

# 'Rider News

## From The Desk of Superintendent - R. Todd Porter

Each year as a school district we are evaluated by the guidelines of the federal government's "No Child Left Behind" law placing districts in the difficult position of having students take a one-time test proving that they are grade proficient in reading and math. That means all students including students in poverty, special education, non-English speaking, or otherwise labeled. It is a frustrating, time-consuming process of preparing for tests and assessing the results, then testing and assessing the results, and so on and so on. When last year arrived each child was to be proficient. 100%. If not, you were labeled "needs improvement" if any child in any sub-group was not proficient.

I write this not to say

that schools should not continually be searching to find ways to become better. To get through to those students, who for whatever reason are not able to meet that cut score set by those at the state level that are responsible for setting the bar higher for our students, can be tough. We'll keep working, collaborating with other schools and teachers who can share methods and examples that have been successful with their particular group at a particular time. We need a commitment from students and parents to help, as well. In an educational climate that at this time really doesn't care if a child has learning problems, may be dealing with emotional issues, or may not be blessed with the advantage of having all of

the "extras" that some kids grow up with, the "No Child Left Behind" law has turned into a punitive tangle of red tape and expense. We must move forward, however, and do the very best we can.

I recently corresponded with Dr. Matt Blomstedt, Nebraska's Commissioner of Education, to express my concern about the frustrations of our school, along with most of the schools in the state of Nebraska, are dealing with. He agrees. I feel confident that the Nebraska Department of Education is on the right path and will be supportive of districts that need ideas and support, but will appreciate the things that we do well. In essence, we are all hoping that soon we will be allowed to do what is best for our students and not

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### Special points of interest:

- Nov. 1 - Daylight Savings Time Ends - Turn Clocks Back 1 hour
- Nov. 9 - School Board Meeting 7:30 PM in Bartley
- Nov. 11 - Veterans Day Program @ 9:30 AM in Bartley
- Nov. 18 - NO SCHOOL Teacher In-service and RPAC Play Production
- Nov. 24 - Early Dismissal :2:15 PM at Elementary 2:30 PM at High School

## continued

have our primary focus be on scores on one particular test on one particular day. That experiment has had its time and not

achieved its goal. The concept of preparing our students to become college or career ready makes sense. Kids are individuals, howev-

er, and we should be allowed to work with their aspirations, not the ideals of a federal bureaucracy.

## High School News - Mr. Springer

### Making up homework for days missed!

The students at Southwest School now have the ability to work with the teachers from home. This has been a great success this year as students can get notes and assignments for the classes they miss. If your child is ill please remind them to email there teachers to get the assignments.

Reminder to all parents that students grades and missing assignments are available via the internet. If you have questions on how to check the status of your child, please contact the school and we will help you get logged on to the web page.

The year seems to be flying by quickly! With the nice weather the past couple of months. We are bound to have an unprepared day when the weather shows it flurry. With that in mind please be sure to check out the school closings or

late start information that can be found at the following sites. We will also utilize our phone system to send info as soon as we make a decision.

**In-climate weather** is always a threat living in Nebraska. The school has a large list of places we post school information. These include NTV, 10/11, KHAS-TV, KRVN, KICK, KIOD, Weatherthreat.com and the schools new blackboard message system. Please check those places for information, if you are in question as to our school closings. We will try to determine the plan based on the weather by 6:30 a.m. as that is when most bus routes are starting. Calling the school early will usually result in no information as we are busy out driving roads or calling people that can help us make a qualified decision on conditions in our district. Since the district is so large the weather and road conditions may differ significantly. Once the call

has been made the media is alerted right away so people can plan for the day. If you are not on the calling system and would like to be please contact Natalie in the high school office.

Parents, the winter conditions always have the potential of getting a bus stuck or having a breakdown. The buses are monitored by radio and help is usually a few minutes away. However, in the event a bus fails to run the temperature can drop very quickly due to the lack of insulation. This is why it is important to ensure your child is dressed appropriately for the cold. Please help remind them that flip flops and shorts are not proper clothing for winter. It is also important that they are wearing a coat when riding the bus on those cold days. Thank you for your help ensuring you child is properly prepared for the weather conditions.

## 5th Grade Book of The Month - Delaney Critchfield

Book of the month is "Pete the Cat and His Four Groovy Buttons":

Pete the Cat is wearing his favorite shirt - the one with the four totally groovy buttons. But when one falls off, does

Pete cry? Goodness, no! He just keeps on singing his song - after all, what could be groovier than three groovy buttons? Read the book to count down with Pete to see how the story will end.



## Counselor's Corner - Mr. Loshbaugh

### SENIORS

Seniors participated in the statewide *Apply2College* campaign on Wednesday, October 21<sup>st</sup>. Most college bound seniors have now applied to at least one college. After applying for admission, students should be sure to complete school specific scholarship data forms on the college website.

Seniors should also continue working on their resumes. This requires going back and remembering all of your school activities, work experiences, and volunteer experiences. Students will be able to use these when applying for local scholarships beginning in January. Reminder that students get two days during their senior year for college visits. These days do count against your ten absence days a semester.

November 6<sup>th</sup> is the regular deadline for the December 12<sup>th</sup> ACT test. Seniors, this is the last ACT test that will count for scholarships.

### Scholarships

Information about The Hagan Scholarship can be found at [haganscholarships.org](http://haganscholarships.org). The Hagan Scholarship are intended for high achieving students who will require financial assistance in order to attend college. These students will graduate from a public high school located in an eligible state and in a county having fewer than 50,000 residents. Each scholarship is worth \$40,000 over four years. Application deadline is November 15<sup>th</sup>.

The University of Nebraska's Collegebound Nebraska guarantees that students who meet admissions requirements and who are awarded a federal Pell Grant can attend the University of Nebraska and pay no tuition. This year, approximately 6,700 students at the University of Nebraska -- almost a quarter of Nebraska undergraduates at the university -- meet the Collegebound Nebraska promise. Visit [collegeboundnebraska.com](http://collegeboundnebraska.com) to learn more.

Peru State College has four nursing program seats available through the Rural Health Opportunities Program (RHOP) are available at several Nebraska State Colleges. This program provides tuition assistance for health career students interested in returning to rural Nebraska. Use the keyword RHOP to find school specific information. Application deadline is December 1<sup>st</sup>.

Don't forget about all of the resources at Education Quest - [www.educationquest.org](http://www.educationquest.org) - that you can access for information on colleges, programs, and scholarship opportunities available to you.

The Townsend Scholarship is a local scholarship valued at \$16,000 plus \$1,200 for a personal computer. It must be used for one of the University of Nebraska colleges - UNO, UNL, UNK, or Curtis - and it is only available to students at McCook and Southwest High Schools. Applications for this year's award are available in Mr. Loshbaugh's office. Deadline is March 4, 2016.

## Elementary News - Mrs. Latta

Our third grade students welcomed their Good Friends on Thursday, October 22. As this was their first meeting of the school year, time was spent getting to know each other, playing a game, and, of course, eating the yummy snacks our parents provide.

We celebrated our NeSA success at an assembly Friday, October 23. Medals were awarded for meeting or exceeding the state standards

in Reading, Math, Science and Writing. Each and every student who completed the tests in our school last spring earned at least one medal. We even had 26 students who earned an Academic Excellence medal for exceeding the state standards in ALL areas assessed. We are so proud of our students!

On November 17, staff from Game On! will be here once again to help

us with Family Game Night. Families are encouraged to come to the elementary gym 6:00-8:00 p.m. to play board games and have a snack. Our elementary staff will also be helping to teach and play the games. Board games are a great way to learn patience, sportsmanship, problem-solving, and so many other life skills. And they're FUN!

## Southwest School Board Meeting

Board of Education Meeting

Southwest Public Schools

District 179

October 12, 2015

President Duane Teter called the regular meeting of the Southwest Public Schools Board of Education to order at 7:34 p.m. on October 12, 2015 at the Southwest Elementary School in Indianola.

Present: Ondrea McConville, Jenni McConville, Lynda Baumbach, Steve Daffer, Duane Teter, Principals Kathy Latta and Matt Springer, Superintendent Todd Porter, and Patricia Smith.

Absent: John O'Dea.

Visitors: Mary Marsh, Jolene Miller, Don and Donna Behnke, Sarah Krause, and Jason Kloepping.

President Teter observed Open Meeting Law requirements.

Moved by Baumbach, seconded by J. McConville, to excuse absent Board Member John O'Dea. Ayes: Baumbach, Daffer, J. McConville, O. McConville, and Teter. Nays: None. Absent: O'Dea. Motion carried.

Moved by Daffer, seconded by O. McConville, to approve the board meeting agenda as presented. Ayes: O. McConville, Baumbach, J. McConville, Teter, and Daffer. Nays: None. Absent: O'Dea. 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.

Superintendent Porter announced that Ryan Van Pelt placed fourth overall in the Land Judging Contest hosted by the Middle Republican NRD on the NCTA Campus in Curtis on October 7. Kailee Miller, Alexis Schmitz, and Suzanne Roggenkamp were selected to receive FFA jackets from the Nebraska FFA Foundation's Blue Jacket Bright Futures Program.

Moved by O. McConville, seconded by J. McConville, to approve the minutes of the September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015 board meetings. Ayes: Teter, Daffer, Baumbach, O. McConville, and J. McConville. Nays: None. Absent: O'Dea. Motion carried.

John O'Dea arrived at the meeting at 7:39 p.m.

Moved by Baumbach, seconded by Daffer, to approve the claims as presented. Ayes: J. McConville, Daffer, Baumbach, O'Dea, Teter, and O. McConville. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The treasurer's report was presented to the Board.

Moved by Baumbach, seconded by O'Dea, to accept the sealed bid by Jack Ryan for \$1,100.00 for the elementary storage building advertised in the Indianola News and the McCook Gazette. Ayes: J. McConville, O. McConville, Daffer, Teter, O'Dea, and Baumbach. Nays: None. Motion carried.

President Teter reviewed New Business Action Item 2, the Superintendent's Evaluation and Contract. Board members were instructed to complete the evaluation and return to President Teter as soon as possible.

A date and time to begin the negotiations process between the Southwest Teachers Association and the School Board Negotiations Committee was discussed. The SWTA negotiation team will contact President Teter with possible dates and times for meetings.

Moved by O'Dea, seconded by Baumbach, to approve the elementary electrical work proposal by Holdrege Electric in the amount of \$19,479.00. Ayes: O'Dea, Teter, J. McConville, O. McConville, Daffer, and Baumbach. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Moved by O. McConville, seconded by O'Dea, to approve the bid from Karr Tuckpointing in the amount of \$23,325.00 for maintaining the exterior of the elementary building. Ayes: Daffer, Baumbach, O. McConville, Teter, O'Dea, and J. McConville. Nays: None. Motion carried.

A quote from Esslinger's Construction for possible addition of building awnings at the junior-senior high building was tabled until details on the construction process can be finalized.

Building Committee members Baumbach and J. McConville and high school coaches will review possible designs and line coloring for approval by the Board.

Superintendent Porter discussed the donation of a greenhouse and hydroponic system by Schaffert Manufacturing. The project will be used by the Ag and Science departments at the junior-senior high building, and a website will be linked to the Schaffert Manufacturing website. Mr. Porter attended the School Law Update and will attend the Senators Round Table. The district is reviewing options to increase investment interest, and the dates of callable bonds with the possibility of pre-paying principal was reviewed. A caterer for the Staff-Board Christmas party has been secured.

Principal Latta reported that Sarah Krause is currently working on the internship component for her administrative degree in K-8 education, and the elementary completion of evacuation and lock-down drills. Fire Prevention Week was celebrated with a visit by the Bartley Fire Department, and Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled for October 15 from 2:00-7:00 p.m.

Principal Springer discussed finalization of the MAPS testing with 100% participation, sponsorship of a student participating in the National FFA Choir, and the October 21 Junior-Senior High Open House from 5:30-8:00 p.m. with a fund-raising meal by the FFA and entertainment in the auditorium.

Moved by Daffer, seconded by J. McConville, to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. Ayes: J. McConville, Baumbach, Daffer, Teter, O'Dea, 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, November 9, 2015, at 7:30 p.m. at the Southwest Junior-Senior High School in Bartley.

## Special Education - Ms Shirkey

As many of you already know, I was promoted to be the Special Education (SPED) Director for Southwest Public Schools this year. You may be asking yourself, "what does a SPED Director do and why do we have one?" In the past, SWPS had contracted with ESU 15 in Trenton for SPED Director services. After I completed my Masters of Education in Administration, it was determined that I would assume the duties of SPED Director. Some of my duties include:

- \*attend MDT and IEP meetings
- \*complete finance reports for special education
- \*complete discipline reports for special education
- \*input student data for special education
- \*attend trainings with NDE personnel
- \*attend special education trainings
- \*keep up to date with special education law
- \*participate in monthly SPED Directors' conference call
- \*oversee special education teachers
- \*oversee special education paras

I'm sure there are other duties that will come along with this position as time goes on. I am really enjoying my new position within the school district, and look forward to continuing to grow professionally. If you have any questions or concerns about special education, please feel free to contact me through email

([mary.shirkey@swpschools.org](mailto:mary.shirkey@swpschools.org)) or at either of the school buildings (Elementary 308-364-2613 or Jr/Sr High 308-692-3223).

### New Books and Computers -Just Some of the Changes in the Library

What's new in the library? We have 150 new high school books and 150 new elementary. Last year students at the JR/SR High as well as staff were given a form asking what books they would like to see added to the library and many of those books were purchased and have already been checked out.

Computers are an integral part of our school and we have added around 40 new computers to the school. With the addition of the new laptops we no longer need a computer lab and that has been converted into a regular classroom. Our wifi antennas were replaced and our wireless speed has improved.

The new Electronic Announcement Boards that the library monitors for the high school and elementary buildings have been full of photos of students and staff and information on current school events. It's fun to see all the faces and keep up to date on the school events before and after school and as we eat.

In September we challenged the students and staff to guess the number of books in the library for gift basket prizes. The closest guess was by Corine Baker (5,147), 2<sup>nd</sup> closest guess was by Mackayla Wright (5,000) and 3<sup>rd</sup> closest guess was Mr. Bish (4,950 books). The actual number of books we counted was 5,125.

If it's a book you want to read on your lap or a laptop you want to use to book through your assignments we have what you need at the library, so come see us soon. We look forward to your visit!



# **Meet Doug Cooper, ATC, MaED— HS Athletic Trainer**

## **College Education and Training:**

- Bachelor of Science in Athletic Training, University of Kansas, 2009.
- Masters of Arts in Exercise Science, University of Nebraska-Kearney, 2011.

I am employed by New West Orthopaedic and Sports Rehabilitation/InSPIRe Rehabilitation (Integrated Strategic Partners in Rehabilitation). InSPIRe provides the rehabilitation and athletic training services for Tri Valley Health System.

Through my athletic training, I am able to improve the availability of medical coverage to area high school athletes. I have developed numerous trusting relationships with the medical providers in the surrounding communities, which helps ensure that everyone involved in the care of the athlete is on the same page. My primary responsibility is to enhance the quality of health care for the athletes through prevention, evaluation, management, and rehabilitation of injuries.

Currently, I visit Southwest Schools on Tuesdays and Thursday around 11:30 (sometimes later depending on how many athletes I see at my previous school), to evaluate any JH/HS student where an injury may have arisen. The student/coach/parent can contact the office secretary to get them on my schedule for that day if they want me to see them when I arrive at the school. After I complete my evaluation of the student, I will give them 3 forms stating my recommendations, which they will give one to their parents, one to the coach, and one to their medical provider if necessary. If an injury is severe enough, I will contact the parents personally and seek out a referral to their local provider, to get further assessment of the injury. Along with my weekly visits to the school, I also provide athletic training coverage for football games, wrestling tournaments, and any other sporting events that are requested.

There is no charge for services I provide to students or schools. Parents will never receive a bill for any of my services.

If parents would like for me to see their son/daughter, they can notify the school office or myself directly at 785-543-7751. I am happy to serve Southwest Public Schools and have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know the staff and

Sincerely,

Doug Cooper

## **Southwest Public Schools**

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**Veteran's Day Program**

**Wednesday**

**November 11, 2011**

**9:30 AM**

**Southwest High School Gym**

**Bartley, NE**

**Everyone Welcome!**