

December 2014

Southwest Schools

'Rider News

From The Desk Of Superintendent Todd Porter

It is difficult to believe that at this writing we are in Thanksgiving week, which means that after we return we only have 17 days of school before the end of the semester. Seventeen days seems like a very small amount of time, but on the other hand, students still have plenty of opportunity to work on grades and homework assignments that will have an impact on things like overall grade point average, class rank, or just earning credits needed for graduation. At the elementary level, it is important to encourage your child to work hard right until the end of the semester and show their very best effort.

For our seniors, time is running out for narrowing their choices for colleges, career direction

and making plans for "what's next" in life. Scholarships from colleges are starting to be awarded. There will be many more opportunities for students coming for in the next few months for our seniors to take advantage of. If you are the parent of a junior, it is not too soon to be looking at college or career possibilities. If they are college bound (especially four year), getting an ACT test in will be a very important step soon.

I am happy to say that the State Department of Education is looking at adopting a new way of evaluating schools in a much less narrow manner, which will allow schools in the state of Nebraska to get away from much of the negative impacts of the "No

Child Left Behind" legislation. This will be a broader look at more than just one test score and graduation rates. Will we still need to show academic improvement? Of course we will. Putting labels on schools when not considering the many factors that make a school unique can be detrimental to the very progress that schools are looking to make.

My personal wish for all of our Southwest Community is that you have a wonderful rest of the semester and a restful break. Here's looking towards 2015 and many great things to come for our students.



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Special points of interest:

- Dec. 1 - Elementary Christmas Program PK - 3rd @ 6:30 PM 4th - 6th @ 7:30 PM all at the High School
- Dec. 8 - Jr/Sr High Winter Program at 6:00 PM
- Dec. 22 - 23 Semester Tests for Jr/Sr High students
- Dec. 23 - Early Dismissal Elementary - 12:45 PM High School - 1:00 PM
- Jan. 5 - School Resumes

Elementary News - Mrs. Latta

December is another busy month for Southwest Elementary School. Our students will present their annual Christmas program on Monday, December 1st, at the high school auditorium in Bartley. The Preschool – 3rd grade program will begin at 6:30 p.m. At 7:30 p.m., the 4th – 6th grades will present HAPPY, THE HIGH-TECH SNOWMAN. What better way to get in the Christmas

spirit than hearing and seeing children of all ages sharing their joy through music? We'd love to see you all the night of December 1st!

Our school is participating in the Scholastic Reading Club Great Bed-time Story Pajama Drive benefitting Pajama Program, a nonprofit organization that provides new pajamas and books to children in need. If you'd like to participate, please bring

a new pair of pajamas to school by December 5th. We will also be collecting new pajamas at the Christmas programs.

Even as we anticipate the coming holidays and break from school, we'll do our best to keep expectations high for learning in the classrooms. Every day is an opportunity to make life better by learning something new.

Counselor's Corner - Mr. Loshbaugh

SENIORS

- The last ACT test that counts for scholarships is in December 13th. Thanks for all of your hard work, time, expense and effort taking these tests.
- Continue working on your resumes as they will come in handy when filling out local scholarship applications that will arrive here soon. Parents and students can estimate their FAFSA results now by using the College Funding Estimator at EducationQuest.org.
- Students please be asking for quality references and those who will write you good letters of recommendation now.
- Expectations are that all seniors should have college applications and college specific scholarship applications completed before January 1st. This allows us to focus solely on local scholarships during the spring semester.
- Seniors taking spring term College English and College Statistics need to register and pay for those courses as soon as possible. That has to be done at the college.
- Senior parents need to start checking with their church, banks, and organizations to see what scholarships are available to your student.

JUNIORS

- Beginning in January in Mrs. Slaten's English 11 course students will begin the 12 session John Baylor ACT test prep program. This program is designed for school-wide ACT score improvement. This will lead up to the February 7th ACT test which we hope all Junior students will consider taking. Deadline for the February 7th ACT test is Friday January 9th.
- All college bound juniors should consider taking the ACT test twice during their junior year and twice during the fall of their Senior year.
- Look for PSAT/NMSQT results in mid-December.
- Remember the two-year of a consecutive foreign language requirement to be admitted into universities.



Southwest Music - Mrs. Roggenkamp

It's been a very busy, but exciting semester in Music so far! We started the year off with lots of Pep Band performances for football and volleyball games. I can't believe how much the band students have improved and how wonderful they are sounding. Practice pays off for sure!

We had our Dessert Theater in early October where our students had a blast singing and playing all their favorite songs.

At the end of October, I had the privilege of taking Ellie Brown, a sophomore, to Louisville, KY, to participate in the National FFA Honor Choir. What an outstanding experience for her to be chosen among 70 students from the United States. The choir practiced long hours for the first three days then performed at every session during the convention. It is amazing that Ellie had a voice by the end as much as they sang. She met a lot of friends and she hopes to participate again in the National Choir in the next year or two.

In early November, Lanie Overton, a 6th grader, was chosen to participate in a Sing Around Nebraska Honor Choir, held at Nebraska Wesleyan University. Rollo Dilworth, the guest conductor, was amazing and Lanie loved every minute of it, from the first warm-up to the ending performance. There were three college choirs that performed on the concert also, so the elementary students involved were exposed to some fantastic musicians.

Next was our Veterans Day Program. I was very proud of the students for how they honored the Veterans; I think they have a good understanding of what the Veterans sacrificed for our country. The United States is truly a wonderful place to live, thanks to the aid of our Veterans.

In mid-November, Mr. Wilson and I took 18 boys to Lincoln to participate in the first ever Boys' Barbershop Quartet Workshop. What an awesome experience they had! Hearing that age group sing in 4 part harmony gave me goose bumps! The boys that participated were: 6th graders, Justin Brush, Jake O'Dea, Bryson Shoemaker, and Matthew Van Pelt; 7th grader, Austin Brown; 8th graders, Walter Fitzsimmons, Kaden Guerrero, Dylan Hofman, Paul McConville, Simon Moore, Jay Porter, Harley Remington, Caleb Shald, Brett Soderlund, Blake Williams, and Zach Wright; and 9th graders, Alex Porter and Brady Porter.

Jackson Porter, a senior, also went with us to Lincoln to sing in the All-State Chorus, his second year being selected. What a remarkable sound when 440 of the best singers in the state sing together!! It is truly an honor to be chosen for this experience.

We are currently getting ready for our Christmas programs; the elementary program is on Monday, December 1st, with grades PreK-3rd at 6:30, and grades 4-6 at 7:30. The Jr/Sr High program is on Monday, December 8th at 6:00. I hope to see a large crowd at both programs and hope it will get you in the Christmas spirit.

The High School Choir will travel to Kearney to record their Christmas songs to be part of the NTV Holiday Harmonies Program again this year. The program will be aired on NTV on Christmas Eve and the local Fox station on Christmas morning. Thank you to our sponsors for allowing us to be part of that experience!!

As you can see, it has been an eventful first semester. We are so fortunate with our school system to be able to offer our students so many opportunities. I am proud to work for Southwest Public Schools and I am proud of our talented students.

Enrichment - Mrs. Frecks

November has been a busy month for the enrichment classes. The November Rockin Riders, along with 4 other 6th graders, welcomed and registered Veterans at the annual Veteran's Day Program. Twenty-nine veterans signed in. We are collecting addresses of Veterans to be able to thank them for their service to our country. Students have been

making Thank You greetings to our veterans. If you have an address of veteran, please send it to school as we plan to remember veterans during the Christmas season. November Rockin Riders also planned a Thanksgiving coloring contest. Winners will be announced before the Thanksgiving break. Gratitude lists,

according to research, can improve grades and goal-setting skills plus increase satisfaction in relationships and school. This is according to Owen Griffith, a contributor to Envision Educator Smart Brief (Stenhouse Publishers). We are in the process of adding a gratitude list to our journals. Please join us in making your own gratitude list.

Beat the Winter Blahs (Ideas from Kindergarten)

According to research, to enhance fluency children should reread poems or books 3 or 4 times. One great way is to memorize a favorite nursery rhyme and act it out with your child.

Word Journey Write sight words on paper plates and spread them on the floor. Children step from one plate to the next like stepping stones. First, ask them to read the words. Next, arrange the plates in sequence to make a sentence.

Phone Home Make individual phones with paper cups, string, and paper clips. Poke holes in the bottom of two cups and thread the string through the holes. Tie a paper clip to the ends of the string. Let children take turns speaking and listening with the "cup phones." Have them read a poem to you or have them listen to you read a favorite story.

15 Minutes of Walking/Exercising Try building 15 minutes of walking each day as you count, sing letter songs, say days of the week, months and review other information like phone number, and address.

Magic Words Write color words, sounds, letters, etc. with glue on 4"x6" index cards. After they dry, children place paper on top and hold it in place with a clothespin. Children then rub over the cards with the side of a crayon and read the words. Later in the year children can write sentences with words.

Fun Recipes

Trail Mix

Materials: Cheerios pretzel sticks raisins fish crackers

Directions: Dump all the ingredients in a large paper grocery sack. Shake gently. Yippee ti yi yo! Eat and enjoy.

Hint! You can also add chocolate chips, M&Ms, and other ingredients to your trail mix. Serve trail mix in a flat bottom ice cream cone. You can just eat the cone when you're through with the mix.

Monkey Tail Sandwich

Materials: hot dog bun small banana peanut butter

Directions: Spread peanut butter in the hot dog bun. Peel the banana and put it in the bun. Eat your sandwich, and don't monkey around!

Hint! Put tuna fish in a hot dog bun. Put a slice of cheese on top and broil it. You'll have a "fish tail" sandwich.

High School News-Mr. Matt Springer

The first semester is coming to a close. With the winter weather finally setting in, it is important that you remind your children to dress warm. You may be amazed to see the number of students walking the halls in flip flops and shorts. Not what I would consider appropriate winter dress for the cold days. Buses are warmed up every morning prior to loading students but there is always the outside chance of a bus getting stuck or losing heat. A bus loses heat really fast if the engine is not running or the heater goes bad. So please keep that in mind as you send your child out the door

to catch the bus.

Students have and will continue to take semester tests. This year we will test on Monday the 22nd and Tuesday the 23rd. Friday will most likely be a review day for the semester test and inform students of what they will be responsible for on those tests. Please keep in mind tests are very important and a learning process for the next level of their education. It is important that you help make sure your child is at school on those last few days.

If you were unable to attend the Conference One Act

plays hosted at the High school last month you missed a great event. The performances were wonderful. There were a lot of compliments on how nice our facility is and how impressed they were with the staff and crew helping run the event.



Board of Education Meeting-Southwest Public Schools-District 179-November 10, 2014

President Duane Teter called the regular meeting of the Southwest Public Schools Board of Education to order at 7:33 p.m. on November 10, 2014 at the Southwest Junior-Senior High School in Bartley.

Present: Kevin Potthoff, Tom Sughrue, Ondrea McConville, Steve Daffer, Duane Teter, Steve McConville, Principals Kathy Latta and Matt Springer, Superintendent Todd Porter, and Patricia Smith.

Absent: None.

Visitors: Mary Marsh, Kris Marotta, Dave McConville, and Jenni McConville.

President Teter observed Open Meeting Law requirements.

Moved by Sughrue, seconded by Daffer, to approve the board meeting agenda as presented. Ayes: Sughrue, Potthoff, S. McConville, Teter, O. McConville, and Daffer. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Notice of the meeting was given in advance by the board-approved method of meeting notice. Notice of the meeting was given in advance to all members prior to the meeting date.

Moved by O. McConville, seconded by Potthoff, to approve the minutes of the October 13, 2014 board meeting minutes as presented. Ayes: Daffer, Teter, O. McConville, Sughrue, and Potthoff. Nays: None. Abstained: S. McConville. Motion carried.

Moved by Daffer, seconded by S. McConville, to approve the claims as presented. Ayes: Potthoff, Sughrue, Daffer, Teter, S. McConville, and O. McConville. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The treasurer's report was presented to the Board.

Approval of the 2013-2014 audit was tabled until the December board meeting in order to give board members time to review the report.

Moved by O. McConville, seconded by Potthoff, to approve the quote from Daktronics for an 8' x 18' football scoreboard in the amount of \$8,987. Pepsi has donated \$5,000 toward this purchase. Ayes: S. McConville, Daffer, Teter, Potthoff, Sughrue, and O. McConville. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Moved by S. McConville, seconded by Sughrue, to recognize the Southwest Teachers' Association as the exclusive bargaining agent for the district's non-supervisory certificated staff for the 2016-2017 contract year. Ayes: S. McConville, Daffer, Teter, Potthoff, Sughrue, and O. McConville. Nays: None. Motion carried.

New Business Action Item 4, Discussion of the Superintendent's Evaluation and Contract, was tabled until after the Administrators' Reports.

Superintendent Porter reported on Safe Schools computer-based employee training, No Child Left Behind provision, evaluation of curriculum, possible addition of a school to the RPAC Conference, elementary restroom renovation, installation of electric heaters in the football concession stand, and scheduling of the 2015-2016 RPAC Conference volleyball and basketball tournaments at MCC.

Principal Latta reported on the Good Friends activity, Halloween party, Game Night, Red Willow County Health staff immunizations, Veterans' Day Program, and the UNL Response to Intervention Workshop in North Platte.

Principal Springer updated the board on the status of delivery of the new bus, the Pre-kindergarten-Grade 12 Assembly, the Board-Staff Christmas Party, and bus diesel treatment during the cold temperatures.

Moved by Teter, seconded by Daffer, to go into closed session to discuss the Superintendent evaluation, according to Board Policy 4057, to protect the needless injury to the reputation of an individual at 8:25 p.m. President Teter repeated the motion, and the Board voted. Ayes: Teter, Sughrue, Daffer, Potthoff, S. McConville, and O. McConville. Nays: None. Motion carried.

President Teter declared the end of closed session at 8:50 p.m.

Moved by Sughrue, seconded by S. McConville, to approve the Superintendent's Evaluation. Ayes: Teter, Sughrue, Daffer, Potthoff, S. McConville, and O. McConville. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Moved by Potthoff, seconded by O. McConville, to approve Superintendent Todd Porter's contract for the 2015-2016 year. Ayes: Teter, Sughrue, Daffer, Potthoff, S. McConville, and O. McConville. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Moved by S. McConville, seconded by Sughrue, to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 p.m. Ayes: Daffer, Sughrue, Potthoff, Teter, S. McConville, and O. McConville. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Agenda for meetings will be kept continually current and available for public inspection in the office of the Superintendent.

The next regular board meeting will be held on Monday, December 8, 2014, at 8:00 p.m. at the Southwest Junior-Senior High School in Bartley.

Southwest Public Schools

Southwest High School
900 Coke Street
PO Box 187
Bartley, NE 69020

Phone: 308-692-3223
Toll Free: 855-692-3172
Fax: 308-692-3221

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2nd Annual Great Bedtime Story Pajama Drive

Parents - Southwest Public Schools is holding its 2nd Annual Great Bedtime Story Pajama Drive along with Scholastic Reading Club. This nonprofit organization provides new pajamas and books to children in need - especially those living in group homes, shelters, foster care, and orphanages.

Our school wants to be part of this drive so that we can help make a better bedtime for these children. Together we can help the Great Bedtime Story Pajama Drive reach even more kids with pj's and books.

If you and your child are able to participate, please have your child bring in a new pair of pajamas to school by **December 5th**.

Here are some simple guidelines for the pajamas:

- Pajamas must be brand-new
- Pajamas in all sizes are needed- from newborn to adult
- Pajamas must be in complete sets or nightgowns
- Pajamas in children's sizes must be manufactured as pajamas - this ensures that they are flame-retardant and safe.

We will have pajama boxes set up the night of the Elementary Program or you may send to your child's classroom

If you have question **PLEASE** contact the school: 364 - 2613 and talk to Mrs. Young