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Special points of interest:

- Jan. 5 - School Resumes
- Jan. 12 - School Board Meeting @ 7:30 PM in Bartley
- Jan. 13 - All School Play in Bartley at 2:00 PM and 7:00 PM
- Jan. 14 - NO SCHOOL
- Jan. 19 - RPAC Vocal Clinic at Alma. Concert at 7:00 PM
- Jan. 21 - RPAC Art Contest in Cambridge @ 1:30 PM
- Jan. 23 - RPAC Wrestling @ Arapahoe 2:30 PM

From The Desk Of Superintendent Todd Porter

The December board meeting was the last meeting for three veteran board members that gave a great deal of their lives for the betterment of our school district. Tom Sughrue, Steve McConville, and Kevin Potthoff along with the rest of the school board acted in a manner that I think can be best described by a term recently used by the legendary Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne. They acted with a "unity of purpose." Osborne used this term to describe how they approached football operations during the 90's when Nebraska football flourished. Dr. Osborne commented that things always didn't go exactly as planned, but the direction and drive of the program revolved around this "unity of purpose" and the overall results were quite impressive. As a district, I feel that taking this approach towards our goals of steady improvement will guide us in the right direction. The

task is often challenging and there are bumps in the road along the way, but the focus remains the same. It is an all-encompassing task of all of us - educators, parents, community members and certainly our students themselves.

There are many outcomes that we want for our students and they vary as much as the students' personalities themselves do, but in the end we are trying to prepare students to be responsible, productive citizens. We want them to be engaged in whatever career it is that they choose and have success. That can look very different from student to student, but the concepts of having a good work ethic, being punctual, being able to follow directions and find satisfaction in the effort they have put forth are pretty universal. It will lead to success no matter what field a student chooses. Our hope is that students are prepared to take

advantage of the opportunities that are placed before them. Sometimes opportunities mean there is challenging work ahead, but knowing that having a good work ethic usually results in positive rewards, and we should all pass that message along. Prepare yourself while you are in school to take advantage of the opportunities that will be presented to you. Choose your passion, understand the sacrifices you must make to enjoy that success and don't let anything get in your way. If it does, work through it or around it, but don't waver on that desire to have a productive career. Challenges will be there, but so will your determination and will to overcome them.

Thanks to all of our community members that contribute to our students each and every day. Here's hoping that you have a healthy productive 2015.

High School News - Mr. Springer

The first semester has past and student grades are recorded. You should have received your Childs report card by the time you are reading this. If you have not, please call the school. (Or maybe ask your child if they have seen it!)

Scholarships are starting to filter into the office and Mr. Loshbaugh has worked very hard getting info to the kids. I hope as a parent you can sit down and discuss your child's plans after high school. It may not seem like an important thing to do if your student is not a senior, however in the colleges

today there are programs that have a waiting list to even get accepted. So it is important to turn in an application prior to the senior year. ACT scores are becoming a huge part of getting accepted and they also hold a lot of weight in local and federal scholarships. Taking the test more than one time has proven, in almost every case, that the student will improve the second and even the third time. One point on the test can mean the difference of a few dollars or a full tuition scholarship. The \$36.50 fee to take the test is cheap if they improve on

their score. Students are encouraged to take the ACT test twice their Junior year and again once in the fall of their senior year.

Reminder that it is important for you to call the school if your child is ill or not going to be in school that day. We will always follow up if a child is reported absent from first hour. Our first concern is the student's well-being in case they were in a wreck or had trouble. So please help us out by calling.

The Circle Of Security

At times all parents feel lost or without a clue about what our child needs from us. Imagine what it might feel like if you were able to make sense of what your child was really asking from you. The Circle of Security® Parenting program is an 8 week program based on years of research about how to best support and strengthen parent-child relationships. It is designed to help parents give their children a feeling of security and confidence so their children explore, learn, grow and build positive relationships. Parents who complete the class say their children are now more understanding of other's emotions, have stronger self-esteem, and have happier, more positive relationships with their parents and other children.

What's in it for me?

- Learn the importance of the parent-child relationship and how to keep it strong
- Learn how to manage your child's emotions and your own response to them
- Learn how to be the best parent you can be
- Learn how to "be present" with your child during the best and toughest of times

Presented by: Karen Salyer, MS, CCC/SLP

Sponsored by: Educational Service Unit 15

Location: McCook Community College - McMillen Hall 213

1205 West 3rd ST, McCook, NE 69001

Times: Tuesday Evenings from 6:30 – 8:00 pm

Dates: January 13, 20, 27, February 3, 10, 17, 24, March 3

Who should attend? Parents, Grandparents, Family Members, Teachers, Day Care Providers (Basically anyone who has a relationship with another person and wants to make it better.)

Cost: \$25.00

Class size limited to 12 students so register early.

Rockin Riders - Mrs. Frecks

The Rockin Riders and enrichment classes have had another busy month. We are finishing up Christmas greetings to area veterans. I appreciate those of you who informed us of veterans who were not able to come to the annual Veteran's Day Program. The Rockin Riders planned a door decorating and gift wrapping competition and next week (December 23) we are asked to wear

our ugliest Christmas Sweater to school. Also the Rockin Riders for December put up an attractive December bulletin board at the elementary school. The lower elementary classes became aware of 6 year old Addie Fausett who has a rare disease. Addie loves to receive cards, especially homemade ones. Doctors believe that this may be Addie's last Christmas here on earth and have asked

for lots of Christmas cards this year for Addie and her 2 sisters. Students have been busy making some beautiful cards for Addie. We are reminding each other that it is a special time of year for giving and some of the best gifts are inexpensive. Join us in giving a gift of yourself to someone you love this Christmas season.

Southwest FFA - Mr. Roggenkamp

The Southwest FFA chapter would like to thank the community for its support of its recent fruit, meats, and beef sticks sale. The chapter has been busy delivering products to all of the community who purchased. These funds will be used for State FFA Convention costs and contest registrations in the spring. Thank you all so much.

The chapter was able to enjoy an evening of bowling in November. Following a

day of school, the chapter took 30 members to Cambridge Lanes. Members enjoyed the recreational activity and nachos. Kyle Van Pelt bowled the highest round of the day, and we won't mention who bowled the lowest.

In January senior members who wish to obtain the State FFA Degree will need to prepare their applications and record books. All members are eligible to apply for Proficiency Awards if their SAE is

strong, and they have pictures of them in action working their SAE project.

February looms as contest month. Members will begin preparing in January for Meats, Agronomy, Farm Management, Welding, Ag Mechanics, Livestock Management, and Vet Science just to name a few. District XI consists of 12 FFA chapters with different qualifications for each contest for making it to state competition in April.

Counselor's Corner - Mr. Loshbaugh

Students who plan on schedule changes for 2nd semester need to fill out a Schedule Change Form. These are available in the holder outside the counselor's office. Please turn forms in prior to leaving for Christmas Break.

SENIORS

- 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. FAFSA applications can be filed at fafsa.com.
- Expectations are that all seniors should have college applications and college specific scholarship applications completed. This allows us to focus solely on local scholarships during the spring semester.
- Students please begin asking for quality references from those who will write you good letters of recommendation now.
- 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 ACT score improvement. This will lead up to the February 7th ACT test which we hope all junior students will consider taking. Registration deadline for the February 7th ACT test is Friday January 9th. For more information about registering and paying for the ACT test please visit www.actstudent.org.
- All college bound juniors should consider taking the ACT test twice during their junior year and twice during the fall of their senior year. Here is the schedule of remaining ACT test dates that will count for scholarship opportunities: February 7th, April 18th, June 13th, September 12th, October 24th, and December 12th.
- Many college representatives will be visiting our school in the spring and these are mainly for the juniors to visit with to start preparing for college opportunities.
- PSAT/NMSQT results were returned to students in mid-December.

Exciting News in 5th Grade!

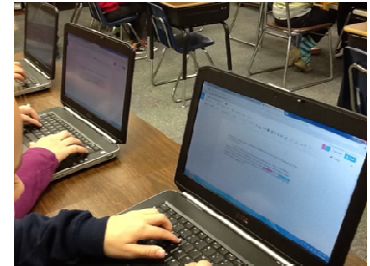
Fifth grade students now have email! The students have been anticipating getting their own account for a while and were so excited to set up those accounts. In late November, Mrs. Hyke showed the fifth grade students how to open and maintain their email account. She gave them a quick course in how to use google docs and toured a few of the other features of email.

One of the first ways fifth grade used their email, was to join two or three other classmates within a shared document. They worked together to

write a Thanksgiving story. Each group member could contribute their part of the story at the same time as the other group members. It was fun when the students could see their partner's work as they were typing it from another machine.

Other ways students have been using their email is to watch video clips about World War II and send reflections of those clips to Mrs. Ramsay. They have also completed surveys and taken quizzes through email. Several students have been able to set up an account at

Quizlet.com which allows them to practice concepts from math, science, and other subjects that they are studying. We are just beginning to explore the advantages of having a school email account.



Life Skills - Mrs. Wyatt

Life Skills has been a busy place this first semester. Classes are Pre-Algebra, 7th Careers, 7th English, 7th Social Studies, 10th English, Geometry, and 7th Math. Careers class is currently working on a report about a country. Each student chose a country to work on. They are then asked to act as a representative for that country and convince their audi-

ence to visit their country. The kids have worked really hard on this project. The first nine-weeks class did a great job. Some of the kids put a lot of work into their power point presentations.

The new computers have been great for the students. It is amazing what they

can do with their power points and other things. Thank you to everyone that had a part in getting these computers for the students.

Everyone is looking forward to Christmas vacation but not the semester tests.

Board of Education Meeting Southwest Schools December 8, 2014

Vice-President Tom Sughrue called the regular meeting of the Southwest Public Schools Board of Education to order at 8:02 p.m. on December 8, 2014 at the Southwest Junior-Senior High School in Bartley.

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

Absent: Duane Teter and Steve McConville.

Visitors: Mary Marsh, Kris Marotta, Dave McConville, Jenni McConville, John O'Dea, Lynda Baumbach, and Don and Donna Behnke.

Vice-President Sughrue observed Open Meeting Law requirements Visitors: Mary Marsh, Kris Marotta, Dave McConville, Jenni McConville, John O'Dea, Lynda Baumbach, and Don and Donna Behnke.

Vice-President Sughrue observed Open Meeting Law requirements.

Moved by Potthoff, seconded by Daffer, to excuse absent Board Members Duane Teter and Steve McConville. Ayes: O. McConville, Potthoff, Sughrue, and Daffer. Nays: None. Absent: Teter and S. McConville. Motion carried.

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

Ondrea McConville thanked Tom Sughrue, Kevin Potthoff, and Steve McConville for their service to the district and for the assis-

tance given her during her time as a board member.

Superintendent Porter recognized donations by the Wilsonville Baptist Christian Church to the elementary backpack program and the National Honor Society. Junior-Senior High School students were acknowledged for outstanding awards at the McCook Art Guild Art Show, Junior High Livestock Judging Contest, Jan Wymore Honor Band participants, and placing at recent high school Quiz Bowls.

Moved by Daffer, seconded by O. McConville, to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2014 board meeting minutes as presented. Ayes: Daffer, O. McConville, Sughrue, and Potthoff. Nays: None. Absent: S. McConville and Teter. Motion carried.

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

The treasurer's report was presented to the Board.

Moved by Potthoff, seconded by O. McConville, to approve the nomination of Janet Rippe to the Southwest Foundation Board. Ayes: Daffer, Potthoff, Sughrue, and O. McConville. Nays: None. Absent: S. McConville and Teter. Motion carried.

Moved by O. McConville, seconded by Potthoff, to approve the 2013-2014 audit as presented. Ayes: Daffer, Potthoff, Sughrue, and O. McConville. Nays: None. Absent: S. McConville and Teter. Motion carried.

Moved by Potthoff, seconded by Daffer, to approve the purchase and installation of carpet in the amount of \$2,745.00 for the west entryway and area in front of the trophy cases in the junior-senior high building to alleviate tracking of moisture and to prevent possible accidents. Ayes: Daffer, Potthoff, Sughrue, and O. McConville. Nays: None. Absent: S. McConville and Teter. Motion carried.

Moved by O. McConville, seconded by Daffer, to approve the 2015-2016 negotiated contract for certified staff, increasing the base salary by \$1,000 to \$32,550. Ayes: Daffer, Potthoff, Sughrue, and O. McConville. Nays: None. Absent: S. McConville and Teter. Motion carried.

Item 5 of New Business, discussion of the administrative contract of Matt Springer, will be addressed following the Administrators' reports.

Superintendent Porter reported on the completion of the main elementary restroom renovation and plans to begin the next restroom renovation during the Christmas break. He discussed installation of the junior-senior high gym railings and teacherage windows. Ondrea McConville and Steve Daffer, along with Mr. Porter, recently attended the NASB Convention, and new board members will be attending a workshop in North Platte. The possibility of purchasing a walk-in exterior freezer at the junior-senior high school building is being researched and will be an agenda item in January. Superintendent Porter thanked the outgoing board members for their service.

Principal Latta reported on restroom renovations, the Christmas program, and a pajama drive in exchange for books.

Principal Springer reported on the delivery of the new bus, semester tests on December 17 and 18, ideas to curb sun reflection in the practice gym, and the Staff-Board Christmas Party.

Outgoing Board Member Kevin Potthoff thanked Jenni McConville, Lynda Baumbach, and John O'Dea for donating their time to serve on the Board of Education and encouraged the Board to finalize the plans for the practice gym project. He reminded the Board that education is the top priority.

Moved by Sughrue, seconded by Daffer, to go into closed session to discuss personnel to protect the needless injury to the reputation of an individual at 8:50 p.m. Vice-President Sughrue repeated the motion, and the Board voted. Ayes: Sughrue, Daffer, Potthoff, and O. McConville. Nays: None. Absent: S. McConville and Teter. Motion carried.

O. McConville declared the end of closed session at 9:16 p.m.

Moved by Potthoff, seconded by O. McConville, to approve the contract of Principal Matt Springer. Ayes: Sughrue, Daffer, Potthoff, and O. McConville. Nays: None. Absent: S. McConville and Teter. Motion carried.

Moved by Daffer, seconded by Potthoff, to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 p.m. Ayes: Daffer, Sughrue, Potthoff, and O. McConville. Nays: None. Absent: S. McConville and Teter. 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, January 12, 2015, at 7:30 p.m. at the Southwest Junior-Senior High School in Bartley.

Southwest Public Schools

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I would like to thank everyone that helped with the pajama drive. We had a very good turn out and I believe we will do this again. We were able to help many with your donations.

Again – THANK YOU ALL –

Mrs. Young