8:00 PM

ALL CONFERENCES WILL BE HELD AT THE JR/SR HIGH in Bartley

Elementary News - Mrs. Rasmussen

February will begin with Parent-Teacher Conferences at the new Jr/Sr High School on the 2nd, from 2 - 8 pm. All elementary teachers will be in the gym. Thanks in advance to all the elementary parents for adjusting to the different set up. We appreciate all of you who make time to come in and visit with your child's teacher.

This year the elementary school will celebrate Valentine's Day on Friday, the 12th. Classroom parties will take place in classrooms starting at 1:00 pm. Please look for notes from your child's teacher concerning Valentine's games and treats.

The final date of note is the Friday, the 19th. There is no school that day due to Spring Break.

Second Grade News by Ms. Ruggles

It is hard to believe that February is here already. We have been working very hard in second grade this year and our time together seems to be going by too quickly. We have learned many things in math. We can tell time to the half hour and hour. Soon we will be telling time to five-minute intervals and to the quarter hour. We have mastered our addition facts and we are working on our subtraction facts. We will also learn some multiplication facts by the end of the year. Money, temperature, geometric shapes, patterns, and measurements are a

few more things that we are tackling in math. Everyone has been working very hard to improve their reading skills. Our new reading program has allowed all of my students to feel success and build confidence in their reading ability. Second grade is the year that we start Accelerated Reading. Everyone has been reading at home and school trying to earn their AR points. If they reach their individual goal by the end of the year they will get to go on the AR field trip.

We started 2010 off with a visitor to our classroom. Traci Stevens is a student from the

University of Nebraska at Kearney who is doing her student teaching in our school. We are fortunate to have her in our classroom for part of her experience. She grew up in Benkelman and now lives southeast of McCook with her husband, Jim, and their two children, Jadie 9, and Layne 6. When she is not at school or helping her husband on the farm she enjoys spending time with her family, gardening, and reading. Please welcome her to our school if you have the opportunity.

Reading Mastery at the Elementary - Mrs. Brown

"Reading Mastery Signature Edition is proven to help students decode and comprehend the meaning of print effortlessly, even students who are seriously at risk of failure." This has been evident in our first few months using this reading program. The students are working hard and most have gained almost a whole grade level or more in their reading. The features of this program are:
-**Strategy-based instruction** that allows students to learn more efficiently.

-**Intensive, explicit, systematic teaching** to help students achieve a high rate of success
Carefully scaffolded lessons that **build confidence and independence**.
-Ongoing **assessments** and specific guidelines for remediation to help you make effective instructional decisions.
-Addresses all **five essential components of Reading**: phonemic awareness, phonics and word analysis, fluency, vocabulary and compre-

hension.
-Provide **spelling instruction** to help students make the connection between decoding and spelling patterns.
-**Develop decoding, word recognition and comprehension** skills that transfer to other subject areas
We are so lucky to be able to have this reading program and see the students achieve reading success!

Southwest Public School Staff Demographics

The following chart shows the approximate number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) individuals the district employs during the 2009-2010 school year. The Board of Education annually reviews staffing needs, taking into consideration Nebraska Department of Education requirements, federal and state requirements and recommendations from the administration based on local needs.

Staff	Elementary	Jr/Sr High	Total
Principal	1.00	1.00	2.00
Certified Teachers	12.50	21.13	33.63
Media Specialists	.25	.75	1.00
Activities Director	.25		.25
Technology Coordinator	.25	.50	.75
Guidance Counselor	.25	.75	1.00
Para-educators	4.00	1.00	5.00
Daycare	.83		.83
Cooks	2.50	3.00	5.50
Custodians	1.25	4.00	5.25
Secretaries	1.00	1.67	2.67
School Nurse	.26	.20	.46
<u>District</u>			
Superintendent	1.00		
Bookkeeper	1.00		
Bus Drivers	9.00		



Mini Cheer Camp

The Southwest cheerleaders held a mini-cheer camp Saturday, January 16 for 40 girls pre-school through 7th grade. The girls learned cheers, made posters to hang on the gym walls, and learned the "Hoedown Throwdown" from the Hannah Montana movie. The cheer camp participants performed at half-time of the girls' varsity basketball game against North Platte St Pats. They also had the option to stay and perform during the boys' half-time as well. A huge thank you goes to the cheerleaders for their hard work with camp. Thank you to the following businesses that helped sponsor the camp: Adams Bank & Trust, Brooks Construction, Cabin Saunas, Haag Insurance, Lord's Hardware, Longnecker Jewelry, McConville Agency, Rocket Inn, and State Bank of Bartley. An extra thanks to Adams Bank & Trust for donating the pom-poms for the camp participants. The girls received a t-shirt and pom-poms for participating in mini cheer camp.

iPods In Special Education - Ms Shirkey

It is hard to believe that it is already February. It has been another exciting year so far in the Special Education department at the high school. At this time last year, the SPED department purchased 7 iPods to be used for students to listen to books. I have a few students that use these on a regular basis, and several others that have tried the iPod at least once. There are two programs that I use to convert books to the iPods. Bookshare is a free program that is offered to students with qualifying disabilities. Bookshare can be used to listen to books on the computer, or can be converted to iPods. In order to use an iPod with Bookshare, there is a program called Ghost Reader that had to be purchased to convert from text to voice. The other program I use is the Nebraska Overdrive libraries system through the McCook library. I feel that the iPods have been a huge asset to the students that have chosen to use them. They can listen to the books as they are following along in the print version. The students are allowed to check out the iPods, so they do not have to be in the SPED classroom to listen to their books. With the previous computer reading programs we used, the students were restricted to being in the SPED classroom to listen to books.

FBLA News - Mrs. Barger

To begin this semester, Southwest FBLA has been doing activities to complete the Go Green project sponsored by the state FBLA. President Jordan Brooks researched the topic and gave environmental tips at the meeting on January 6. Members each wrote how they could help the environment on paper leaves which have been on the cabinet doors in the business room this month. The next week, a Go Green tip was given over the intercom each day and posters were hung around the school encouraging students to do activities to help the environment. Thursday, January 14, students were all encouraged to wear green or brown for Go Green Day. FBLA continues to have boxes in the teacher workroom for recycling catalogs and magazines, newspaper, and junk mail. A trash can is in the commons area for recycling plastic bottles. They will have a display set up for Parent-Teacher conference.

We would like to thank everyone who supported our soup supper at the North Platte St. Pat's basketball game. Members also worked the concession stand for the Hayes Center basketball game.

Musical News from the High School Vocal Department

Everything in vocal is now on the fast track: We started with Doane Honor Choir on January 10th through 12th, and the RPAC Vocal Clinic held at Bertrand on Monday, January 18th. If you were able to make the clinic, "Thank You". It was a great day for the students and the program was excellent. During the evening performance, each school performed, and then the mass choir performed "The Star Spangled Banner", "Come to the Music" by Joseph M. Martin, "Blades of Grass and Pure White

Stones" by Keith Christopher, and "City Called Heaven" arr. by Josephine Poelinitz. The students really enjoyed working with the clinician, Adam Lambert from Grand Island High.

During January and February students will be attending various honor choirs. A list of the choirs and students is below.

Doane Honor Choir - January 10th through 12th - Erin Kelley

UNK Festival Choir - January 25th - Kendra Cuellar, Kayla Fortin,

Skylar Murray

UNK Women's Choir - January 25th - Sierra Meador

Hastings Honor Choir - February 4th through 6th - Kendra Cuellar, Erin Kelley

Wesleyan Honor Choir - February 11th through 13th - Erin Kelley

Selected to sing the National Anthem at the FBLA Leadership Conference in Omaha - April 8th through 10th - Erin Kelley

FFA Honor Choir - April 7 through 9th - Chris Dunn

High School Math Mr. Ellicott

One of the great things about being in the new building is access to smartboards for math classes. I use the smartboard for a variety of purposes. It allows me to organize notes for each class and to keep examples consistent if there is more than one section of a class. We also have access to a virtual graphing calculator and an interactive program that does both graphing and geometric constructions. Stop by during parent teacher conferences if you would like a demonstration of this great technology.

Counselor's Corner - Mr. Watt

SENIORS

It is time to get serious about the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). PLEASE take advantage of the FAFSA Completion Day at McCook High School, in their Guidance office, on March 1st 2010. This is an opportunity to get a free tutorial on completing your FAFSA from the professionals at EducationQuest. You can make an appointment by calling EducationQuest at 1-800-666-3721. Continue to work on scholarships! Scholarship lists can be found on Southwest High School's daily announcements and on our website at www.swpschools.org and then going to the counselor's corner.

JUNIORS

All college bound juniors should consider taking the ACT test two times as a junior and then two times as a senior. The last ACT test that will count for scholarships is the December 11th, 2010 testing date. The available test dates are as follows and more information can be found by visiting www.actstudent.org:

February 6th, 2010

April 10th, 2010

June 12th, 2010

September 11th, 2010

October 23rd, 2010

December 11th, 2010

Please start making plans to visit your top 4 colleges starting now through the fall of your senior year!

Honor Band Season is in Full Swing

With winter comes honor band season. Junior High and High school band students alike practice diligently for their auditions in hopes of acceptance. Here are this season's results:

Doane Festival of Winds (held in October): Erin Kelley (Sr., Flute, Honor Band 1st Chair); Holly Wolfe (Jr., Flute, Festival Band); Kassidy McConville (Soph., Clarinet, Festival Band); Danielle Blume (Jr., Alto Sax, Honor Band); Kendra Cuellar (Sr., Trumpet, Festival Band); and Autumn Rae (Jr., Trumpet, Honor Band)

UNL Winter Winds (January 22nd-24th): Autumn Rae

UNK Honor Band (January, 25th): Erin Kelley (Honor Band); Holly Wolfe (Festival Band); Cascade Tollman (Soph., Flute, Festival Band); Kassidy McConville (Honor Band); Jennifer Foster (Jr., Clarinet, Festival Band); Danielle Blume (Honor Band); Dylan Helberg (Sr., Tenor Sax, Festival Band); Ashlee Minard (Sr., Bari. Sax, Festival Band); and Autumn Rae (Festival Band)

Wayne Honor Band (January 29th): Erin Kelley (Honor Band); Kassidy McConville (Honor Band); Jennifer Foster (Honor Band); Kate Kelley (Fr., Clarinet, Festival Band); Danielle Blume (Honor Band); Cassa McConville (Fr., Alto Sax,

Festival Band); Autumn Rae (Honor Band); Natalie Longnecker (6th, Alto Sax, Jr. High Band 1st Chair); Jane Reiners (7th, Alto Sax, Jr. High Band); and Austin Minard (7th, Bari Sax, Jr. High Band)

Chadron Honor Band (February 1st-2nd): Cascade Tollman (Festival Band)

Hastings Honor Band (February 4th-6th): Jennifer Foster and Autumn Rae

Class C Honor Band (March): Results pending.

Congratulations to all these talented students. We're so proud of you!

Technology at the Elementary - Mr. Kennedy

First of all, I would like to make one thing perfectly clear to everyone: I am not the world's foremost expert in technology, but I am going to give it my best shot. One of the most exciting technology upgrades that has taken place at the elementary is the addition of smart boards in every classroom. Smart boards are amazing teaching tools. They make many of the teachers' jobs much easier and they help make learning more enjoyable for the students. This year in fourth grade we have been studying the states so we downloaded a program that allows the students to practice the states and capitals by dragging and dropping on the smart boards.

A couple of the websites that I have been encouraging the students to use this year are

<http://www.playkidsgames.com> and <http://www.spellingcity.com>.

The first one allows students to practice their math facts and the second one is for practicing spelling words in more of a game form. Another very useful math website is <http://www.nlvm.usu.edu/> which has a number of interactive manipulatives that aid in the learning of math concepts. I would also like to throw in a quick reminder to parents to please make sure your child has his/her homework done every night and please check over it.

Our latest technology addition at

the elementary has vaulted us right out of the black and white age and into the colored age (well...sort of). The new copy machine at the elementary may not be able to copy in color, but it can scan in color. This allows us to scan a colored copy of something and be able to project it onto the smart boards in color. The copy machine also has the capability to scan something and e-mail it directly to an e-mail address. Did I mention it doesn't jam nearly as often? Mrs. Stritt has all kinds of time on her hands now.

Help Needed !!

Speech Judges, Tab Room Workers & Concession Stand Workers are needed for February 13th and February 27th
Please call: Linda Clark
692-3223 or 345-2452

High School News - Mr. Springer

The semester is well under way and staff and students are getting settled in the new building. There are a few differences that have caused for discussion as we work through the first year in the new facility. Safety is one area that people are finding is very different from the other high school. In the new facility we have the ability to monitor any and all persons entering the building. This is done by keeping the exterior doors locked and having all visitors enter the building through the front office doors. Thus allowing the school personnel to monitor who is in the building and for what purpose.

Technology Tidbits - Ms. Kent

The new classrooms at Southwest don't look like the ones you and I grew up with. Most notably, the big chalkboard is missing from the front of most classrooms. It's been replaced by a SmartBoard. For those of you who have missed the demonstrations, it's a big white surface on which a computer screen is projected. It is touch sensitive, so a user can use their finger to navigate, just as they would a mouse. A SmartBoard has unlimited possibilities, being able to do anything a computer can do. Our teachers find many ways to utilize them, from showing how to measure an angle in math, to where Haiti is located, showing

Visitor parking for the building is available in the front area as well as south of the school. There is a large area that has been rocked and designated for parking south of the gym building. It may look as the parking lot is full however the parking lot extends the full length of the building east and west plus south to the edge of the property line.

Parent Teachers Conferences

Second semester has begun and students are finishing up there 5th week back from vacation. We will be hosting the Parent teacher conferences at the new high school in Bartley on the 2nd of February. Staff will be available in their class

a video on Martin Luther King, Jr., to letting a student present a PowerPoint to the class.

We are fortunate to have wireless internet access throughout the entire building at the high school. Students and staff can now use laptop computers and not lose any of the features a desktop would have. We also have a guest account, which will allow visitors to our school the ability to access the Internet without having access to any school information.

The new building is very technology friendly. Things just seem to work better now. We have adequate Internet ac-

cess, enough connections in each room, plug-ins where we need them and we even have a room in which we store the servers - they are no longer humming away in Mr. Hendricks office! It's been heavenly for the technology coordinator!

Student Class Registration

Registration is just around the corner for the 2010-11 school years. That makes it important, for us to begin planning the class offerings and the number of classes needed to best fit our district. Students and parents should begin thinking of the future of their education and determine if they are looking at a four year school or a Vocational school. Most four year colleges are now requiring students to have foreign language in high school or in college.

As always, we have Infinite Campus available for parents and students to check their grades. If you need help setting up an account, please contact one of the building secretaries, or me, Jody Kent. Also, remember to check the web page, www.swpschools.org to see pictures, current and past newsletters, lunch menu's and more.

Assessment Update - Mrs. Rasmussen

The second semester of school brings lots of assessments at most grade levels. All of this assessment is necessary for two reasons: one to report to the Nebraska Department of Education so we remain an accredited school system. The second and more important reason is to track student growth over their educational careers.

The first major test of the second semester is the State Writing Test now called the NeSA-W (Nebraska State Accountability-Writing). This test is given to students in grades 4, 8, and 11. This test will be given to students the first two weeks of this month. Students will be given a topic to write on and then have two class periods to formulate and

rough draft, edit that draft and complete a final copy. Tools such as dictionaries and thesaurus are permissible in this test.

Next, students in grades 3rd - 8th and 11th will be assessed in reading this year on the new state reading test, the NeSA-R (Nebraska State Accountability- Reading). This is an online test that assesses vocabulary and comprehension. Last spring our school district piloted the new test and student score were not assigned. This year the test will be the measure to determine if our school has made AYP (adequately yearly progress) under the No Child Left Behind Act. This test will be given over the course of two school days in April, and replaces the on-line assessments we used previously.

Math is another area that will be assessed this spring. Students at Southwest will be using the online system of criterion referenced tests as in the previous years. Those tests will be used by Nebraska Department of Education to determine

if our district has made AYP. Next year, math will switch over to the new state test, NeSA-M (Nebraska State Accountability- Math). This year we will also be piloting the new state test. There will be no student scores to report in the new system, this year.

As in years past we will be using the Terra Nova test. This is a norm referenced tested, that everyone knows as the fill in the bubble test. In this test, we find out where our students stack up nationally in all areas of their education. This is the first year however; that NDE will be requiring school districts to report those score at the state level.

Last but not least 10th graders have the PLAN Test and juniors and seniors can be taking the ACT and SAT. Not to mention all test associated with the students regular class work. By the end of the school year our students are going to be more then ready for a well earned summer vacation. Please see the Parent Pointer in this newsletter to help students do their best.

Parent Pointers

Coping With High-Stakes Tests

- ◆ Help your child to be calm, focused, and rested on test day. This begins with a good night's sleep.
- ◆ Prepare any needed materials ahead of schedule, and take time for a good breakfast before the exam.
- ◆ Remind your children that you support their effort and that daily performance is a much better indicator of aptitude than a single test.
- ◆ Plan a post-exam activity your child enjoys as a reward for his or her hard work.

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ANNOUNCEMENT:

What: Dessert Theater

Where: High School Auditorium

Time: February 7, 2010 - 2:00 p.m.

Price: \$5.00 - Adults \$3.00 - Students

There will be a variety of music styles performed by the band and vocal students. After the program, we will serve desserts. Contact a music student if you would like a ticket. Tickets will also be available at the school office and at the door the evening of the performance. We hope to see you there.

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United We Educate.



The Southwest Athletic Department would like to give a special thank you to all the parents that organized and provided meals for our boys and girls basketball teams after some of our away games. It was greatly appreciated.

Parent's Night for Girls' and Boy's Basketball teams, Swimmers and Cheerleaders will be Tuesday **February 9th** During the Southern Valley Basketball Game. The recognition of parents will take place between the Girls and Boy's Varsity games.

Wrestlers will honor their parents right before finals during the Southwest Invitational meet on **February 6th**.



Parent Teacher Conference
Tuesday, February 2, 2010
2:00 PM - 8:00 PM
ALL CONFERENCES WILL BE HELD AT THE JR/SR HIGH in Bartley