

Holdrege Middle School

March 2008

Children – Our Community's Investment

www.thedusters.org Russ Baker, Principal P.O. Box 2002 • Holdrege • Nebraska • 68949-2002

From the Principal's Desk:

Parent Teacher Conferences

We were very excited about the number of parents that turned out for parent teacher conferences. From the numbers turned into me by the teachers, we had a large majority of our parents show up for conferences. At the middle school we like to have parents very involved in the education of their child. If you were not able to come to the student-led conferences, please call Mrs. Berreckman at the Middle School to set up a time to discuss your child's work and progress.

End of Year Testing

From now until school ends, there are several tests that will be given to the middle school students. Standardized tests for sixth and eighth grades are given the week of March 17th. Math tests given in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade are used to determine placement for advanced math classes for the next year.

These tests are all part of our district's testing program. The testing is a part of our process in determining how we are doing as a school. Some of this testing is mandated by the state, while other tests are developed by the school district to determine the progress of our students. In all of these cases, our goal is to continually evaluate and modify to meet the needs of our students. Many teachers and district personnel invest time and expertise in the school improvement process, and we take our task very seriously. I appreciate what they do in the name of quality education.

Specifically in regard to the tests we administer, the achievement tests and STARS tests are often misunderstood. The achievement tests are designed to test a student's knowledge of specific material in specific subject areas. The scores are determined by comparing their results to a norm group. The results are reported in terms of national percentiles. In this way, we can get a snapshot of how a student is doing in comparison to other students of the same age around the country. If a student scores at the 60th percentile, for example, it means that the student has scored better than 60 out of 100 students in that particular area nationally. The

STARS tests were developed by Holdrege teachers along with teachers from other local schools that belong to a consortium. These tests will evaluate how well the students are learning the material that has been presented in class. The reading and math scores are then reported to the State of Nebraska.

Retention or Summer School?

As a middle school, we continue to battle with the benefits and problems associated with retention of students. Each team has identified students that may be in line for possible summer school or retention unless things change in the fourth quarter. Mrs. Berreckman and I will meet with the teams to discuss the possibilities of summer school or retention of identified students. We will also be in touch with parents to make a decision together, because this is a partnership. Each situation will be looked at individually and evaluated on the basis of what we believe will be best for each student. There are no hard and fast rules here. If you have concerns about your student and possible summer school, please contact his/her teachers. We would be happy to discuss the situation with you. Summer school will run from May 27th to June 13th and will cost \$75.

Keeping It Safe

Holdrege Middle School is considered by the majority of our students as a safe place. This is one of the most important statements that students, parents, and faculty can make about a school. If a student does not see the school as a safe and caring place, learning cannot take place at the optimum level. It is my goal that each student be safe and free from harassment and intimidation. When it occurs, we address it aggressively.

We have tried to teach and learn from each other the ills of this kind of treatment and things students can do to be safe from this. It is necessary for students to tell someone if they are being bullied or harassed. If you or your student ever feels that some form of harassment or bullying is taking place, please let a teacher, the counselor, or myself know so that we can address it promptly and fully.

Hoops for Heart

Thanks to all the students that got involved with the Hoops for Heart program to help out the American Heart Association. Also thanks to all of you who were willing to support them. The Middle School collected \$2400 for the American Heart Association. Our winning 6th grade class was Mr. Hudson's with \$565. The winning 5th grade class was Ms. Wagoner's with \$285. Congratulations to them. Our top money collectors were Chase Hasty with \$257, Gabby Gracia with \$164, and Nathaniel Hargett with \$125. All the donations stay in Nebraska and help with research. Thank you for supporting the American Heart Association.

Make a Difference!

The bad news is that our children are not as healthy as they should be. More than 9.2 million children and adolescents ages 6 - 19 are considered overweight or obese.

The good news is that healthier students may lead to better grades, improved behavior, and better attendance. The American Heart Association recommends that children and adolescents participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day. Regular physical activity enhances the health, academic performance, attitudes, and classroom behavior of children at school.

Holdrege Middle School 7th and 8th Grade Academic Quiz Bowl finished second in Educational Service Unit 11 Quiz Bowl Competition!!



The Holdrege Middle School 7th and 8th grade team members are: Front Row: Coach Ron Evans, Austin Envick, Hunter Ellis, Andrew Daily, Seth Hald - Captain, Zachary Gray, Nicholas Anderson, Daniel Olson, Joseph Burr. Second Row: Bailey Williams, Jordan Hoeft, Matthew Jensen, Alasyn Barwick, Courtney Milius, Dillon Clayton, Austin Pistulka, Austin Swanson. Quinton Stump was not present.

The Holdrege Middle School 7th and 8th grade Academic Quiz Bowl Team finished second out of 15. Minden won on the last question in a tight competition with Holdrege. The ESU 11 Quiz Bowl Tournament was held at the Holdrege Area Ag Center.

The Holdrege Middle School 7th and 8th grade team will compete nationally in April in the Thinking Cap Quiz Bowl Contest. The Dusters finished second in the Thinking Cap Quiz Bowl Competition this year in the state.

The Holdrege Middle School Quiz Bowl Teams are coached by Ron Evans, Sixth Grade Science Teacher.



Sixth Grade Science and Social Studies Report, along with Reading, English, and Math

Sixth grade students have recently completed their three dimensional projects on the Mayan Civilization for Mrs. Wells' social studies class. The projects had great variety, and were very diverse in presenting the Mayan way of life. Students created temples, bridges, weapons, and many artifacts of the Mayan Civilization.

The sixth grade students are studying Earth movements of the crust in sixth grade science class. Students are creating plate boundary maps using longitude and latitude to determine the locations of many volcanoes, and the location of earthquake zones. Students construct the location points and determine the areas of the Earth's plate tectonic boundaries where volcanoes occur and earthquakes happen. The sixth grade students are also completing their science standards testing. The sixth grade students have done well and have been very successful overall in the science standards testing.

The sixth grade teachers: Mary Schneider, Heidi Wells, Mike Hudson, Ron Evans, are preparing and reviewing concepts in reading skills for the students to complete the NCLB test for reading. The students are reviewing and studying the components of reading: decoding, comprehension, main topic, purpose, theme, genre, details, and other components in reading narratives.

The sixth graders in English and Math are continuing to develop their skills in proficiency of the English language and to develop their mathematical skills.

8th Basketball News

Nearly 30 guys finished the 8th grade boys' basketball season, as the A team win/loss was 4-3, B team 2-3-2, and C team was 2-4. We played some stiff competition and improved throughout the season. Many have a good future ahead of them if they put in some off-season work, and continue to build skills and quickness. Thanks to our 'parent fans' who followed us to the games and for support during the year! - Coaches Ott and Borden

7th Basketball News

We had 23 students start the season and 22 finished the season with us. It was a very successful year, as I saw a lot of improvement in the boys. If they continue to work hard in the off-season, they will have a bright future. I would like to thank Mr. Evans for helping me, and the boys for coming to practice with good attitudes. Hopefully they had a fun experience. Also, I would like to thank the parents and other fans for attending our games. – Mr. Veal

BOGO

**THE BUY ONE GET ONE FREE SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR
WILL BE COMING TO HOLDREGE MIDDLE SCHOOL
MARCH 31 - APRIL 4, 2008.**



Hours for viewing the book fair:
Monday, March 31: 7:30 am – 4:00 pm
Tuesday, April 1: 7:30 am - 4:00 pm
Wednesday, April 2: 7:30 am – 4:00 pm
Thursday, April 3: 7:30 am - 7:00 pm*
Friday, April 4: 7:30 am – 2:30 pm

Remember.....encouraging your child to read helps to ensure his or her success!

Also, please remember that money made from the book fair will be used to purchase new books for our library. Bring friends and family to stock up on summer reading. The book fair will include the newest titles as well as books that are fun, interesting and inspirational. Adult titles are also available. Help support our school while encouraging your entire family to read!

*Please note that the book fair will be open Thursday evening until 7:00 pm.