

The

Good

News

Bulletin

Sharing the good news of South Dakota's schools

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|-----------|
| WADE'S WELCOME..... | 2 | MADISON CENTRAL..... | 34 |
| ALCESTER-HUDSON..... | 3 | MCINTOSH..... | 35 |
| ANDES CENTRAL..... | 4 | MILBANK..... | 36 |
| ARMOUR..... | 5 | MITCHELL..... | 37 |
| BALTIC..... | 6 | MOBRIDGE-POLLOCK..... | 39 |
| BON HOMME..... | 7 | NEWELL..... | 41 |
| BRIDGEWATER-EMERY..... | 8 | PARKER..... | 42 |
| BRITTON-HECLA..... | 9 | PARKSTON..... | 43 |
| CANISTOTA..... | 10 | PLATTE-GEDDES..... | 44 |
| CENTERVILLE..... | 11 | RAPID CITY..... | 47 |
| CHAMBERLAIN..... | 12 | RUTLAND..... | 49 |
| CHESTER AREA..... | 13 | SANBORN CENTRAL..... | 50 |
| CHEYENNE-EAGLE BUTTE..... | 14 | SCOTLAND..... | 51 |
| CLARK..... | 15 | S.D. INNOVATION LAB..... | 52 |
| COLMAN-EGAN..... | 16 | SIOUX FALLS..... | 54 |
| COLOME CONSOLIDATED..... | 17 | STANLEY COUNTY..... | 55 |
| CUSTER..... | 18 | TODD COUNTY..... | 56 |
| DE SMET..... | 19 | VERMILLION..... | 57 |
| DEUBROOK..... | 20 | VIBORG-HURLEY..... | 58 |
| DEUEL..... | 23 | WAGNER..... | 59 |
| DOUGLAS..... | 24 | WESSINGTON SPRINGS..... | 61 |
| ESTELLINE..... | 25 | WILLOW LAKE..... | 62 |
| GROTON AREA..... | 26 | WILMOT..... | 63 |
| HAAKON..... | 28 | WINNER..... | 64 |
| HARRISBURG..... | 29 | WOLSEY-WESSINGTON..... | 65 |
| HOT SPRINGS..... | 31 | WOONSOCKET..... | 66 |
| HURON..... | 32 | YANKTON..... | 69 |
| LEAD-DEADWOOD..... | 33 | | |

WADE'S WELCOME



DR. WADE POGANY
ASBSD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

One of South Dakota's best assets is our great education system. From Kindergarten through 12th grade our kids demonstrate success in many different ways. Some are honored for their academic achievement, some for athletic or fine arts talents, while others for their involvement in clubs and organizations in their schools.

Our teachers, administrators and school support staff play a huge role in the success of our students, as do many community members in each school district.

It's important that we tell the stories of everyone who contributes to the education of our children, the future leaders of this great state.

The Good News Bulletin is our way of highlighting some of the stories that illustrate the achievement of our schools and a way of life in South Dakota.

The Good News Bulletin gives you a look at the many successes our schools produce. We received stories from schools across South Dakota, highlighting student achievement, community involvement and significant accomplishments.

It shines a spotlight on innovation, hardworking teachers and students who will someday continue their excellent work by leading our state.

We want to thank the board members, administrators and teachers from our school districts who submitted stories, as well as Mari Biehl and staff from the South Dakota Innovation Lab.

ASBSD is proud of our state and our schools. After reading the Good News Bulletin, we hope you will agree, South Dakota's education system is truly one of our greatest assets.

These are stories about our great South Dakota schools.



A-H FFA FIGHTS HUNGER

The Alcester-Hudson FFA Chapter and National Honor Society hosted an event in partnership with Yankton Kids against Hunger Program and Orphan Grain Train out of Norfolk NE. Kids against Hunger is a national organization with a mission to help end hunger.

To celebrate National Ag Day/Week, on March 24 the Alcester-Hudson FFA Chapter helped conduct a meal making activity for the Kids against Hunger program.

Throughout the day the entire student body had the opportunity to help pack meals with the Yankton Kids against Hunger and Orphan Grain Train organizations. The students were then joined by over 25 community members and business organizations to finish the last shift of packing.



Former Alcester-Hudson FFA Advisor Kelly Dunkelberger said each meal costs about 20 cents to make and a packing shift

lasts about 90 minutes and on average each person helped pack around 200 meals in their shifts.

Dunkelberger said community members donated items enough funds to host four shifts on that day, which helped defray the cost of the activity for the Kids against Hunger Program and the AH FFA/NHS program.

“There were over 150 people who helped pack over 41,000 meals in all,” Dunkelberger said.

ACADEMIC RIGORS AND SUCCESS

The students of Alcester-Hudson have embraced the opportunity afforded them through the dual credit courses being offered through the state universities and technical institutes.

Eighteen of the 43 eligible juniors and seniors in the district are currently enrolled in 11 different courses from 5 different universities and technical institutes. In addition, Alcester-Hudson has three seniors taking AP English in the district.

Students are learning how to prioritize time and navigate the various on-line components in order to be successful in the classes.

“It is our goal to have the majority of our juniors and seniors take at least one dual credit class in high school,” Junior High and High School President LeeAnn Haisch said.

Along with the dual credit opportunities, Alcester-Hudson School District has also expanded rigorous coursework by adding Project Lead the Way – Biomedical classes.

“The number of our students who enter medical-related post-secondary programs has been steadily increasing over the past decade, so the addition of PLTW seemed a logical decision,” Haisch said.

Jeff Sebern, the PLTW Biomedical class instructor, said he likes the meticulous problem solving required of students enrolled in the course.



“It requires students to read and carefully follow each step or procedure of the lab,” Sebern said.

Students enjoy the hands-on aspect of the class.

“I like it because we are always doing something,” Alcester-Hudson Senior Colin Walth said. “We see it happen rather than just reading about it and imagining how it is supposed to work.”

The district is celebrating many other good things this year, but two noteworthy accomplishments are the fifth consecutive year of increasing composite ACT scores – now at 23.6 – and the Board of Regents transition report for the district, which indicated former students enrolled in BOR colleges and technical schools earned an average GPA of 3.01 last year.

STUDENTS SOAK UP SUBJECTS IN SUMMER

Summer for the last three years has been filled with fun and meaningful experiences for the Andes Central School District students!

The 2014 Andes Central Summer Program had approximately 60 students enrolled. The students have the choice of the weeks they want to participate in, although most students attended all weeks.

The program is available free of charge to all kindergarten through twelfth grade students, with breakfast and lunch served daily to the program participants, enrolled in Andes Central Schools. The program is funded the 21st Century Grant.

Each week of the program carries a different theme with various hands on activities and outings Monday through Wednesday.



Some of the activities that took place in the summer of 2014 were:

- **Animals and Ecosystems:** students studied animal habitats and ecosystems around the world. They created their own habitats with various art materials and spent a day in Pickstown at the city's Museum and Fort Randall Dam Visitors Center where they took a nature walk, played outdoor games, and created nature art.
- **Celebrating Our Town:** students learned about various careers, community helpers, what the Andes Central community has to offer and why it's important to support local businesses. They also learned about Native American traditions and created dioramas of communities. The week concluded with a trip to Wagner to local movie theater for an afternoon of a movie.
- **Leadership:** students learned what it takes to be great leader and how to help others through exploring their own feelings and how to express them in polite and meaningful ways, what it means to respect themselves and others, and how to build character and social skills. They were

delighted to see all the animals at the Great Plains Zoo in Sioux Falls at the end of the week.

- **Read about Math:** students polished their math skills by learning strategies for solving real world math problems and effect on everyday activities. They played math games and created their own math books and number snakes. A trip to the Kirby Science Center at the Washington Pavilion in Sioux Falls capped the week.
- **Stars and Stripes:** students researched Independence Day and government and were intrigued with the history of our country. They learned about maps, crafted numerous patriotic items and visited the Akta Lakota Museum at St.



Joseph's Indian School and the South Dakota Hall of Fame in Chamberlain.

- **Storytelling:** students read stories that have been passed down for many generations, including fables, folk and fairy tales, nursery rhymes, and tall tales. They produced a show and crafted story magnets and sticker scenes. Students visited the Prehistoric Indian Village, Dakota Discovery Museum, and the Mitchell Aquatic Park in Mitchell at the end of the week.
- **Under the Big Top:** students were entertained with circus and popcorn themed reading and math games and designed their own hats and painted sun catchers. Their week ended with a trip to Yankton where they went bowling and visited the Dakota Territorial Museum.

The summer program ended with an exciting trip for some of the students to Omaha, NE. While there, students took part in many wonderful learning experiences; visiting the Strategic Air and Space Museum, Kenefic Park: Union Pacific Railroad Locomotives exhibit, Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium, and the Omaha Children's Museum.

STUDENTS SOAR TO NEW HEIGHTS

Armour Kindergarten students are an amazing group of kids who just happen to love birds.

This love of their feathered friends is fostered in the trans-disciplinary problem based learning classroom of Kelly Preheim. She has taken her passion for birding into the classroom and starts the youngest students in the Armour School District with a strong foundation in reading, math and the sciences using birds as the catalyst.

Preheim first started the design of her kindergarten classroom four years ago in a South Dakota Innovation Lab professional development program. She took knowledge from the program and continued to collaborate with other SDIL teachers to provide a rich learning environment centered on birds.

Preheim gets the students interested in birds and the many ways in which she incorporates birds into the curriculum helps learning become more enjoyable for the students.

This type of learning creates experiences that are long lasting and builds an immense applied knowledge base. The foundation built in a problem based classroom gives students the strong understanding that what they are learning is real and it has meaning beyond their classroom and even their school.

One day during a reading lesson, Preheim asked the students who could name the five vowels. One boy excitedly said, "Great Gray Owl, Snowy Owl, Great Horned Owl, Eastern Screech-Owl, and Northern Saw-whet Owl!"

Preheim's kindergarten students write about birds and their natural world in a class nature journal and monthly personal journals. The class reviews letter sounds and practices phonics standards using bird flashcards. Students research, illustrate and write about birds to create a class book about backyard birds that has been published each year.

The young students each have a Backyard Birds of South Dakota booklet from the SD Dept. of Game Fish and Parks Wildlife Division they use as their guide to identify different bird species and also to help them explain the features of the birds to the guests that come to their classroom. They also have a library full of books about birds.

Preheim marvels at how her students become more aware

and pay more attention to details through the lessons.

"The self-esteem of the children grows as they realize that they know something that many others are unaware of," Preheim said. "These 5-6 year olds are the experts and they like that feeling! Their parents are very impressed with their child's expertise."

As the young birders leave Preheim's room they teach others about birds.

When they are first graders, students continue to be mentors to the new birders that enter kindergarten. They collaborate and learn together in the "Chickadee Bird Club" where students come together for bird talks and new learning once a week.



Preheim has developed quite a team of experts to help facilitate the learning in her classroom, as well. The class works with the high school biology students to build nest boxes for an area at the local lake and collaborate with Dr. Dave Swanson, an ornithologist from USD, who bird bands with them. Local people like the folks from the seed store in their community and other bird enthusiasts have also played a role in helping the students succeed.

Timothy Barksdale, a nature filmmaker, is filming the class for an episode in the upcoming nature series

for PBS titled "Adventures with Birdman."

The class had the honor of attending the SD Birding Festival this spring, as distinguished guests and featured speakers.

The students and parents were able to attend birding field trips and bird banding during the day. At the evening banquet they stood before a crowd of nearly 100 birders from across the state where the kindergarten birders shared their knowledge of birds with the crowd.

The kids knocked their socks off when they started identifying birds by their song. One festival attendee said, "I am trying to guess the bird before them, but it isn't possible. They are amazing!"

By the time the students spend the year with Preheim, they have honed their visual and auditory discrimination skills to the point of being able to identify over 400 birds by sight and more than 100 birds by sound.

"It really isn't difficult to teach them something that they really love," Preheim said.

WATCHING THEIR GARDEN GROW



If you give a class of 2nd grade students some composting worms, they will make a garden to go with them. That is exactly what happened last fall in Danielle Eszlinger's 2nd grade classroom in the Baltic School District.

The class adopted some composting worms from another 2nd grade classroom and the ideas started flowing about how they could use the rich compost created by their castings.

The kids went to work creating a plan to build a school community garden.

They started by learning about different kinds of gardens and the different types of plants they could grow. The kids worked closely with Chris Zdorovtsov from the SDSU Extension Office to learn about the care and maintenance of a garden. They decided if their garden was going to be one that the entire community could enjoy, it needed to be a raised bed garden.

With the new information and preliminary garden plans, the class set off to learn more about the existing ground bed community garden.

The students enlisted the help of a local pastor, Ryan Franchuk and congregation member Laura Garness, of Christ Fellowship Church. This church started the original ground bed community garden. The congregation supported the idea of raised beds for the community garden and decided to join the class to make it happen.

Now that the 2nd grade students had a place to put the garden, they needed to let the school and city leaders know their plan.

Zdorovtsov worked closely with them to develop a blueprint for the garden layout. The students created a PowerPoint presentation full of meaningful information that would give the city council and school board insight into their goals for the garden and how it would benefit their learning and their community.

With all of the pieces in place, they went to a Baltic school board meeting to get their approval. Then, they moved on to the city council with their request. At each public meeting the kids were confident in their knowledge and had practiced their public speaking skills to effectively communicate their mission.

They received overwhelming support and approval from both the school board and city council.

After receiving approval, the work really began. The 2nd grade students needed to set up a growing system in their classroom to start the young plants during the winter months.

They also needed to find funding to support the construction of 31 raised garden beds of varied sizes. At the same time,

they needed to continue to learn more about their composting worms and other ways to support a healthy garden so their thumbs would be nice and green by the time they were ready to plant. They embarked on a robust fundraiser that included a story in the local newspaper, advertising flyers, and a number of personal presentations for local residents and businesses.

Along with the campaign, they found local master gardeners to partner with them in teaching them about garden plants, healthy soils, and bugs that can help or hurt your garden.

The kids went to work installing a greenhouse system in their classroom to start tomatoes, cucumbers and various other plants.

Steve Sikorski, a master gardener, came to their classroom to help them create one of the garden boxes using 2X12 lumber and power tools. In turn, the students put their new expertise to work over the next three weekends building the remaining boxes with their family, friends, classmates and community members.

Zdorovtsov and Sikorski continued to make their regular visits to their school to offer guidance and support in the process. Many parents and community members also offered their fields of expertise to assist in making this lofty goal become a reality.

When spring finally came it was time to put all of the pieces of this garden puzzle together.

What else could the kids do, but have a garden party?

They planned a celebration for the entire school and community to participate in. There were shovels handy so the guests could help with planting, there were rocks to paint, maps of the garden plan and of course, treats, but not your normal party treats.

The treats consisted of things that could be grown in a garden—carrot and celery sticks and dip, bruschetta made with different peppers and veggie kabobs.

The entire class came out on a beautiful spring evening to share their learning, their excitement about the garden and the importance of the garden that will be a long lasting part of their community.

As the summer months passed, the kids and community came together to water and weed the garden and enjoy its harvest.

In the fall, the founding group of 2nd grade students moved on for new experiences in 3rd grade, yet they always have a role in the care and maintenance of the Baltic School and Community Garden.

They leave a legacy of learning for the next group of students because as all gardeners know, there will always be plants to grow, weeds to pull, features to add, and of course, worms to care for.



LIVE FROM BON HOMME!

Every spring students in the Bon Homme School District audition for a Variety Show and in the fall students, faculty, parents and the community come together for two enjoyable performances.

Weeks of preparation go into planning this event. Students are involved in all aspects of the Variety Show, which is held in the gym of Springfield Elementary School, as they perform, organize, set up and tear down and advertise.

A special enhancement to the show this year was the addition of a new sound system, which the Bon Homme school board allocated \$24,000 to purchase and install. Billy Kaul, a local businessman, parent and musician, worked with purchasing and setting up this first-rate equipment.

The Bon Homme School Jazz Band opened this year's show followed by many other performances of vocal solos, including one student who composed her own music, two sisters who performed a gymnastics/dance routine and two brothers that performed a comedy/singing act with a little dancing thrown in.



A junior high boy presented a piano solo and a group of junior high girls sang together. The flute students from the high school band performed an ensemble and a rock band comprised of both students and teachers did some "wild" entertainment.

Bon Homme staff members got involved, as well. A local teacher served as the show's emcee and the football coach made an appearance as Byron the Magnificent.

The local teacher's organization sold pie to raise scholarship dollars and the music boosters organization sells pop and popcorn. Kaul also coordinated the event, assisted by faculty members Loretta Webber, Owen Hansen, and Mick Patzlaff.

"The Bon Homme School and community looks forward to many more years of Variety Show performances," Superintendent Bryce Knudson said.



B-E SUCCESSFUL

The Bridgewater-Emery School District produces many great accomplishments. Students and teachers believe in positive involvement, rigorous academics, peer/student support and community service.

Bridgewater-Emery has been named a Distinguished School District three consecutive years.

B-E High School received the US News and World Report American's Best High Schools Award. Sixty percent of 2015 seniors are enrolled in one or more dual enrollment courses, ACT score are

Honor's Choir.

The high school student council, FFA and FCCLA programs recently received nearly \$15,000 in grant funding from Cargill, Inc. to provide a health snack vending machine at each school site.

A book fair run by middle school students raised \$2,000 for new library books annually and the B-E Student Council sponsored blood drive recruited 38 donors.

The dedicated staff at Bridgewater-Emery believes in helping students beyond academics.



consistently above the state average, three seniors were selected to the first Pharmacy Technician Certification Program and one class of 2014 graduate was named a National Merit Scholarship finalist

The "Homework Room" concept, which requires high school students to remain after school for incomplete homework, was developed in the high school four years ago. The concept has helped communicate the importance of homework and resulted in fewer missing homework assignments.

Participation in activities by B-E students is very high as 76 percent of all high school students participate in 2 or more co-curricular activities.

Over 70 high school students participate in the FFA and FCCLA programs, 70 high school and 62 middle school students participate in band and 25 students in grades 4-6 participated in



Each year the staff hosts a spaghetti supper as a fundraiser to raise money for a student fund. All food for the supper is donated

by staff members. Over the past three years, the student fund has provided over \$2,000 in necessities to our students in need.

Students at Bridgewater-Emery go beyond the school walls to serve the community.

For the past 20 years, K-12 students have put on a Veteran's Day Program for both the Bridgewater and Emery communities. Students have also put on the program at the area community nursing home and assisted living and senior center. Students also make monthly visits to the centers where they read, play games and provide various activities for the residents.

B-E high school students sponsor a Senior Citizen Christmas Social, which they provide transportation to the school, entertainment and brunch to over 50 senior citizens from both communities.

A “FUN” DRAISING COMMUNITY

Zip lines, tire swings, a climbing wall and spinner seats have the students at Britton-Hecla anticipating recess each day.

A project that began merely as an idea, evolved into a plan and “we can do this!” was the resounding chorus heard in the hallways. After much investigation, a price tag of about \$200,000 was finalized and with the school board’s support, the B-H Elementary school began fundraising.

A kickoff fundraising event was held at the first football game



with elementary staff baking bars and flipping burgers. The fundraiser didn’t put a dent into the amount they had to raise, but it boosted confidence and more planning ensued.

B-H Elementary Principal Kyla Richter said the recurrent theme in the minds of school staff and community members was “Britton, and the surrounding area, are such generous, prideful communities; you will not have a problem raising these funds in a short amount of time.”

“This turned out to be the case, and after several large donations, our fundraising efforts that were expected to last five years, took two years to complete!” Richter said of the project. “One piece of lasting advice from a prominent member of the community was to ‘passionately believe in your project and the money will follow.’”

That truth was evident in the project, which replaced outdated playground equipment, and the passion of the district and community to make Britton-Hecla Elementary, not only exciting on the playground, but fun and challenging in the classroom, as well.

“The school staff and other volunteers worked very hard to make our playground a safe place for us to play and have adventures!” Britton-Hecla sixth grader Paige Assarsson said excitedly.

STUDENTS CONNECT WITH NEW TECH

Technology is an exciting tool that can enhance classrooms and learning experiences.

One piece of technology Britton-Hecla High School has been lucky to have this year is a 3D printer. Engineering and Design Instructor Jennifer Carlson and CAD Teacher Travis Santistevan were trained on the printer and teach classes that can use the printer.

As part of the learning process, the 3D printer has been used to make various small items, such as a small hammer, a comb and a sign for a door. In both classes students will have the opportunity to use the 3D printer in their second semester classwork.

“The 3D printer is an amazing piece of technology that has and will help enhance students understanding of 3D modeling and design,” Santistevan said.

Britton-Hecla High School has also utilized technology in the robotics class.

Students are working in teams of three to build robots, using their own plan, parts provided from a starter kit (they can order more and different parts as they build) and their own building skills to create their own effective design, which they feel will best meet the requirements.

They must connect, program and remotely operate the robot to perform tasks. Student designed robots must be able to pick up an 8 inch cube to a height of 48 inches and be able to stack cups to create a tower. They must also be able to run autonomously and stack cubes on poles of varying heights.

Students will take their completed robots to competition to see how their bots perform in comparison to other students from area



schools. The robots have to meet the size requirement of being able to fit in an 18x18x18 inch box before they are allowed into competition and must perform certain tasks, such as moving remotely, telescoping and being able to lift and carry an item.

Building the robots has provided students a new outlet to think creatively, using their own problem solving skills and using technology to be successful as a team.

“I like the hands-on experience I get building a robot with my team. We can build something one week and then decide there is a better way to build it for a specific function. Then we take the robot apart and improve it,” Senior Aimee Allcock said about her experience with the robots.

“By competition time our robots will look nothing like they did the first month of school.”

LIGHTS...CAMERA... CANISTOTA IN ACTION

• EVENTS STREAMED ON TV AND ONLINE WITH STUDENT HELP

The Canistota School District kicked off the new-year in high (tech) fashion, with the ability to stream live media to both its local cable channel, as well as the Internet.

Starting with the 2014 volleyball season, the first official live broadcast was streamed through Golden West Telecommunications cable system to the Canistota community, and to the rest of the world via the Internet and High School Cube, an online streaming platform for school activities.

The maiden broadcast brought in viewers from as far away as Texas and Washington, not to mention Minnesota, Kansas and Colorado. This new ability gives Canistota students the ability to operate cameras in a live setting, work in a control room and operate broadcasting equipment, such as a tricaster, video switching and live audio mixers.

Students can also create commercials promoting the school and businesses in the community, as well as pregame and post-game commentaries that highlight coaches and players.



“The students are genuinely excited to be learning skills that are valuable in a real world setting, as well as making the lives of many in the community just a little bit better,”

*Daron Ross
Canistota Technology Director*

“Having this opportunity not only allows the public to see sports in the school gym but other events such as plays and musical programs, from their own home,” Canistota Technology Director Daron Ross said.

“Many members in community do not have the ability to leave their homes during South Dakota’s rough winters and the new program gives many of the them opportunity to see their kids, and grandkids live on TV or PC.”

The program had been in the planning stages for a couple of years, but got kicked into high gear this year after an anonymous individual donated \$10,000 to the district to get it started.

With all the basics in place, Canistota’s School Board and AV Program, under the supervision and direction of Ross and Canistota Journalism Instructor John Delle, plan to grow the program to include live events from the football field.

“The students are genuinely excited to be learning skills that are valuable in a real world setting, as well as making the lives of many in the community just a little bit better,” Ross said.

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

• SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PARTICPATE IN CHALLENGE DAY

With each new year the challenge presents itself for the Centerville School District to do bigger and better things for their students and staff. With the 2014-15 school year approaching, there were many changes already underway at the school.

New students, new teachers, new protocols, new management, the list goes on and with any sort of change comes hesitation. Hesitation is what presented itself on October 6th, the day before

Centerville's first experience with a program called Challenge Day.

Students and staff voiced hesitation about participating in something so new and unknown. When Challenge Day was finished, however, there was zero hesitation and 100 percent understanding and acceptance.

The Challenge Day motto is 'Be the Change' which Centerville K-12 Counselor Kendra Hotchkiss saw take hold of the student body on the day of the event.

"I envision the goal is that students will look within themselves and change to show more acceptance and understanding towards others," Hotchkiss said. "This is exactly what happened on October 7th for the Centerville School."

On the day of the event excitement was in the air.

Staff, students, parents, community members and the Challenge Day advisors came together to provide an opportunity for the students to really talk with each other and understand each other without stereotypes and cliques that can form in the school environment.

"Acceptance and understanding was displayed to each other throughout the day," Hotchkiss said.

Challenge Day gave the students the chance to come together and truly accept one another. Students continually said the day was an amazing experience they would not forget.

"In working with kids for twenty-three years, this was one of the best activities that I've ever been involved in," Centerville School Board President Sylvia Kroger said of the event.

"It leveled the field for all of the students involved so that they could see each other just as people and not part of a label or a group."

Weeks after the program, several students at the school were seen displaying the love hand sign that was introduced during Challenge Day. Hotchkiss said more than a month after the program, students would rush to her with excitement when something happened that reminded them about the program.

"I could see the effects of the changes made that day, within the school," Hotchkiss said. "I can still see those changes. Though smaller, the steps towards a better atmosphere are still being made."

No one expected the program to change

the school environment overnight, however, the changes demonstrate the students are more aware of each other and the struggles each of them face every day.

"It's hard to teach a child humility, but I think this activity helped them understand better some of the obstacles that some of the kids, that they see every day, face," Kroger said. "It was so very meaningful for me to be part of this activity!"



TWO FAVORITE PLACES

• LIBRARIES PROVIDE STUDENTS PLACE TO EXPLORE, LEARN AND DISCOVER

Everyone has a favorite place.

Those in schools have an opportunity to go to any number of favorite places within each building and one of them for many, including students, happens to be the library. Even though they have taken on new looks in the technology/electronic age, hard and soft cover books are still the mainstay of what we call the library.

A place where you are allowed to explore, learn, and discover because of books.

Peggy Hanzlik, Dori Krenke and Regina Dunn operate the two libraries in the Chamberlain School District. They are passionate about reading, helping students discover their interests and building a foundation for them to become lifelong readers.

Together, the two district libraries boast over 35,000 book titles. Library grants in previous years have helped the district purchase Nooks and Kindles and electronically catalog all materials in the libraries, including books, magazines, and other periodicals.

In the Chamberlain Elementary School Library, Hanzlik holds a Library Skills Class for kindergarten through fourth grade students.

Classes are 50 minutes in length and divided into thirds: 1/3-spent listening to a book read to them, 1/3-skills, and 1/3-checking out books. During the skills portion of the class students learn how to take care of a book, turn pages properly, find a book and use the on-line card catalog and data-base.

Students also learn the “elements of a story” such as character, setting, conflict, plot, and theme.

Book displays can be found in the library hallway showing off



award winning books from the Prairie Bud & Pasque Children’s Book Awards or are centered around a theme or holiday.

Thirty-five book fairs have been held since Hanzlik began working in the library.

“Parents and community members have been very supportive of this event and this year’s sales were some of the highest with over \$5,300 worth of books were sold,” Superintendent Deb Johnson said.

Each year, Dunn, the Middle and High School Librarian, attends the “What’s New in Young Adult Literature” conference. This conference helps her choose books that are of high interest for middle and high school students. Many of the books she purchases have received a National Book Award or are Pulitzer Prize winners.

“We have so many students who enjoy reading; they read for pleasure not just something for class,” Dunn said, adding she has noticed an increase in students reading realistic fiction and Classic American Literature.

Students also enjoy reading series books or reading all of the books written by a favorite author.

Overall, students read a wide variety of different types of literature and the selection of books for middle and high school students will continue to expand each year.

“With the continued focus on reading and what the CSD libraries have to offer, students will always have a chance to explore, learn and discover,” Johnson said.



CHESTER CELEBRATES A DECADE OF ONLINE ED.

• MORE THAN 200 STUDENTS LEARNING ONLINE AT CYBER SCHOOL

A decade ago, the concept of a “School Without Walls” became a reality in the Chester Area School District with the creation of the Chester Cyber School.

Chester Cyber School allowed students from Hutterite colonies, who previously ended formal education at the 8th grade, the opportunity to receive a high school education.

“Time and place take on new meaning when students have the flexibility to complete assignments at any time of the day and from any location,” Superintendent Heath Larson said. “While the delivery method may be flexible, our curriculum aligns with the rigorous standards and is facilitated by South Dakota certified instructors.”

The program evolved in 2009, as Chester united with High Plains Alternative School to offer on-site education to students who would

“The goal of the Chester Online Learning program is to provide students with a strong education through an alternative delivery method where every student has a front row seat.”

*Heath Larson
Chester Area School District Superintendent*



succeed in a more individualized setting. In 2010, the online offering expanded further, becoming a provider for South Dakota Virtual School and allowing students from any district in the state to take classes from the highly qualified Chester Online Learning teachers.

Currently, Chester’s online learning program has thirteen staff members for the Chester Cyber School, High Plains Alternative School, and the South Dakota Virtual School.

Eight colonies and 75 students enrolled during the first year of existence and has grown to 22 colonies with 208 students enrolled in 2014.

“The goal of the Chester Online Learning program is to provide students with a strong education through an alternative delivery method where every student has a front row seat,” Larson said.

EMPTY BOWLS FILLED WITH KINDNESS

Twelve years ago, Bev Rose, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte High School art teacher, presented an idea to her advanced Art Class. She had been reading about a project known as “Empty Bowls”, in which ceramic artists created bowls as a community service project.

Rose asked her class what they thought about doing this project for the Eagle Butte community. The students embraced the idea and the class worked hard to meet a goal of 100 bowls for the project. The class created wheel thrown bowls and taught 2nd graders how to make pinch bowls for the event.

The class wrote a short article for the paper, and made a soup supper where people could come pick out a bowl and have a meal for a donation of \$5.00. The community response was great.

Right at that time, a family in the community lost everything in a fire and the students asked Rose if they could donate the proceeds to the family to help them with food and clothing, which marked the beginning of the “Empty Bowls” project at Cheyenne-Eagle Butte High School.

Since then the project has grown into a celebrated community event. The soup supper quickly out grew the locker area in which it was previously held and was moved into the lobby of the gymnasium, which only lasted a few years before it was moved into the gym.

One year, so many people showed up that Rose and her students knew they would be quickly out of soup and food. Surprisingly, almost on cue, people started showing up with pots of soup and fry bread, resulting in plenty of food to go around.

The event gives art students a way to make a personal difference with their art.

“This was very heartwarming and encouraging for the students to feel so much support from the community,” Eagle Butte School Board Member Tina Neigel said.



In recent years, a silent art auction and art show has been added to the “Empty Bowls” soup supper event. Art created by high school students is on display in the gym. Community members bid on art created by students



and staff and this money is also donated to the cause.

Student organizations, such as Student Council and National Honor Society, also contribute to the community service project. Community members continue to donate soup and other food for the supper and the goal for this year’s Ceramics class is to create 350 bowls.

The benefits of the “Empty Bowls” project have been greater than ever expected by Rose. Students gain skills and confidence with each bowl they make. Their efforts bring the community together for an evening of fun and giving from the heart.

Throughout the years the students have been able to raise over \$20,000 to help out those in need in our community.

“My family and I will forever be grateful for (the school) and (the) students hosting Empty Bowls for my son,” Stancee Moran Cottier, who’s newborn son faced medical issues and the family the stress of paying the bills, said. “It lifted a huge financial burden from our shoulders and lightened a load we were already facing. The money raised from Empty Bowls helped us focus on our son.”

“It also showed us how great of a community Eagle Butte is and that we really weren’t in this alone. The art and pottery done by the students was amazing along with the food that was brought by numerous people from around town and surrounding areas. The support was amazing and continues to be!”

CTE COURSES REINFORCE SUCCESS OF STUDENTS



Clark School District's career and technical education courses are providing exciting educational opportunities for their students.

"We want all our learners to be successful and this is one way to keep some of our students motivated and excited about learning," Clark Superintendent Luanne Warren said.



Warren said the district offers five CTE related programs, including automotive, machine tool, computer aided drafting, agriculture and FCCLA.

Students in the automotive program work on vehicles in a variety of ways and can obtain a commercial driver's license (CDL), as well.

Machine Tool and computer aided drafting classes design projects using computer based programs and students learn how a project can go from conception to a mechanical drawing and a finished manufactured product.

Young men and women participating in FCCLA develop leadership and public speaking skills much success.

In the ag programs, students have built houses and a variety of other structures for community projects and individuals. They are also involved in horticulture and FFA projects and competitions.

"CTE courses benefit our district by making our students achieve success outside the regular classrooms," Warren said of the programs, which have 10-15 students enrolled each year.

"Students feel successful using hand on and project learning outside our school walls."

Warren said students have responded positively to the programs offered.

"This has been a very successful endeavor," Warren said. "It has been a real motivator for our students."

C-E HONORS VETS



The Colman-Egan School District held two events this fall to honor area military veterans for their sacrifice and service.

“The land of the free and home of the brave” echoed at the Colman-Egan’s Fritz Field on October 23 prior to a Hawk’s home football game.

First Premier Bank sponsored a pre-game flag presentation with players and coaches from Lake Preston and Colman-Egan, veterans from the communities of Lake Preston, Colman, and Egan, as well as soldiers from the 1742nd Transportation Unit. The game ball was presented to the game officials by members of the 1742nd Transportation Unit.

The district also hosted a Veterans Day Program on November 11. The school was decorated with red, white and blue patriotic art work made by Preschool through 6th grade students.

C-E kindergartners led the Pledge of Allegiance followed by the Colman-Egan band playing the Star Spangled Banner. Students performed and presented patriotic themed songs and displays

throughout the program.

The colors were presented by Retired Colonel Roger Fritz, Master Sergeant Kristy Hawkins, Sergeant Casey Shoenrock, and Specialist Troy McMenney. Pastor Alan Blankenfeld, interim pastor at Colman Lutheran Church and Midway Lutheran Church, gave the invocation. The Veterans Day Message was given by Heather Henderson, of the South Dakota Veterans Affairs Office.

Colman-Egan High School Science Teacher Troy McKenney, a member of the 1742nd Transportation Unit, was presented with a Quilt of Valor by Mary Ehrichs, a long-time quilter from Egan, with the assistance of Tori Nelsen.

The veterans and men and women serving our country today were presented with handmade flags while the band played “America.”

The program concluded with the K-6 students singing, “This Is America” and the retirement of colors.

Photo below courtesy of Moody County Enterprise.



CTE CONSORTIUM LEADS TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES

As part of the West River Career and Technical Education Consortium, the Colome Consolidated School District was able to offer an engineering class to high school students this year.

A grant of \$604,000 from the governor's office provided the funding for this unique project for Colome and three other school districts – Gregory, Burke, and South Central – as part of the West River CTE Consortium. A large portion of the grant was used to purchase trailers that house the classes and move from district to district each year.

Each school is able to offer a CTE class, which includes the Project Lead The Way engineering course in Colome.

Introduction to Engineering Design class offered in Colome and taught by Michael Murray, a physics, calculus, and Algebra II instructor in the Gregory School District.

Students are thoroughly enjoying the class in which they have measured toy car parts and have drawn basic sketches using a program called Auto Desk Inventor, which is a program used to build engines and houses, among other unique and challenging tasks.

Following this school year, the rotation of CTE classes continues in Colome. Next year the district will offer residential construction, where students learn to build a house, followed



Project Lead the Way (PLTW) is the nation's leading provider of STEM programs, which include science, technology, engineering, and math programs, and offers students a chance to apply what they know, to identify a problem, to find unique solutions and to lead their own learning.

Twenty-seven students enrolled in the three sections of the

by metal fabrication, which will teach students to weld among other skills, and a biomedical class, in which students learn the principles of engineering and design concepts in medicine and biology, in subsequent years.

The CTE program offers students a unique opportunity to discover careers that may interest them.

LEARNING INNOVATED WITH IPADS

In the spring of 2013, Custer School District 4th Grade Teacher Eve Trandem received a Classroom Innovation Grant from the South Dakota Department of Education, which she used to purchase 25 iPads and enhance her students' individual inquiry and learning needs, independent investigation and project creation and presentation.

With heavy focus on collaborative reading and writing and a flexible learning environment for students, Trandem had three major goals for the iPad use in her classroom:

1. To engage all students in a creative and collaborative environment by increasing technology use in reading and writing through differentiated instruction.
2. To develop a platform for students to share authentic learning.
3. To provide an opportunity for students to access authentic real-world information in support of the Common Core shifts in learning.

"Since the integration, the iPads have become an essential tool in our classroom routine and have opened the door to a world of unlimited learning opportunities," Trandem said.

Trandem said the iPads are used in many educational ways in the classroom, including vocabulary exercises, reading and math instruction, project creation and information gathering, as well as



geological exploration of the Earth through an app titled "Earth-Viewer", which she said was a class favorite. Students are also taught responsible ways to research a subject using the iPad, said Trandem.

A small group of students shared some of their favorite applications with the Custer School Board, explaining to the board members what an application did and why they found it educational.

Trandem said using the iPad has worked wonders in her classroom.

"The iPads have completely changed what our classroom looks like, sounds like and the level of active student engagement," Trandem said.



A SCHOOL FULL OF OPPORTUNITY

Students at De Smet's Laura Ingalls Wilder Elementary are benefitting from their district's commitment to providing enriched learning opportunities.

Elementary students have taken part in computer coding, fishing, a Young Reader's Festival and snowshoeing among other educationally enriched activities, as part of the school's inaugural adventure into its "Wild About Learning" theme.

"We wanted to really tap into the students' specific interests," Elementary Principal Abi Van Regenmorter said. "Each student was asked what they were most interested in learning about and then we used those ideas to organize the activities."

"By the end of the year, all students in grades K-5 will have to option to participate."

Van Regenmorter said teachers also organized independent activities for the classes, including the fourth grade class's reading of the book *Dolphin Tale 2*, which culminated in the students attending the movie *Dolphin Tale*.

A goal of the project was to introduce a skill that will be useful later in the students' education and life and a large number of students indicated they wanted to learn more about technology so, utilizing Code.org, the school had the students learn to solve mazes, design games and program a robot.

"We know that computer science jobs are growing rapidly and there are not enough graduates to fill those positions," Van Regenmorter said. "It was my goal to give students not only knowledge about coding, but also confidence to try new and different things."

Students learned perseverance throughout the coding lessons and during the sessions it became evident students were more comfortable taking risks and thinking critically instead of automatically asking an adult for help when they didn't know the answer, said Van Regenmorter.



Wilder students learned about science and the outdoors during the fishing trip to Lake Thompson. Students that attended the Young Reader's Festival were able to listen to author Kate DiCamillo speak about her experiences and inspirations for writing books and watched a performance by Native American hoop dancer, Kevin Locke, who also spoke about the Native American culture, played a flute and introduced children to the Lakota language.

Van Regenmorter said the enrichment activities brought a new level of energy and excitement to school and expanded the comfort zones of students are expanding.

"They are excited to try new activities," Van Regenmorter said, adding that parents have been very supportive of the activities, which the district will continue to pursue.

"We hope to expand these opportunities," Van Regenmorter said, "to give students exposure to different cultures, interests, and academic skills to prepare them to truly be life-long learners."



The learning didn't stop when the lesson ended.

"Several students have continued to work on the coding out of school time and at home," Van Regenmorter said. "The awesome thing about coding is that the students don't even realize how complex of a skill they are learning."

In cooperation with the Outdoor Campus, Laura Ingalls

STUDENTS PROMOTE RECYCLING PROGRAM

Last summer, when Dawn Leuning attended the four-day summer professional development with the South Dakota Innovation Lab, she designed a transdisciplinary learning experience for her fourth grade students around understanding the importance of reducing, reusing, and recycling.

Leuning created a plan with standards aligned with all disciplines, let her students take ownership of the project and molded the design to best engage their interests to help positively impact the amount of waste generated by the classroom, school and community.

The students started by learning the differences between reducing, reusing and recycling.

Soon, they were able to identify several areas where they needed to improve their habits to take care of the Earth. The fourth graders decided a good place to start was to collect recyclables from their school. They researched recycling programs in other schools, collaborated with the sanitation workers in their community and even partnered with their school janitor as an advisor to the program.

Recycling is a very important part of the green planet equation, but reducing and reusing are equally as important.

The fourth grade students made an effort to employ those strategies into their everyday living. As in most schools, paper is a widely used supply but the kids noticed very few pieces of paper were utilized on both sides. That needed to change.

The class started by saving paper on which only one side had been used by putting it in a tray in their classroom for reuse. Then, they started saving their spelling test sheets to use them over again the following week. They have spread the message of using both sides of paper through announcements and education talks to other classrooms.

Students took their learning outside the classroom with a field trip to Cook's Recycling and the Brookings Landfill.



The recycling experts at Cook's Recycling gave the kids a tour of the facility, helped them understand the guidelines of effective recycling collection and shared the rules for recycled materials to help define what truly can and cannot be recycled. The kids gathered these and more facts and ideas to take back to their school project.

"It was amazing how many things can actually be recycled," Fourth Grade Student Catherine Klein said.

Students also had the opportunity to see what happens to a landfill when it is no longer in use.

Dakota Nature Park in Brookings provides visitors with an opportunity to observe nature at the site that once served as the City of Brookings Landfill. The landfill has since been capped and has fulfilled the environmental monitoring requirements of the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

"I couldn't believe how beautiful Dakota Nature Park in Brookings was," Fourth Grade Student Ellie Koenig said.

The class's latest project was to develop and deliver a presentation to the school board to put recycling receptacles in the school. The class presented results of a survey of the students and teachers in the elementary school which showed there were 20 areas in the building that were in need of a recycling receptacle, including the lunch room where milk cartons can be saved from the garbage and added to recycling.

Deubrook School Board members approved the class's request and the receptacles will be placed in every classroom and other areas around the school.

The efforts of Deubrook's fourth grade class are making a difference in their school. Now the kids are working on expanding their plan to their community. They are brainstorming ways to share recycling information and develop a collection bin system for residents. This will require more research, more time spent consulting with their industry partners and more effort put into writing and preparing their plan for presentation.

Authentic learning with applied practice is the goal of problem based learning and the fourth grade students at Deubrook are realizing this all while doing good for the planet.



SCHOOL PROGRAM RIGHT “FIT” FOR COMMUNITY

The small communities that make up Deubrook Area Schools do not have easy access to fitness facilities.

Deubrook School District’s Strength and Conditioning class and Health and PE Instructor Tim Cariveau decided this presented an opportunity for them to make a difference in the health and wellbeing of their community.

Cariveau created the community fitness plan this summer during a four day, South Dakota Innovation Lab summer professional development. He developed the framework and let the kids take it from there.

The class set out to design a Tabata program that would meet the needs of all fitness levels. A Tabata workout lasts for only 4 minutes as participants go through four different exercise rotations pushing themselves as hard as they can for 20 seconds, resting for 10 seconds and repeating the process. The exercises focus on the upper body, lower body, core and then whole body. A workout can be completed in 4 minutes with very positive results.

This high intensity interval training was just what the class was looking for to create a low cost, time efficient way to encourage their community to get fit.

Students split up into six teams made up of four students each, devised a plan to make this an opportunity for all levels of fitness and also provided a plan the community members could use wherever they were.

Each team was responsible for developing a Tabata sequence. Their exercise sequence had to consist of the four different exercises, with each member of the team responsible for a different role in the rotation.

Team members were responsible to be one of the following in the videos they created: a leader, a person doing a modified version for lower intensity, a team member performing the regular exercises



and the fourth person performing the activities at a higher intensity level.

In this typical physical education class, students are meeting standards across a variety of disciplines by writing scripts for the exercise videos, working out a nutrition plan that fits well with the Tabata exercise regimen and partnering with the Multi Media Design class at their school to create quality videos that will be posted to the school website for participants to access.

“These TABATA videos have been a great project, with an even greater reward,” Deubrook High School Senior Jacob Johnson said. “These short work out videos will be great for the busy life of our community members. It’s been a fun experience to create these videos as a class. It’s something different, and will have really cool outcome at the end!”

The students have also learned the importance of preparing your body for intense physical activity and have prepared warm up and cool down exercises for each of their videos as well as step-by-step instructions for performing the exercise tasks. They are also gaining skills in public presentation and video design.

An added bonus to the plan is students will get to demonstrate their learning to an authentic audience.

The goal of providing exercise options and education to their community creates an audience outside the classroom walls, which heightens student engagement and responsibility to producing a quality product. Thinking through every step of the exercise plan and modifying after evaluation embeds the students in the design process that requires collaborative feedback, critical thinking and persistence in a task.

Members of the Strength and Conditioning class initially considered selling the exercise videos. They decided, however, their efforts were not to profit financially, but build equity in the community through encouraging healthier living.

“We are trying to help out anybody who wants to become more physically active,” DHS Senior Evan Sheffield said.



DEUBROOK'S DIGITAL BRIDGE TO COMMUNITY

• DEUBROOKLIVE BROADCASTS ACTIVITIES ONLINE

The Deubrook School District built a digital bridge to connect with their community.

Community members can watch a variety of district events through DeubrookLive, an online streaming service operated by students and staff and hosted by High School Cube.

The district began streaming events in 2011 as a way to reach people with ties to the district, but lived out of state and has continued to grow in popularity, said Deubrook Network Administrator, and program coordinator, James Niehus.

"As we have done this we continue to get more and more

an iPad Air and another operates the computer controlling the HighSchool Cube program.

Niehus monitors the students by watching the live stream and are graded on public feedback of the event they are operating the stream for. He said students do an excellent job operating the stream and enjoy watching the events when they're not running the stream

"Students think it's great because if they are not able to get to a game they can still catch it on the DeubrookLive stream," Niehus said.

Students are also encouraged to do play-by-play for an event, if



people being able to watch our Deubrook students," Niehus said.

"We first started with a few relatives in various states being able to watch their nieces and nephews. Now we have students that are foreign exchange students at our school and their parents our able to watch them in our various activities at DeubrookLive."

Niehus said in its first year, DeubrookLive streamed only home basketball games, but now shows all home athletics held in the gym, student music concerts and various school activities, such as prom, grand march, Veterans Day Program and graduation.

Students in Niehus's MultiMedia Design Class operate the DeubrookLive system and earn class credit by participating in at least one live event. Running the live stream requires student collaboration as one controls the camera used for the live stream with

they want to. Niehus said technology student aide Johnny Roelofsen, who has also been instrumental in getting students not even enrolled in the MultiMedia class to help with DeubrookLive, has gained notoriety for his work on the mic during athletic events.

"We have had very good feedback on the great job he does on it," Niehus said.

Feedback from people throughout the years has proven the district's digital connection with the community has been a hit.

"I have received several emails over the years on how much people enjoy it. Overall I think (DeubrookLive) has been a huge success," Niehus said.

"It is one of the ways that Deubrook students and myself give back to the Deubrook community."

STUDENTS EXPERIENCE REAL LIFE LEARNING

Mike Stephenson of Pheasants Forever presented Deuel Elementary School Principal Chad Schiernbeck with a project idea for an afternoon workshop to make elementary students aware of the importance of the pheasant habitat and the benefit the habitat has to other wildlife, pollinators, and the health of the environment.

Schiernbeck's reply: "I think we should make a bigger plan than that."

Deuel had been exploring the possibility of implementing problem based learning as an instructional strategy in their school. They had done the research and discovered this type of learning embeds kids in solving problems that are real and require extensive research, processes of design and collaboration. A project like the one proposed by Stephenson would be just what the school needed to move the plan forward with a common goal.

Deuel School District joined the South Dakota Innovation Lab (SDIL), which is a collaborative group of rural schools in the state all implementing problem based learning as their instructional strategy and using resources collectively to enhance education for all students. The Deuel staff came together at a summer professional development to work out a plan for the coming school year.

The elementary staff proceeded with making a plan around the Pheasants Forever idea.

The robust Pheasants Forever project involves studying the natural habitat of a local natural area, learning about insects, mammals, pheasants, habitat, grasslands, woodlands and wetlands.

A focus of this type of work included reaching out into the community and surrounding area to find industry experts that can assist in serving as consultants in the problem solving work that is happening in classrooms. Deuel Elementary students have become partners with the City of Clear Lake and the local Pheasants Forever group, working on a 14 acre tract of land in the northeast portion of Clear Lake.

On Sept. 5, 2014, a "Kick Off Event" to get students excited about the learning that would occur in this outdoor classroom was held on a beautiful fall afternoon just a mile from the school with learning centers, park walkabouts and stations, which included professional experts from Pheasants Forever, South Dakota Game Fish and Parks and The Nature Conservancy. There were also centers focused on bees and monarch butterflies.

At the end of the afternoon, kids went away excited and ready to learn more.

After the event, the work began.

Junior Kindergarten students learn about ladybugs and have become active in the Lost Ladybug Project. Kindergarten kids discover more about the wildlife at the park and what they need to survive. In their most recent project the students are creating "Squirrel Buffet's" to help these critters out for the winter.

First grade students have become monarch conservationists and are learning lots about the food monarchs eat and their migratory patterns. The second grade team decided to tackle the many issues affecting the bee population and how they can raise awareness about the most important pollinators. Third graders have embarked on learning all about our state bird, the pheasant, and how they can help increase the pheasant numbers in the Ulven Park area and beyond.

The fourth grade crew is led by two teachers, who have a passion for plants and healthy areas for growth. Students are learning about native grasses and plants that help with wildlife and pheasants. They are also focused on the pollinating and nectaring plants at the

park.

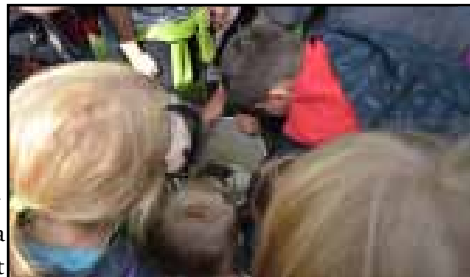
Fifth grade kids are wetlands experts using their skills to let others know the impact that wetlands have on creating a healthy habitat for waterfowl, and also the long range affects a wetland has on the water table and the climate.

All of this learning is happening with education in mind.

Standards have been aligned to the projects and teachers are assessing student growth to guide instruction. The students can see their learning has impact beyond the classroom as their partnership with the community is strengthening the relationship between school and community.

Those bonds lead to added interest in the school, which creates pathways for kids to gather a greater understanding of what learning and living is like in our rural communities and the opportunities that will be there for them in the future.

The Pheasants Forever project in Deuel is a culturally relevant project requiring kids to dig deeper and learn more while solving a real problem.



CREATIVE BOOM

• DOUGLAS D.I. PROGRAM QUINTUPLES IN SIZE SINCE START

Destination Imagination is beginning its 8th year at the Douglas School District. The program began with one team of five 3rd and 4th grade boys in 2007 and has grown to 5 teams and over 25 kids in in 2014.

Destination Imagination, or D.I., is a creative problem-solving program that is offered to kids as early as Kindergarten age all the way through high school.

The Destination Imagination program encourages teams of up to 7 learners to have fun, take risks, focus, and solve challenges while incorporating STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), the arts, and service learning. Team members learn patience, flexibility, persistence, ethics, respect for others and their ideas, and the collaborative problem solving process.

Teams are formed in late October or early November and begin working on Challenges. There are 2 types of challenges



that the kids work on. One is called the Central Challenge, or Team Challenge. The challenge areas of focus include: Technical, Scientific, Fine Arts, Improvisational, Structural and Service Learning.

The second type of challenge is called the Instant Challenge. Instant Challenges require teams to engage in quick, creative and critical thinking.

At a tournament, a team will receive an Instant Challenge and the materials with which to solve it. The team members must think on their feet by applying appropriate skills to produce a solution in a period of just five to eight minutes.

All of the Douglas D.I. Teams will be showcasing the solutions to their Team Challenges and participating in Instant Challenges at the West River D.I. Tournament on March 14 at Douglas. The South Dakota State D.I. Tournament will be in Huron on March 28.

Douglas D.I. teams have won state championships for the past 7 years, winning invitations to D.I. Global Finals in Knoxville, Tennessee. Globals will be held May 20- 23, 2015 with teams competing from 48 states and 30 countries around the world.



PLANNING SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR STUDENTS

• ESTELLINE UPDATES TECH FOR INTEGRATION IN ELEMENTARY

The Estelline School District recently rolled out a plan to emphasize technology at the elementary school level, which district leaders hope will position students for a successful future.

“We have been a 1:1 high school for several years and we felt that it was time to make technology more accessible to all of our students, not just 7-12 students and teachers,” Estelline

“As a district, we felt that use of technology would increase exponentially with availability and we knew that we were a little behind in that regard,” Estelline School Board President Tianna Beare said.

“We look at this as a long-term investment for our community.”

The district is currently partnering with the Estelline



Superintendent Patrick Kraning said.

District teachers have completed several years of training on a variety of topics, but often ended up sharing equipment or labs, so utilizing capital outlay funds and federal and state grant dollars, the district purchased 95 tablets, 2 ActivPanel Touch display boards and updated district infrastructure for the additional technology integration into classrooms and daily use by elementary students.

Currently, Estelline has 1:1 computer access in grades 3-12 and iPad labs in grades K-2.

Alumni Organization to have the group “adopt” a classroom and contribute to on-going technology growth in the elementary.

“We have a very active alumni organization that has members who have contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to scholarships and an athletic complex, so we are excited to see them get behind this type of project for future growth,” Beare said.

“We know that if we start with a solid base, it will grow into something special.”

NEW STUDENT GROUP IN GROTON

Groton Area High School students have a new club to join this year with the introduction of the Future Business Leaders of America.

Currently 20 South Dakota high schools, including Groton, are members of the FBLA, which is the largest business career student organization in the world with 215,000 high school members.

The purpose of the organization is primarily to prepare students for careers in business. Groton Area High School Business Educator Brooke Lingbeck is the FBLA advisor for the Groton club.

Officers for Groton's FBLA, include Gabe Dohman, president; Courtney Kurtz, vice president; Jasmine Schaller, secretary; Tori Bjerke, treasurer; Kaitlin O'Neill, reporter; Taylor Gustafson, historian; and Sheldon Herr, parliamentarian.

Groton FBLA members planned several events this year, including various fund raising activities. Their first event, held in September, was a bake sale at a GHS volleyball game.

One amusing fundraiser involved placing small pink flamingoes on the lawns of unsuspecting Groton homeowners. For a small fee the flamingoes will be moved to another lawn.



Superintendent Joe Schwan was the first "lucky" recipient of this small flock.

Groton FBLA members attended the FBLA Fall Leadership Conference in Sioux Falls and the Officer Leadership Institute in Redfield in November. They'll also be attending the Spring Leadership Conference in Rapid City in April.

GAHS NAMED ON NEWSWEEK LIST

Groton Area High School ranked 158th in Newsweek Magazine's top 500 highest performing schools in the nation in the magazine's report released this fall.

Newsweek's list of "America's Top High Schools" is a ranking of schools based solely on achievement. The schools are ranked based upon performance indicators (for example, proficiency rates on state standardized assessments).

This evaluation identified high schools that perform at or above the 80th percentile within each state. In order for Groton Area High School to receive such a high ranking, several factors must exist: top quality teachers, hard working students, strong parental sup-

port, and a wide variety of activities to challenge and motivate their participants.

Groton Area High School Principal Anna Schwan said there was an extensive list of questions that had to be answered for the report.

Nearly 89 percent of the Groton's graduates plan to attend college and almost that many (88.55%) graduated from high school this past spring. The poverty rate (12.89%) for the school district is part of the formula used by the national magazine. Statistics also revealed that Groton's score for college readiness was 89.67.

INTEREST IN ROBOTICS CLUB GROWING IN GROTON

Where can you find a STEM-based student activity with such enthusiasm that they ask the coach if they can have extra practice time and where participation has grown 500 percent in just three years?

Groton Area High School found it in VEX Robotics.

“Robotics offers students something to get excited about outside the typical sports, music and other traditional extracurricular activities,” GT Robotics Volunteer Coach Jim Lane said.

“Robotics provides hands-on career exploration in fields including engineering, computer programming, mechanics and technical writing.”

Groton Tiger (GT) Robotics began three years ago with four students when the Department of Education provided a robotics starter kit to the school’s Industrial Technology I class. The IT classroom activity hooked the students; they formed a team, calling themselves the Geek Squad and competed in the first state competition sponsored by VEX Robotics in the spring of 2013.

VEX Robotics is an international program in which the company sells participating teams parts to build a robot (metals, wires, motors and a micro-processor) and establishes an annual “game” for competition, which includes basic challenges where the robot must be pre-programmed to autonomously accomplish a task and a driver operates the robot with a radio-controlled joy-stick.

Groton’s Geek Squad placed third at the state competition, and because the first- and second-place teams were unable to attend, the Geek Squad had the amazing opportunity to attend the World VEX Robotics competition.

Although the team didn’t place in the world competition, they learned so much through the process of competing against and observing more than 600 teams from all over the world.

“Each robotics team involves a variety of roles students can explore and grab hold of, with self-confidence growing as each student finds his or her unique niche,” Lane said.



Last fall, the four “robotists” shared their excitement with classmates and younger students, making posters and using word of mouth to let others know about this new program available in their school.

GT Robotics added a second team — for a total of 10 robotists — and the two teams met at least once weekly throughout most of the school year and participated in four competitions, including the state competition in Sioux Falls.

For the 2014-15 school year, GT Robotics has grown to four teams and 21 students ranging in age from 6th grade through seniors. It remains an extracurricular activity still coordinated and led by parent volunteers, with the school now providing a designated former small classroom for work space and equipment storage.

GT Robotics has already hosted South Dakota’s first VEX robotics competition of the season, which was open to all 20+ VEX-registered teams in the state. Ten teams from four schools participated.

Plans are underway for GT Robotics to host another competition later this year and compete in at least five other competitions, including the state competition to be held in Mitchell this winter.

“This new activity also teaches teamwork; to be successful they must work together to design, build, document and operate a robot with an adult coach providing very minimal, general direction. It provides applied academics opportunities—with students putting into practice, in a very hands-on way, classroom learning and life experiences,” Lane said.

“Perhaps most importantly, the students have a lot of fun along the way!”

SERVICE PROJECT SHOWS SCOTTIE PRIDE

• STUDENTS STOCKPILE SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE WITH FOOD

The students of the Haakon County School District were challenged in November to collect enough food to fill the office of the superintendent.

The "Can the Superintendent Thanksgiving Food Drive" took place from November 3-17 and was the student council community service project of junior students Garrett Snook and Keegan Burnett.

"The whole staff and student (body), and especially the younger students, thought it was neat to try and fill my office up," Superintendent Keven Moreheart said.

Along with the fun of filling Moreheart's office so full of food that he could not use it, Snook and Burnett created a competition between the grades. The class who donated



the most food to the project received a pizza party.

The sixth grade class came out on top of the completion by bringing in 237 items.

The Thanksgiving food drive generated 950 pounds of food, which was donated to the Country Cupboard Food Pantry in Wall. Moreheart said the school brought in more food than could be used.

"This is proof of how not only our students in the district, but our community is dedicated to helping others when needed," Moreheart said.

"We have tremendous school organizations that are always willing to think of projects that will help others. This 'Scottie Pride' is something we are very proud of."

SITE SEEING STUDENTS

• MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS VISIT BOSTON AND NEW YORK

Harrisburg North and South Middle Schools students spent a week of their summer break in Boston and New York City visiting the historical sites they studied about in class.

The trips, offered every two years by Harrisburg North Middle School 8th grade teacher Tamra Huffman, align perfectly with the 8th grade American History curriculum.

For the first time ever, the group of students headed to Boston.

“We were very excited about taking the students to the locations that were studied about during the American Revolution,” Huffman said

Students stopped at the Revolutionary War battle sites of Lexington and Con-

cord, toured through Boston and visited Paul Revere’s house, the Boston Massacre site, and the Granary Burying Ground where Paul Revere, Samuel Adams, John Hancock, and other signers of the Declaration of Independence are buried.

The group even had the opportunity to step foot on and tour the U.S.S. Constitution – the oldest commissioned United States Navy vessel.

Students enjoyed memorable meals while in Boston, as well.

“When the students visited Plimoth Plantation, their afternoon meal consisted of ‘Eating like a Pilgrim,’” Huffman said. “Students had a meal like the settlers at Plimoth would have eaten which means – no forks allowed and napkins over our right shoulders!”

“Students said it was one of the best meals of the entire



trip!”

Huffman said the meal consisted of turkey, stewed pompion (squash), Indian pudding and ended with Boston Crème Pie and the students were amused by colonial entertainers who performed authentic colonial songs and told jokes.

“The highlight of the trip was New York City,” Huffman said.

One of the group’s first stops in New York City was going to the Lower East Side and seeing how our early immigrants lived in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

“Students explored the Tenement Museum and had an apartment tour,” Huffman said. “They saw first-hand how small an apartment was for a family of ten!”



Students thoroughly enjoyed going to a Broadway show, shopping in Chinatown and walking through Central Park, where they came upon a movie set for “Train Wreck.”

One of the most poignant moments from the entire trip was the 9/11 Memorial – museum with a collection of artifacts, stories, photos, and video. Students spent two hours at the new museum, which honors the victims of the tragedy.

“It was a very emotional experience for everyone,” Huffman said, adding that the students had a great time on the week-long trip and will have many memories for years to come.

Huffman is planning another trip for middle school students for the presidential inauguration in January, 2017, in Washington, D.C.

H.S. STUDENTS TREK NEW EDUCATION PATH

• MASS CUSTOMIZED LEARNING/MODULAR SCHEDULING IMPLEMENTED

The start of a school year means new beginnings for students, teachers and a school district.

That sentiment took on new meaning for Harrisburg High School at the start of the 2013-14 school year when the district implemented modular scheduling and mass customized learning (MOD/CL) for their incoming freshmen class.

“The Class of 2017 (students) are the pioneers and have had the great courage to lead from the edge,” Harrisburg High School Principal Kevin Lein said.

In modular scheduling class scheduling occurs in customized time frames to accommodate courses and students in a more flexible method of delivery. Mass Customized Learning utilizes research-based methods of individualizing learning and technology to allow students to reach potential.

“This is a far path from the normal lecture format, or even the guided discovery we sometimes reward as constructivist and individual,” Lein said. “The strategies employed by the instructors are individualized and personalized.”

Currently, between the freshmen and sophomore classes there are 310 students going down the MOD/CL track with the program expected to grow to more than 500 students next year.

Lein said there is no eligibility requirement or enrollment cap, but students need a well-developed work ethic and maturity of accountability and responsibility to be successful in the program.

“This method is harder, requires skills not normally expect-

| | | Mon. | Tues. | Wed. | Thur. | Fri. |
|---------------|--------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 8:00 - 8:20 | MOD 1 | Band | Band | Band | Band | Band |
| 8:20 - 8:40 | MOD 2 | | | | | |
| 8:40 - 9:00 | MOD 3 | | | | | |
| 9:00 - 9:20 | MOD 4 | IMC | Writer's Workshop | | Literature Seminar | Science Lab |
| 9:20 - 9:40 | MOD 5 | | | Science Lab | | |
| 9:40 - 10:00 | MOD 6 | Science Seminar | | | Math Lab | Spanish I |
| 10:00 - 10:20 | MOD 7 | | IMC | | | |
| 10:20 - 10:40 | MOD 8 | | Math Seminar | IMC | Wellness | IMC |
| 10:40 - 11:00 | MOD 9 | Spanish I | | Lunch | | Lunch |
| 11:00 - 11:20 | MOD 10 | | Math Lab | | Writer's Workshop | Math Seminar |
| 11:20 - 11:40 | MOD 11 | IMC | Social Science | Wellness | | |
| 11:40 - 12:00 | MOD 12 | Lunch | PBL | | IMC | Math Lab |
| 12:00 - 12:20 | MOD 13 | Science Lab | Lunch | IMC | | |
| 12:20 - 12:40 | MOD 14 | | IMC | | Lunch | Writer's Workshop |
| 12:40 - 1:00 | MOD 15 | Writer's Workshop | Writer's Work | Math Seminar | Social Science | Literature Seminar |
| 1:00 - 1:20 | MOD 16 | | Literature Seminar | Spanish I | | Wellness |
| 1:20 - 1:40 | MOD 17 | Social Science | | | IMC | |
| 1:40 - 2:00 | MOD 18 | | | | | |
| 2:00 - 2:20 | MOD 19 | Intro to Ag | Intro to Ag. | Intro to Ag. | Intro to Ag. | Intro to Ag. |
| 2:20 - 2:40 | MOD 20 | | | | | |
| 2:40 - 3:00 | MOD 21 | Wellness | | | | |

ed of high school students and the uneasiness and anxiety always associated with educational transformation,” Lein said.

Parents and students understand the benefit of the program, but also sometimes experience doubt when the targets and expectations seem so elevated, said Lein. During a conversation prior to Christmas break, a group of students in the

program cited four characteristics needed to be successful in MOD/CL:

- Work ethic and accountability;
- Educational Extrovert not afraid to ask questions and meet with teachers;
- Responsibility and time management;
- Self-Awareness.

MOD/CL allows for students to develop and reach potential within a timeframe that matches their development and graduate within four years like their peers on the traditional track, which Lein praised for being exemplary.

Lein credited stakeholders in the district and the Class of 2017 for their commitment to the new beginning at Harrisburg High School and setting an example for the classes to come.

Our staff, (school) Board and parents involved are committed to our mission to have Harrisburg High School students become ‘Independent Learners’ ready for any life path,” Lein said.

“This method of instruction is excellent preparation.”

COUNTING ON CHARACTER

- SCHOOL ADOPTS "CHARACTER MATTERS" CURRICULUM FOR ATHLETICS



Hot Springs School District became the first school in South Dakota to introduce the "Character Matters" curriculum into their athletic program.

Designed by Wade Salem, the Character Matters program has been used to help coaches build strong successful teams and programs by incorporating a focus on character.

Hot Springs School District introduced the program at their athletic ceremony with Salem addressing the athletes, their parents and coaches on the importance of making right decisions and how character can be the difference maker in propelling one to greater success both on and off the field.

Coaches in Hot Springs have participated in face-to-face trainings of the Character Matters curriculum, received year-round e-mail instructional enhancements and been provided definitions of the character trait and questions to pose to their team.

Hot Springs Soccer Coach William Collignon said before the implementation of the Character Matters curriculum he would have to remind his athletes to finish out runs past the line, give their all and not drift out during team laps, but after

the Character Matters presentation, he noticed a change.

"During one of our final team laps, one of the younger players fell behind. I could not tell who started the gesture, but I heard 'Let's jog in place at half and wait for him,'" Collignon shared.

"All the team ran there in place and waited, they all finished together... just nice to see that some things 'just click.'"

Darci Rogers, one of the soccer team captains, said the focus on character has helped her and other school athletes understand why they should not cut corners and encourage younger players.

"Everyone appears to be trying more this year," Rogers said.

The extra effort paid off for the soccer squad. The team made it to the semi-final round of the 2014 Class A State Soccer Tournament, with Ty Wynia named to the Class A All-State First Team and Darci Rogers received Honorable Mention on the All-State team and was named to the SD Soccer 605 2014 Elite Eleven "A" Girls team.

LEARNING CENTER OPENS DOORS AND OPPORTUNITIES

• K-1 SCHOOL PART OF DISTRICT'S 21ST CENTURY LEARNING PLAN

The Huron School District has been working on "21st Century Learning Centers" to meet the district commitment to "reconfigured" grade-level elementary schools.

Last year the Huron School District broke ground on the \$7.5 million addition to Buchanan, part of a \$22 million bond approved by the voters to renovate and construct the three elementary learning centers.

The new Buchanan K-1 Center opened this year, with the school previously serving as the Kindergarten Center for the previous three years.



Renovation of the existing building took place in a short time frame, which was a major undertaking to be completed in just three months. Each room received a makeover with brand new windows, carpets, ceilings, lights and cabinetry - all matching the standard of the new additions to the building.

This September, Buchanan opened its doors as a Kindergarten/1st grade Center, which also houses the special education pre-school program. Buchanan serves 210 Kindergartners and 220 1st graders, with nine teachers at each level.

"We have Title, Special Education, and English Second Language support services as well," Buchanan Elementary Principal Peggy Heinz said.

The facility has a full-size gym with six basketball hoops and a divider curtain allowing two activities when necessary. Each grade level has a computer lab and lockers that are color coordinated by grade-level, to help students know where they

are at in the building.

With the additional space, Buchanan is now capable of housing additional support staff, such as two school psychologists, and a deaf educator.

Heinz said with the additional space the school has a designated room for the Boost-Up program and large commons area that can be used for many activities, including breakfast, lunch, assemblies, collaborative team teaching, and faculty meetings.

"The physical education schedule is no longer dictated by



the lunch schedule," Heinz said. "A beautiful conference room, occupational therapy/physical therapy room, large student bathrooms and teachers lounge rounds out the state-of-the-art facility."

The school also has separate bus and parent drop-off areas and two large parking areas for staff and parents, said Heinz.

Buchanan also features a state-of-the-art security system with multiple cameras around the building including keyless entry for all staff and a secure main entrance, which requires all visitors to earn clearance before entering the school.

"We receive comments from parents daily on the beautiful Buchanan facility," Heinz said.

"The entire staff at Buchanan feels very fortunate and grateful to live in a community who supports education. Buchanan has 50 plus staff members that call the school their home."

COURSE AND CLUB CREATE INNOVATIVE ATMOSPHERE

In search of an innovative way to educate and engage students, the Lead-Deadwood School District designed a robotics program.

The school district's goal of preparing all students for success after high school provided the motivation to implement the robotics course and club, which provides hands-on opportunities for students with a wide variety of interests and future goals.

"The students involved in the robotics club develop higher order thinking skills that uses creativity, design and problem solving skills," Lead-Deadwood Industrial Technology Instructor Jason Boeding said.

Boeding said most of the skills robotics helps develop will benefit students in their post-secondary education and career. Robotics broadens students' knowledge in STEM – science, technology, engineering and math – subjects. The program is currently sponsored by Goldcorp and has previously received funding from the EPSCor program.



Superintendent Dan Leikvold said the program gives students "a chance to be creative and innovative in an environment that allows them to foster individualism, as well as to collaborate with others."

In 2014, Lead-Deadwood's robotics program participated in the FRC (First Robotics Competition) and this school year took part in a similar type of competition known as the Vex Competition, which is held in South Dakota.

Boeding said the competitions are comparable to a sporting event or tournament with points awarded, game plans devised and a crowd of spectators. He added that students also have the opportunity to apply for various scholarships through the FRC and the Vex competitions.

"The biggest reaction I have seen from students is the excitement as a group working together to build and compete for a common goal," Boeding said.

In addition to the competitions, robotics students have presented an interactive demonstration for 4th and 5th grade students at the district's elementary school during which they explained what the robot was performing and how it was programmed.

Boeding was thrilled by the example students in the robotics program set for the elementary students.

"I was very proud of the robotics class to not only give a demonstration within our school system," Boeding said, "but become role models for our younger generation."



PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

• CTE PROGRAM COLLABORATES WITH BUSINESSES, TECH SCHOOL

The CTE expansion project at Madison Central High School is up and running.

“It has become a hot topic in our community and business field,” Madison Central High School Principal Adam Shaw said. “We have many businesses in our community that would like to form partnerships with the school district and provide hands-on training for our students.”

“The business partnerships are growing much faster than anticipated.”

The high school currently has a group of nine students who work with Gehl Manufacturing and learn the process of industrial welding in their lab. At the conclusion of their training the students will move into the factory for further understanding about the manufacturing process.

Madison High School has also partnered with Lake Area Technical Institute in Watertown to provide 8 ½ dual credits at the conclusion of the welding experience.

“Students are enjoying this opportunity and could possibly have the opportunity to work for Gehl manufacturing in the future,” Shaw said.

This fall students began a Certified Nursing Assistant

certification class through LATI and Golden Living Center in Madison.

Students are going through an on-line class to learn the CNA process through the partnership with LATI and used their skills based through the Golden Living Center. The eight students enrolled in the CNA certification course will receive two dual credits from LATI for completing the course.

“Many of these students will be hired on the spot at the conclusion of their skills assessment,” Shaw said.

The high school’s Project Lead the Way Biomedical program is operating, as well.

“Students are actively engaged and enjoying the opportunity,” Shaw said, adding that those enrolled are eligible to receive college credit through Augustana College at the completion of the coursework.

“We are still in the process of remodeling a classroom in the high school for the PLTW courses. Madison High School will offer the four PLTW classes in the years to come.”

Shaw noted that the district will continue to offer the Health Occupations class through a partnership with the Madison Community Hospital.

Beginning in the spring 2015 semester, Madison Central High School students will have the opportunity to work in the automotive field.

Students in the automotive program will start with the brakes curriculum. At the conclusion of brakes they will take alignment, suspension, steering, and axels and the high school will align a math class and careers class with LATI.

A junior who starts in the program in the fall of 2015 and takes the necessary classes before graduating from high school will have nearly completed their entire first year of the automotive program at LATI, which means those students will only need one year at LATI to be back into the automotive field in half the time.

“We are taking a risk at MHS and are thinking outside the box,” Shaw said. “It is our hope that by providing these non-traditional experiences for our students, we are transforming the educational experiences.”

“One that is free from norm referenced testing and offers a more hands-on experiences.”



AN EXTRA EFFORT

• FCCLA CHAPTER GROWS IN NUMBERS AND SERVICE

Dedicating special effort to special service projects defines McIntosh High School's Family Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA).

The 21-members of the McIntosh FCCLA recently focused their efforts on the Ronald McDonald House and Humane Society in Bismarck.

"FCCLA helps students interact with the community, as well as each other," McIntosh FCCLA Advisor Kisha Jordan, also the district's Family and Consumer Science Instructor, said. "It is a national career and technical Family and Consumer Science based organization that puts the family first and foremost."

The students spent a Saturday at the Ronald McDonald House, learning about program, how it supports families who are accompanying children to area hospitals undergoing treatments and completing tasks around house.

A group of students spent the day doing yard work and helping around the house while another group made several dozen freezer cookies and freezer meals, which families staying at the house can bake when needed.

Students donated more than \$50 of their own money to the Ronald McDonald House, which is the equivalent of a five night stay for a family.

FCCLA members also spent a Saturday afternoon in October walking dogs from the Bismarck Humane Society Shelter. Students have supported the Humane Society Shelter for the past three years.

"FCCLA is a great experience for secondary students to join because it has some many avenues to focus on," Jordan

"FCCLA helps students interact with the community, as well as each other."

*Kisha Jordan
McIntosh FCCLA Advisor*



said. "They are so open to all types of activities."

Jordan praised the program for offering students many different opportunities that develop their leadership, teamwork, planning and critical thinking skills.

"FCCLA has so many different opportunities for different interests, ranging from politics to child care to the culinary arts," Jordan said.

Last November, the McIntosh FCCLA Chapter traveled to Little Rock, Arkansas to attend the National Cluster Meeting. The group networked with students from around the nation and also learned some great leadership skills.

At the national competition McIntosh FCCLA President Harley Schell competed in the Food Art competition and placed 8th overall. Jordan hopes the dedication of the 21 FCCLA members, the largest group she's worked with, influences more students to join.

"The numbers are exciting," Jordan said. "We are pushing our exposure to the middle grades hoping to keep up the numbers in the upcoming years."

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

• FOUNDATION PROVIDING SCHOLARSHIPS FOR NEARLY THREE DECADES

The community of Milbank is very supportive of the schools.

Nowhere is that more evident than through the success of the Milbank High School Educational Foundation. The Milbank High School Educational Foundation was chartered as a nonprofit corporation by the State of South Dakota in June of 1986.

The impetus for the creation of the Foundation came from a group of public-spirited Milbank business people. The foundation has grown to a total asset value of approximately \$2 Million, with 28 scholarships totaling over \$140,000 being awarded to Milbank High School seniors in 2014.

The Foundation is managed by a seven-member Board of Directors, who each serve five-year terms. Current board members include Jeff Jones (President), Doug Buri (Vice-President), Chad Nelson (Secretary), Mike Misterek (Treasurer), Russ Fischer, Susan Leddy, and Sue Stengel.

Past board members who have been influential in the development of the foundation include Jack Stengel, Carlon Van Wagner, Rudy Nef, Marwood Wise, Max Gruenwald, Dr.

Norm Madsen, Jack Davenport, Jason Seurer, and Camille Reynen.

Recently, the Milbank School Endowment Fund was established to raise funds to create and enhance academic programs within the Milbank School District.

The Milbank School Endowment Fund, an idea created by Marylynne Fields, was established after state funding cuts resulted program cuts in the district.

Fields, who serves as the Endowment Fund President, is the daughter of former, long time Milbank High School Principal Art Campbell. The Endowment Fund has almost doubled in value over the past year and currently has assets totaling approximately \$70,000.

Other School Endowment Fund board members include: Chad Nelson, Tom Goetz, Steve Wenzl, Sid Foshier, Kirby Hins and Jim Wendland, with Superintendent Tim Graf, Business Manager Nancy Meyer, and High School Principal Dan Snaza serving as advisory board members. Past board members include Kevin Tetzlaff, Chad Thue and Mark Wolff.



A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION

L.B. Williams Elementary students in Mitchell know the importance of a good first impression after a year embedded in problem based learning focused on first impressions.

The idea started with two teachers from LBW—Cheryle Aslesen, multiage 1st and 2nd grade, and Stacy Morgan, 5th grade. They made a plan to address a real problem in their school—the lost and found box. At a South Dakota Innovation Lab summer professional development week, the teachers put together a plan around improving the appearance of their school for visitors, students, and staff.

Aslesen and Morgan never imagined how that project would grow once it got into the hands of the kids.

The teaching team collaborated together to create experiences that were tailored to the learning at their grade level in accordance with the standards, but they also rose above and beyond those expectations to immerse their students in group and individual tasks across grade levels that would challenge their thinking and require problem solving skills.

First, they worked around the idea of what someone's first impression of them is and the character traits that provide a good first impression.

The next step was to identify what the first impression of L.B. Williams School is. The kids found several things that they wanted to address, but decided to focus on the lost and found. They determined that based on the number of clothing items that are left behind every year, there had to be a better way to return lost items to their rightful owners. They started out by creating a brightly colored, much more presentable box to place the lost and found items in.

Then it was up to the youngest students to sort and organize those items and place them into containers labeled by the specific purpose they served—gloves and mittens in one box, shoes in another, shirts and sweatshirts in another, and the sort went on.

The older kids then took those items and determined the value of each item to report out to the families of the school and also photographed the items and sent them on to the school website designer to be posted on the LBW site for parents to view and identify.

Students kept records of the items and donated them to the Salvation Army after they had been displayed for one month. They also sent out reminders to parents to label their child's clothing so it would be easier to return and they made announcements to the school to remind kids to make sure they come inside with both mittens, their hats, scarves and other articles of clothing.

According to L.B. Williams Principal Becky Roth, the students were quite engaged with the process.

"I was amazed to see the students using their critical thinking skills to truly understand the different aspects of what all needed to be accomplished with this project," Roth said. "By connecting the hands-on learning experience with a 'real-world' problem to solve was a positive educational experience for our students."

Once this problem was tackled and a system was in place the kids decided to extend their efforts to the community.

They made presentations at businesses and to city officials



about the first impression of their community. Based on the students' plans and the importance of their message, the Mitchell 'Do Good' grant provided by Mitchell Telecom was awarded to the classes in the amount of \$1,500 to improve the first impression of Mitchell.

It was back to the design cycle for the kids to create a plan. Students decided to put all of their efforts into the Visitors Center just off of I-90 at exit 332.

They collaborated with local garden and landscape centers, a local curbing company and city officials to create a plan to landscape around the Mitchell welcome sign and add planters to the visitor's booth. The kids had to work out a budget, research plants that would be viable at that location and create a design for the area. All of these skills helped them meet their grade level standards while participating in real learning around solving a real problem.

The final presentation of their learning included a ribbon cutting event at which Mitchell Mayor Ken Tracy made a speech and there was a picnic at the Visitor's Center for the kids.

"Working on the Visitor Center project was my favorite," L. B. Williams 2nd Grade Student Cella Nath said. "I especially enjoyed brainstorming with the 5th grade students throughout the year."

The project was completed in the spring of 2014, but that didn't mean that it was over. The kids had to work out a schedule to maintain the area during the summer months and evaluate the effectiveness of their entire project.

LBW students also evaluated the effectiveness of the lost and found project at the end of the year. They discovered that over \$1,000 worth of clothing was given away from the lost and found at the end of the year. This meant that the problem would have to be addressed again in the 2014-15 school year, which is exactly what is happening.

Under Aslesen and Morgan's guidance, a new group of kids have evaluated their design and are working on modifying the project. The students at LB Williams continue to modify the project and their teachers are realizing that the greatest learning happens in the modification stage.

Looking at problems as an opportunity is a valuable skill these students will carry with them.

LEARNING FIRST HAND

• MCTEA OFFERS STUDENTS IN-DEPTH EDUCATION IN CAREER AREAS

The Mitchell School District, partnering with Mitchell Technical Institute, created the Mitchell Career and Technical Education Academy (MCTEA) in August 2012 to provide high school students from Mitchell and surrounding schools with rigorous, hands-on learning opportunities in many career areas.

MCTEA offers courses that range from introductory to highly skilled, and its mission is to provide educational experiences to prepare students for the high-tech, high-skill workplace of the 21st century. Day-to-day expenses of MCTEA are funded by the Mitchell School District and area districts. MCTEA also received a \$1.2 million grant from the Governor's Office for renovation, equipment purchases, and training of staff.

Offering three programs in 2012 – PLTW (Project Lead the Way) Biomedical Science, Welding and Culinary Arts & Nutrition – MCTEA has grown to eight program offerings in 2014-15, with the additions of Health Science, PLTW Pathway to Engineering, Architecture & Construction, Automotive Technology, and Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources.

More than 600 students, who can earn high school and post-secondary credits, are expected to enroll in the MCTEA courses this year, which is three times as many as enrolled in the program's first year.

In addition to learning technical skills, MCTEA courses provide students with the opportunities to apply the science and math skills they are learning in their academic courses.

"Having a current or former student excited to tell me that she or he is applying the concepts learned in math class in a CTE course emphasizes the important relationship between academics and CTE," MCTEA Director Denise Hoffman said.

Graduates who completed CTE courses during high school have been able to apply what is being taught in the CTE courses to their future endeavors.

"The CTE Welding classes I took in high school were very helpful in preparing me for my future," Michael Geidel, a former



welding student, said. "I entered my post-secondary program with a definite advantage over many of my classmates."

Numerous businesses and industries in Mitchell and eastern South Dakota also partner with the MCTEA, including Trail King Industries, Maguire Iron, Pirogues Catering, Avera, Vern Eide Automotive, Iverson Chrysler Center, Lakeview Veterinary Clinic, SDSU Extension and Patzer Woodworking.

The partnership that has been developed between secondary education, post-secondary education and industry is important to the success of MCTEA.

"The demand for technically trained workers in the United States has simply exploded," MTI President Greg VonWald said.

"The whole premise behind the Career and Technical Education Academy is to provide students with opportunities, through the use of applied educational methods, to learn and develop knowledge and skills that will directly apply to technical careers in the American workforce."



STUDENTS SHOW OFF THEIR SMARTS

• SCIENCE COMPETITION CHALLENGES HS STUDENTS

What do rubber bands, flying beanbags and mousetraps have in common? They are all found at SMARTS Challenge!

SMARTS Challenge is a science competition established by Martin Looyenga and Pam K. Wells of Mobridge-Pollock High School Science Department for grades 9-12.

Started in 2013, the “Smarts Challenge” is a competition for creative, science based learners and is a time to explore science in ways that are not always easy to accomplish in the classroom.

2013’s competition hosted eight teams from seven schools with nine schools – many bringing more than one team – attending the competition in 2014.

The 2015 competition is expected to have more schools and teams involved.

As part of the SMARTS Challenge, students can create, build, and showcase their work. They can also work as teams to solve problems.

The competition consists of “make and takes” where the student teams will build a device and bring it to the competition and also on-site activities where students will be asked to solve engineering or science based problems.

Examples of the competitions include mousetrap cars, catapults/trebuchets, Rube Goldberg Machines, and rubber band powered airplanes.

One competition, “Thinking on Your Feet,” involves real-life problem solving skills. A team of three to four students works together to solve a real problem posed by a business or state agency. They develop a plausible solution and present it to a panel of corporate personal. The students must work as a team to find an answer to a real world problem.

Each team member receives a “SMARTS Challenge” t-shirt.



Awards are given to the top three qualifiers in each competition. The winning team receives a plaque and a scholarship to the EXPO at South Dakota State University. Also, each member of the winning team receives a graphing calculator.

Because of the generosity of the Mobridge-Pollock community and sponsorship from the CEO of MainStreet Bank of Virginia, Jeff W. Dick, the students will receive recognition for excelling in this science competition.

For more information of SMARTS Challenge look at: <http://smartschallenge.blogspot.com/>.

Due to the high interest in SMARTS Challenge, Looyenga and Wells have a team of students that participate in BEST Robotics at SDSU in Brookings.

The team consisted of members who were innovators, engineers, writers, presenters and marketers. Constructing a robot to perform a specific task was just a part of this exciting competition.

Students were to market their product (the robot) to a panel of investors/judges, assist others and show cooperate work. Displaying their work and creating an engineering notebook were integral in the overall success of the competition.

“Students are actively involved in the Mobridge-Pollock High School Science Department,” Mobridge-Pollock Superintendent Tim Frederick said.

“They are learning by doing. They understand the need for innovation in today’s world and are willing to engage their skills into these competitions.”



ENGAGED IN A TRADE

• M-P STUDENTS PREP FOR POTENTIAL CAREERS THROUGH CTE

With increasing college costs, students are opting for more CTE field related opportunities, and the Mobridge Pollock School District is working to provide the necessary programs to assist the students with those choices to lifetime jobs.

Career and technical education is a path many high achieving students are choosing in pursuit of jobs right out of high school.

In Mobridge-Pollock the CTE classes are in demand by students for the hands-on learning and engagement, which are a direct reflection of the needs of the community.

The building trades instructor appreciated the chance to help the students take pride in serving the community in which they reside.

The newly settled culinary arts room features high end cooking and baking equipment focusing on students' connections to their core classes and increasing the rigor and accountability in learning.

Students help serve the community in various ways through culinary activities to raise funding. Recently, the students made casseroles of their choice to help raise funding for a hospital bazaar.



The Mobridge-Pollock School building and trades students recently accepted a \$2,500 check from the Mobridge Rodeo Association for the construction of a new building at the rodeo grounds. Students constructed a structure containing office space, restrooms and a concession stand.



The endeavor brought in more than \$1,100.

Advanced welding students are currently building an ice shack for a community member. Welding the framework requires applicable math skills to produce a successful product, and this is one of the great things about career and technical education.

CTE is emerging as a way for students to learn practical skills, which leads to more rigor and in-depth quality learning.

"Being able to use knowledge learned through applications in which students utilize CTE skills, has allowed our students to work with the industries in our community and our state," Mobridge-Pollock Superintendent Tim Frederick said.

SHOWING HOW MUCH THEY CARE

• SCHOOL COMMITS TO STUDENTS WITH CARE CLASSROOM

Newell School District put action behind their commitment to caring for students when they created and staffed a classroom for severe needs students this year.

“We call it the ‘CARE’ room,” Newell Superintendent Joel Hovland said. “When we started planning this program someone said, ‘We need to do this because we CARE about our kids and want them under our family roof.’”

In past years, special education students with more severe disabilities traveled to a facility in a neighboring town for services. In some cases, those students spent several hours on a bus.

Hovland and staff members discussed the programs offered to special education students with severe disabilities and concluded they could offer the services needed within the district.

“We as a staff met and decided that we want our kids under our roof and set about making that happen,” Hovland said.

The CARE classroom serves five students with a Certified SPED teacher, three full-time paraprofessionals and a nurse to



address any medical issues. Physical needs such as tube feeding and hygienic care are handled by the in-room staff.

CARE classroom students have academic goals based on their individualized education plan and spend time in the mainstream classrooms – accompanied by an aide in most cases – for various activities and classes throughout the day.

Hovland said Newell students and teachers ensure the CARE students can participate in classroom activities.

“It was felt that all our students could benefit from having contact with these wonderful, special students and they with the home town kids,” Hovland said. “The staff and students have welcomed these kids back to our home turf. I see lots of ‘high fives’ from other kids to our special ones.”

Entering the second half of the school year with the “CARE” program in place, Hovland said the district is “ecstatic” about the growth shown and success had by students in the program.

“Having them here generates smiles and a good feeling from everyone,” Hovland said. “It was most definitely the right thing to do.”



A COMMUNITY'S CHARACTER

• PARKER STUDENTS GET TO KNOW COMMUNITY LEADERS THROUGH PROJECT

The Parker School District went through a relatively unique experience in 2014-2015 when it experienced a significant turn-over in staff.

Two administrative positions were new hires, which encompassed superintendent, high school principal, junior high principal, elementary principal, activities director, special education director, and Title I director.

There were also twelve new certified teachers hired, along with three paraprofessionals, which encompassed nearly 40 percent of the staff that works with the students of Parker.

The vision and goals for the new administrative staff centered on staff unity, community involvement and overall development of a positive school culture and climate.

High School Language Arts Teacher Cindy Froiland jumped on board with that philosophy even before the school year started and the changes in staff were fully in place.

Froiland put her community project in motion months before the actual events. Throughout the summer she thought about a discussion with former PE teacher, now High School Principal Bill Leberman about PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Support), and the changes in her career, throughout the school and about the community.

Reflecting on the vision of the people in the Parker community, Froiland researched her own list of values and found that within those various positive characteristics are themes she teaches in her literature class.

"Authors and their characters usually have to persevere to achieve goals and after reading some stories in our sophomore class that had characters with influential leadership qualities, I decided that I had to make it real for my students," Froiland said.

"I wanted them to appreciate those in our community who were the 'movers and the shakers' in the past and who are continuing to make good things happen in Parker today."

First, Froiland and her class held discussions on various past and present leaders in our world and who the equivalent may be in our community. The students had many people they looked up to in the school, church, their jobs, but not many knew of the influential men and women in town within the business community.

Froiland worked with her 23 sophomore students to develop interview questions, prepare for the interview, conduct the interview and gain an overall respect for those who work to make the Parker community what it is.

The next step was to pair up her students with a leader in the community.

The students wrote letters to community leaders, inviting them to the school and to be part of the event. Twenty three students conducted interviews with 23 leaders in the community. Each sophomore was expected to greet the community member



they were interviewing with a handshake and collect some refreshments prior to finding a place to begin their interviews.

In order to work on eye-contact during the interview, the students used their iPADS to record the interview instead of taking notes. They had a list of questions prepared but the goal was to communicate in a conversational and informational way.

The project proved to be a big success.

"I loved seeing my sophomores go from apprehension to achievement," Froiland said. "They were the hosts; they had to be in charge of the situation. Many of the students who were nervous about interviewing someone whom they didn't know surrounded me at the end and were all talking to me at once because of what they had learned. That was so fun!"

The students concluded the project by creating a Keynote presentation on iPads and presented the information to Froiland, after which, she turned the tables on them by conducting an interview with the student.

Froiland said she sees leadership skills in many of her students and the project helped them find the skills in themselves.

"They often don't know their own strengths," Froiland said. "I know they can do it. In fact, they always do so much more when the idea is dropped in their laps, and they need to work it through. To me, that is what the real-world will expect of them."

With the collaboration on the project between students and community members, the future of the Parker community looks bright, said Froiland.

"I really want to thank the 23 people who were willing to give up their time and answer questions about their past and present, in making and keeping Parker moving forward," Froiland said.

"I knew that these individuals would put my students at ease, give truthful and thoughtful answers and realize that our youth are our future."

SUCCESS FROM START TO FINISH

The Parkston School District has had a fantastic two-year run. From start to finish, the district has found success in the classroom, playing field and airways across the nation.

Parkston's good news began early when they learned the class of 2013 had the highest ACT composite in the state at 24.34. This class of 35 students garnered over \$1 million worth of scholarships for higher education.

Trojan TV continues to be a model of media coverage for high schools across the state. This past year, the media club broadcast 76 live events and numerous tape delayed events.

"We had numerous schools come to Parkston wanting to review our program and ask questions as to how they can get started," Superintendent Shayne McIntosh said.

The media club has been self-sustaining, paying for their equipment via donations, sale of ads, and sales of DVD's. While Trojan TV has become most popular, the media club has also found great interest in broadcasting via HighSchool Cube, an internet streaming option for schools across the nation.

"We have had as many 6500 viewers tune into a single event!" McIntosh said.

Parkston also had the honor of being recognized in two separate national reports.

The 2013-14 school year concluded with the district being named by US News and World Reports as one of America's Top High Schools. U.S. News & World Report reviewed 31,242 public high schools throughout the country and identified 35 high schools in South Dakota, including Parkston H.S., that made their rankings.

Recently, another report was released by Niche, which ranked high schools across the nation were on a number of set criteria.

"We were most excited find Parkston High School ranked as the seventh best high school in South Dakota for 2015," McIntosh said.

Not only did the district find much success in the classroom, PHS has had a fantastic run in extra-curricular activities.

Things began strong in the fall of 2013 when the PHS boy's golf team earned State Runner-up honors. That honor was followed by the football team who was also the State Runner-up.

Things did not slow down from there, in February the Trojan

Wrestling team won their second straight state championship, scoring the second most points in state tournament history, only falling short of the record they had set the previous year.

Things only got better after wrestling.

The PHS girls' golf team won their third straight state championship in the spring. The team has had four State Championships and two State Runners-up over the past six years.

The 2014-15 school year started just as dynamically, as the boy's golf team finishing third in the state competition. The girls cross country team brought home a fifth place finish, while the competitive cheer squad, in their first year of competition, brought home a fourth place finish at state.

The Trojan Football team brought home the school's first state championship trophy in the sport, as well.



Finally, the marching band had an excellent year, placing in multiple competitions, including second place finishes in competitions in Orange City and Sioux City and winning their class at the Quad-State Competition in Vermillion.

Good news for the Parkston School District also came in career and technical education, as the district engaged the community in discussions about CTE programs.

"The support was overwhelming and for the first time in school history, the Parkston School District is offering Agriculture as part of its curriculum," McIntosh said. "We also found tremendous interest in the State's reduced tuition dual credit course."

The Parkston Elementary student council led a number of service projects throughout the year. One service project completed during the winter was "Pennies for Patients" which called on students to donate their loose change with proceeds going to fund cancer research.

Classes challenged each other to see who could raise the most funding.

"Not only did the students help a great cause, but they learned a lesson about giving to others," McIntosh said. "Many schools throughout the state participate in 'Pennies for Patients' and Parkston Elementary is proud to have raised the fifth highest amount this year."

"We are most proud of our accomplishments and look forward to having another fantastic year!"

LEAP INTO LEARNING

• STUDENTS CONSTRUCT FROG POND AS PART OF COMMUNITY PROJECT

Platte-Geddes 2nd Grade students and their teachers, Sandy DuFrain and Amy Rolland, set off on quite an adventure with their students at the start of the school year by studying frogs and their habitats all over the world.

DuFrain and Rolland decided they wanted to implement problem based learning into their classrooms after attending a teacher professional development workshop with the South Dakota Innovation Lab where they were able to lay out the plan for the kids to ultimately make a difference in their community.

The teachers put the groundwork for the project in place, but then allowed their students to guide the project by doing research and collecting community survey data. They also enlisted the help of industry experts that included a local landscape garden center owner, a herpetologist from USD, a research scientist from Sanford, plus many other parents and community members.

“I thought it was neat how we collaborated with the high school students in Computers, Geography, Science, Language Arts, and Art. By using the knowledge of the high school students, we were able to give our students a 1:5 teacher/student ratio,” DuFrain said.

“It was an amazing teaching and learning experience that those kids will never forget.”

Students used their mapping skills and creativity to form salt maps to demonstrate their understanding of continents, oceans, and climate.

The kids then narrowed their focus to just frogs native to South Dakota. Dr. Drew from USD offered the class great advice about hatching frogs from eggs and successful classroom habitats. He also offered suggestions for the ultimate release of the frogs into the habitat that would be established for the amphibians in the park in Geddes, SD.

The project was not met without some barriers.

After a long weekend, one group of kids came back to the class-



room to find all of their frogs had died. The group persevered and went right to work, discerning the living conditions of the surviving frogs, the physical characteristics of healthy frogs and possible causes of death.

The kids used their problem solving skills to design solutions around all of the factors they discovered and went to work growing healthier frogs.

Studying the life cycle, habitat and body systems of frogs was not the only part of this deep learning experience.

Students also had to work closely with a local landscaper to design an outdoor habitat that would not only be a healthy host for the frogs, but also contribute to the beautification efforts of the city park. The kids learned all about fountains and water features, perennial and annual plants, as well as the funding required to develop the pond.

The group planned fundraisers, enlisted the help of their families and community members in getting the work done and even made a plan to do other work in the park.

At the end of the 2013-2014 school year, the kids chose to do 3 work days at the park in Geddes, rather than take their usual field trip. Participants painted picnic tables, picked up trash and, of course, installed a pond, complete with perennial plants, a fountain and welcoming pool for the frogs.

The project culminated with a celebration in the park for the release of the frogs.

People clapped and cheered as the frogs were introduced to their new home – a calm and welcoming place for all to enjoy – all made possible by the hard work and big ideas of a group of 2nd grade students and their innovative teachers.

“It was a challenge, but we were able to tie in all the standards into this project,” Rolland said. “For instance we talked about other cultures and created a frog origami. With these hands on activities, the students were unbelievably engaged.”



STUDENTS STUDY SCHOOL LUNCH

• PROJECT EXAMINES CONTENTS OF A HEALTHY PLATE

The school lunch program has been a hot topic for many years as new guidelines for the lunch program has led to debate on the amount of food kids need and where that food lies in the design of a healthy plate.

The 7th grade students at Platte-Geddes School decided to stop complaining and start doing something about it.

P-G Science Teacher Darren DeNeui first learned about aligning standards through problem based learning design through professional development with the South Dakota Innovation Lab.

This is just one of many problems his students have tackled while applying the knowledge they are gaining in solving real world problems.

Students went to work developing a plan to tackle the tough questions about school lunch programs, like portion size, food quality, caloric values, food miles, local opportunities and financial solvency of their school lunch program.

"I personally learned that we waste so much food and that the school pays over \$80,000 a year on school lunch," P-G 7th Grade Student Molly Muilenburg said. "On average each student wastes 67 pounds from school lunch a year."

The class worked in teams to discover what is needed for a healthy diet and also the origins of the food served during their school lunch time. They collaborated with the lunch staff at their school and also contacted other schools to review the guidelines and food sources for their programs. Surveys of the student body were conducted and the 7th graders used the data to drive the development of several new menu options for the lunch program at Platte-Geddes.



"I have learned that a lot of work goes into planning our school lunches, more than just labor," Platte Geddes 7th Grade Student Camryn Boltjes said. "I learned that the head cook has to plan all the meals, figure calories, prices, nutrition needs, and portion size. I have a whole new respect for the cooks."

As the 7th grade life science students dug deeper into the caloric intake of students at different ages, they enlisted the help of a dietician and used research data to determine the calories of each item on a school lunch tray.

They found out interesting facts about calorie calculations and federal guidelines that limit food sources.

The kids dug deeper into how our bodies process calories as it relates to the epidemic of obesity in our young people. They studied exercise habits and how long it would take to burn off the calories taken in during that lunch period.

Students also studied the impact that a healthy diet has on learning success.

The junior high students started with a problem, took the concerns they had about a topic relevant to them and designed their learning around that issue. In the end, the class was able to share, not only what they had learned throughout the project, but also make suggestions that sparked a deeper conversation among the school policy makers about the effectiveness and efficiency of the school's food service program.

"It was cool how Kristi Noem called us and how she was interested in our project," P-G 7th Grade Student Sawyer DeGroot. "She thought we were doing great work."



PROJECT: PLAYGROUND

• STUDENTS DESIGN DREAM PLAYGROUND

Cedar Grove Colony students in the Platte-Geddes School District have dreamed about a new playground at their colony school, located 11 miles north of Platte, for years.

Their teacher Donyelle Petersen wanted her classroom of 2nd-4th grade students to be the catalysts of making that dream come true.

Petersen started the design of the project at a summer professional development workshop with the South Dakota Innovation Lab and then took the plan to her students in the fall. The kids tackled the problem with eager determination.

First, they started researching safe playgrounds and their features. They learned about the federal and state mandates that regulate school playgrounds and even involved their entire school in determining the most important equipment that should be a part of their playground based on all of their suggestions.

The kids knew they would need to convince their parents and the colony leaders their playground would be a safe and fun place to play, but they also knew the cost of new playground would be a big concern, as well.

They researched the equipment and the supplies needed to create the structure, took into account the skills of their parents and other family members on the colony and how those skills could be utilized to keep the costs low. The financial sheet then helped with

the final design of the playground.

The kids made a scaled down model of the playground they would like to build and prepared their statements of support for the design.



Students gave a presentation not just to their teacher, but for an audience of their parents and colony leaders. They gave all the financial, safety and equipment information to the adults and waited for their response.

The leaders of the Hutterite colony liked their plan and their design and had just one question for the students: They wanted them to research further to find out if there was any used equipment available from other schools and communities that they might not be using that would help keep the cost down. Colony craftsmen would like to take the used equipment and pair it with their experts to up-cycle it for their playground.

Like all great problem solvers, the kids took additional task in stride. Students saw it as a challenge and are actively searching for equipment that they might be able to incorporate into their plan.

Big problems require more than one solution—an understanding that goes beyond the typical classroom. These kids are not a part of a “typical” classroom and they are gaining skills that will prepare them to be better students of the future and problem solvers for their colony.

MAKING ROOM

• *LOVE RAPID CITY REDESIGNS ELEMENTARY ROOMS*



When a classroom is housed in an annex, teachers might feel a little disconnected from their schools – quite literally. To help make the Black Hawk Elementary annexes feel a little more like a home, Love Rapid City, shared the love by redesigning the rooms.

Love Rapid City, which is a local group out of Fountain Springs Church, works across the community providing service to people and projects.

Every so often, the group contacts principals with one simple question, “How can we help?”

After a brainstorming session, Black Hawk had the perfect opportunity for them. The student population at Black Hawk has continued to grow and because of that, three annexes now house fifth grade classrooms. It was decided these annexes were a great place to add a little color and life.

“When people think about annexes, they often think of them as dark places,” Black Hawk Elementary Principal Holly Yamada said.

“We wanted to change that and make them feel more a part of the building.”

With guidance from fifth grade teachers, the group came in during the month of June ready to work. New paint colors were chosen for the walls, new curtains were hung, and old lockers were taken out and replaced with functional storage. Wooden cupboard doors were also replaced with whiteboards to make them serve a double purpose of storage and writing space.

Each room now also features a “reading corner” with bag chairs and bookcases filled with books and supplies. All materials used in the redesign were donated by Love Rapid City.

“Love Rapid City really wanted to come in and do something to make their day a little brighter, to show their appreciation for our teaching staff and to the work they do with our students on a daily basis,” Yamada said.

This is not the first time Love Rapid City has helped give Black Hawk Elementary, and other RCAS schools, a bit of a facelift. The group previously donated supplies and time to re-paint Black Hawk classrooms and also donated family-style dining table and a nice seating area for teachers to take a deep breath in the midst of a busy day.

“It’s definitely been a morale booster,” said Yamada. “You can’t imagine what a fresh coat of paint can do for a room to make them cheerier and better suited for the learning environment.”

Katy Kinnan of Love Rapid City said helping the school is truly a win-win situation for Black Hawk and Love Rapid City alike.

“We just wanted to be a tiny part of the great things that happen at Black Hawk every day,” said Kinnan. “We have seen how passionate those teachers are and we enjoy doing anything we can do to lighten the load.”

When students were asked how they felt about their new classrooms, resounding cheers and one word followed: “Awesome!”

PINEDALE TAKES LEARNING OUTDOORS

Another classroom was recently added to Pinedale Elementary.

Only it's not indoors and doesn't feature whiteboards, desks, or computers. Pinedale has transformed its courtyard into an Outdoor Classroom and will host an Open House on Sept. 23 from 3:30-6 p.m. for parents and the community to come see what all the fuss is about.

Malinda Chappell, Pinedale second grade teacher, and according to Principal Rick Owen "the brains behind the courtyard", said the inspiration came from the National Wildlife Federation's program called Schoolyard Habitats.

Pinedale teachers wanted a place where children could authentically apply the knowledge from the classroom and take it outside in a real-world setting. Luckily for them, with this new outdoor classroom, they won't have to go very far.

Traveling through the courtyard there are three of South Dakota's primary habitats: prairie-meadow, Black Hills Forest, and the Badlands. Each location is filled with plants native to the area and helps to meet the needs of wildlife through all seasons. There is a large, covered pergola filled with mushroom stools and benches for students to meet and discuss the discoveries of the day.

A weather station sits centered in the courtyard where students can collect and record weather data or identify the cloud formations in the sky. There is also a large greenhouse and raised vegetable beds for every grade level to grow their own produce.

"Life-long, healthy eating habits will be established as children discover new favorites that they grow and harvest themselves," said Chappell.

Getting students outside and literally in the dirt is something Chappell and other Pinedale staff wanted to accomplish. Because many children might live sedentary, videogame-filled lives, Chappell and others wanted to teach the importance of getting outside and plant the seed of outside curiosity.



"Non-motivated, disengaged students have become far more common in the classroom over the last few years," said Chappell.

"But, when they are outside, in the dirt, experiencing life rather than just hearing about it, they are not only engaged but inspired to want to learn more."

The Outdoor Classroom isn't quite done yet and there are still future plans for expansion. It's the hope that it will soon feature a water catchment system, a vermicomposting (composting with worms) station, and others.

Getting families involved is also important, said Owen, which is why they are hosting the Open House for parents to have the opportunity to see it and continue the learning and curiosity at home.

"In the future our courtyard will not only educate children of all ages but also their families," said Chappell. "We believe the connections to the environment, ideas of conservation, and the desire to get out, learn and explore will become family values as well."

Sponsors that made this Outdoor Classroom possible:

- Louise Englestad –master gardener and designer of all the habitats
- Plantsmyth- Allen Leighton
- Knechts- Carl Hellekson
- Modern Woodmen- Ken Beer
- Sherwin Williams – Greg Bruce
- Made for Shade – Lycia Scott
- Rapid City Public School Foundation- McKee Ford, MAC construction
- Izaak Walton League of America – Mark Boddicker
- Civil Discourse – Christy Heacock
- 1+1 Program- First Interstate Bank, News Center 1
- Master Gardeners – Mary Roduner
- Rapid City Garden Club – Cathy Robeson
- Tony Dean Foundation- SD Parks and Wildlife Foundation
- Fountain Springs Community Church- Katie Kinnan
- Pheasants Forever – Darrell Kjerstad
- Rapid City Landfill - Beth Anne Ferley
- Nielsen Royal Construction - Shawn Nielsen
- Dream Design International - Hani Shafai
- Kristal Montgomery, Hope Christofferson – muralists
- Jake Benson – carpenter
- Nolan Fredericks – Eagle Scout Project
- Children, families and staff of Pinedale Elementary – raising funds and many hours of labor planting and maintaining the habitats.

To learn more about the Outdoor Classroom, call Pinedale Elementary at 394-1805.

EXCELLENT EDUCATORS

• TWO RUTLAND TEACHERS HONORED

Last spring, two Rutland School District teachers received teacher of the year awards.

Technology Coordinator Dale was awarded the TIE (Technology and Innovation in Education) Teacher of the Year Award and Social Science Teacher Lauren Olson received the South Dakota National History Day (NHD) Teacher of the Year.

“We are humbled and appreciative of Mr. Moeller and Mrs. Olson,” Superintendent Carl Fahrenwald said, “that they have chosen to build their teaching careers at our school district.”

“The honors for each teacher are appropriate and well deserved. Their work ethic and commitment to educating students at Rutland is what vaulted them.”

Moeller, a 30-year veteran of the profession, was nominated for the TIE award by Olson. He is credited with bringing the first Apple computer to the Rutland School District in 1984 and his initiative in implementing technology in the district proved to be very insightful in the direction of the district.



“I think we tend to collect these ‘high flying’ teachers because of our unique atmosphere that allows for higher levels of engagement with students and thus the personalized student learning,” Fahrenwald said.

Moeller was humbled by the award, which he received at the 2014 TIE conference, and said the nomination validated his efforts.

“It is nice to be recognized by your peers and the fact that they would take the time to nominate you is more satisfying than the award itself,” Moeller said.

Olson, a teacher since 2008, her first year in Rutland, received her award at last spring’s South Dakota National History Day contest.

“NHD has had a profound impact on my teaching style and the way that my students learn so I was very proud to be selected as their teacher of the year in South Dakota,” Olson said.

Sixteen of Olson’s Rutland students competed at South Dakota’s NHD contest with five qualifying for the national contest in Washington, D.C. One of the students, Karee Wicks, won “Best Project” in the History of Agriculture and Rural Life category for her website: The Responsibility of Farmers in World War II.

The successes of students reflects the hard work of the teachers, which the Rutland School District takes pride in, said Fahrenwald.

“The size of our school means that teachers often function as ‘one person departments’ and are afforded a great deal of latitude to research and implement dynamic learning experiences for students,” Fahrenwald said.

“The Rutland teaching staff in general has a long-standing, well-known reputation for their top-notch work in classrooms as dedicated professionals.”



A PLEDGE TO PROVIDE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

• SANBORN CENTRAL OFFERS FREE, ALL-DAY EARLY ED.

Located in Forestburg, with an enrollment of 200 students, the Sanborn Central School District made a commitment seven years ago to provide free, all-day preschool to its youngsters and district residents.

To attend preschool in Sanborn Central, students must be 4-years-old by September 1 of the current school year and have completed a preschool screening, which includes a verification of immunization records and vision and hearing tests.

Kim Severeid is the preschool teacher for the 16 students enrolled in the class and is joined by a full-time paraprofessional, who assists in the classroom.

Preschool students have a regular day, just like their peers in the grades above them, with breakfast, lunch, two recesses and class time, in which they study letters, phonics, math, science and social studies and have stations and story time.

Severeid refers to the South Dakota Early Learning Guidelines and the kindergarten Common Core standards when developing lessons. The district attempts to adopt preschool material from the same textbook company as the elementary grades.

The preschool students utilize technology, as well, with a Smart Board located in their classroom and access to IPADS and desk-top PC's.

"The academic structure is greatly appreciated and valued (by parents)," Sanborn Central Superintendent Linda Whitney said. "The district often receives requests from parents not living in the



district boundaries to have their child attend preschool at Sanborn Central."

Throughout the week, preschool students participate in music, library activities, guidance and physical education and perform twice a year in the district's music concerts.

Preschool students occasionally group with kindergarten students for integrated activities and the 5th grade students act as reading buddies and assist in the computer lab.

Parents of the preschool students are invited to parent-teacher conferences twice a year where they receive a copy of the Sanborn Central Preschool Skills Checklist which, identifies their child's assessment information regarding specific skills in the areas of social studies/science, personal information, social skills, math, gross and fine motor skills and language arts.

With the closest formal preschool located almost 30 miles away, the opportunity available for students is greatly appreciated, said Whitney.

"Parents find it convenient to send their 4 year old to the same school as their older sibling," Whitney said. "The Sanborn Central preschool fills an academic void for the district's parents."



HARD WORK PAYS OFF

• *SHS NAMED ON NATIONAL LIST*

Scotland High School worked its way on to a prestigious list this past year.

Newsweek Magazine named the home of the Highlanders one of the top 500 high schools in the nation in 2014.

“It is a huge honor to be recognized in a positive way,” Superintendent Damon Alvey said. “It reinforces what our staff and students are doing, which is always good.”

Newsweek collected data, which included achievement performance indicators, enrollment and graduation rates, changes in student enrollment, AP/IB and SAT/ACT scores and counselor to student ratio, from high schools across the United States and used a formula they created for the rankings.

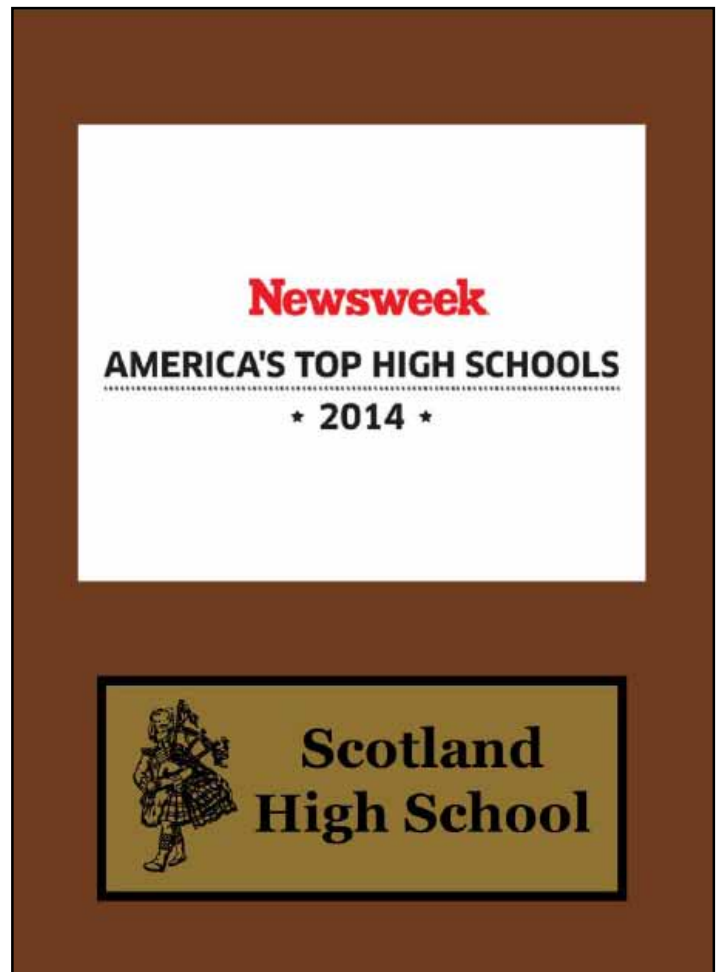
Alvey credited the school staff, school board, parents and community for coming together to build a learning environment that benefitted the students and helped lead to the honor.

“We have managed to create a positive learning environment within our school which helps students foster their own abilities,” Alvey said. “Our parents, community and School Board all support our mission and promote achievement.”

The honor furthered the pride the students, staff and Scotland residents already had in the school.

“The students and staff were excited as we discussed the significance of this distinction,” Alvey said.

“Our community has always been supportive of our school and this allowed us to celebrate the school’s hard work and that (they were) part of that success.”



STUDENTS SHOWCASE SUCCESS IN CLASSROOM

The Marty Indian School hosted the first Family Day to “showcase” the learning that is taking place in the various classrooms.

Over 40 family members were greeted by the MS Student Council and directed to various rooms for tours at the event held on Monday, Nov. 17th.

The eighth grade students presented various content areas in each room. Family members were able to make cell cookies and look at that work showcased in Science, worked with IXL for Math as well as the Saxon curriculum,

Reading and Language Arts showcased poetry work and the Reading Plus software, Social Studies and Geography showed various Problem Based Learning products including the culture of American Tribes, the four seasons, and the Badlands.

Various educational booths were set up for the other stu-

dents to rotate through along with their family members.

Art Teacher Katherine Holding Eagle Turner showcased various art projects from the middle school students. SEPA did hands on activities including making silly putty and stress testing.



The South Dakota Innovation Lab booth provided guidance as participants built catapults. GEAR UP had a book walk and provided information on their program, Talent Search did some coloring activities and give aways, and Mid-Central Educational

Coop did math riddles, math games with dice and cards, and various writing activities.

The Fort Randall Casino provided a great meal for all to enjoy which was sponsored by Family Engagement.

The event was a huge success.

SCHOOLS START USING SHARED TEACHER MODEL

• SDIL ASSISTS THREE DISTRICTS IN NEW TEACHING VENTURE

On a map, Wessington Springs, Lower Brule and Armour, are unlikely candidates for students working together, but a response to a lack of teachers in South Dakota has led South Dakota Innovation Labs (SDIL) to pilot a program with the three schools sharing one teacher.

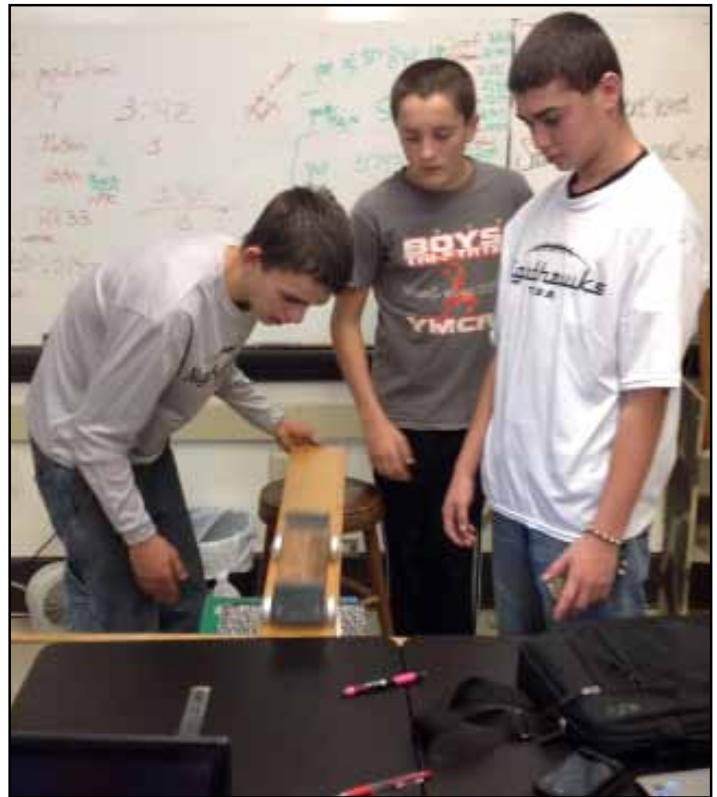
These three schools share a single science teacher for Biology and Physical Science. Utilizing technology and the state's DDN system, the three schools and their students cultivate solutions to a problem that crosses not only the miles between the three schools, but also curriculums – all with the guidance of educator Jeff Schneider.

Students are expected to be independent, inquisitive and involved in the classroom, evaluate each other's work and question the results, as well as lead the curriculum based upon their own curiosity.

Schneider travels to each school in a rotation, which allows for a teacher on the ground, an element that is missing in traditional distance education, as well as technologically.

Schneider practices Transdisciplinary Problem Based Learning (TPBL), which fosters a solution to a problem posed by the teacher. Students in the three schools take a relevant and current problem, such as Ebola, and through the process of developing a solution tackle the standards in Science, Math and English, among other disciplines.

Students recently addressed the real fear and probability of an Ebola outbreak occurring in South Dakota. Students researched and investigated the characteristics, transmission vectors of the Ebola Virus and other communicable diseases,



along with calculating the mortality and transmission rates.

Along with the discovery of diseases, students also developed a model of an epidemiological chart to determine carriers and agents of multiple diseases and examined the geographical relationship between disease transmission and location.

Schneider's students also took part in SDIL's Fall Fling, where students created, tested and utilized medieval trebuchets and catapults to demonstrate physical science concepts in a battle to hit their administrators with a water balloon.

Schneider utilizes state and NexGen standards in the classroom to create a curriculum that expands outside the traditional textbook and invites community resources and experts into the classroom to create a more relevant science experience for the students. Sanford Research provides support, materials and expertise in science materials that rural schools cannot afford to access.



SIoux FALLS TEACHER WINS NATIONAL AWARD

• LEEANNA RABINE AWARDED "OSCAR" OF TEACHING



LeeAnna Rabine, kindergarten teacher at Hawthorne Elementary, was named a 2014 Milken Educator Award Winner on Friday.

One of Rabine's key strengths is her ability to build genuine relationships with students as well as parents. A large percentage of her students at Hawthorne Elementary are economically challenged with many English Language Learners. Yet Rabine sets high expectations for all, even welcoming children with behavioral issues.

She designs standards-based lessons, stays abreast of best teaching practices and uses American Sign Language and vocabulary strategies to develop background knowledge required for learning new concepts.

By creating a positive and nurturing environment in her classroom, students feel safe to thrive.

To enhance students' literary skills, Rabine designed a special pen pal program for her youngsters with high school students in Minnesota. She welcomes parent volunteers and invites community members, from the bank for example, in to mentor students in the classroom and got a local dentist to donate toothbrushes so that students could brush their teeth after lunch, only to realize that some of the children had never brushed their teeth before.

She teaches parents how to read to their children and offers other coaching on parenting skills. If parents miss their child's conference, Rabine does not give up but visits at home.

Outside of the classroom, she mentors new and veteran teachers. She is a member of the Hawthorne development team and the Circle of Courage Behavior team among others.

Highly professional, she worked to align the Common Core to kindergarten and first-grade curriculum, and serves on the district curriculum committee. Rabine was videotaped modeling collaboration with colleagues and has recorded a presentation for all kindergarten parents, which is shown on district television.

Established in 1987 as an initiative of the Milken Family Foundation, the Milken Educator Awards program rewards and inspires

excellence in the world of education by honoring top educators around the country with \$25,000 unrestricted awards.

Not an accolade for "lifetime achievement" or the proverbial gold watch at the exit door, the Milken Educator Awards targets early-to-mid career education professionals for their already impressive achievements and, more significantly, for the promise of what they will accomplish in the future.

To date, more than 2,600 Awards have been given out, totaling over \$65 million.

The one-time award is just the beginning. Milken Educators are given access to powerful networking and development tools throughout their careers in education. When combined, more than \$137 million has been devoted to the overall program.

Recipients are caught by surprise when their names are announced at emotional all-school assemblies in front of cheering students, proud colleagues, distinguished officials and the media.

There's a reason why *Teacher* magazine called it the "Oscars of Teaching"—new Milken Educators have even been asked for autographs by admiring students!

And while the celebrity treatment is well-deserved, the Awards aren't about the glitz and glamor. They're about bringing attention to these classroom heroes; serving at once as validation, motivation and inspiration to current and future quality educators.

The message: We recognize you. We value you. We thank you.

The following information is from the Milken Family Foundation



NEW BUILDING FOR A NEW YEAR

Discussions that began nearly ten years ago became a reality in 2014 for Stanley County Elementary School in Fort Pierre.

On Monday, January 6, 2014, students and staff began the new year in a new 36,600 square foot building, which placed all students in junior kindergarten through fifth grade under one roof.

The \$4.4 million building project, which took fourteen months to complete, has provided students with a safe, modern and inviting structure in which to learn. The new elementary building contains eighteen classrooms, a gymnasium, and a full kitchen.

Prior to this project junior kindergarten through 2nd grade students and the cafeteria were housed in one building with grades 3-5 and the physical education and music classes housed in a second building, Parkview Auditorium, which was located a block away.

Parkview Auditorium was built in the late 1950's and continues to be used for its gymnasium and business offices.

The building that housed junior kindergarten through 2nd grade was constructed in 1956 as a short-term structure to provide a school for the influx of students who arrived in Fort Pierre due to the Oahe Dam construction, had long exceeded its lifespan. The old building was demolished last spring to make room for a parking lot and playground area.

"I didn't realize how bad the old building was until we moved in here," 1st Grade Teacher Maria Scott, a 28-year veteran of the district, said.

While the new building was a must, moving in over 2013's Christmas break was an ambitious undertaking. Moving began December 19, 2013, but a major snow storm added to the challenge



for volunteers and staff.

Fortunately, nicer weather followed the following day and the move was completed.

While the actual moving of furniture, materials, and supplies took only two days, staff spent many days over the break unpacking and putting classrooms together in order to welcome students back to class.

"Considering how big of a project it was and less than ideal weather, it really went smoothly," 1st Grade Teacher Leah Peterson said about the move.

Staff and students waited a long time for a new building, which put all elementary grade levels in one location and are very grateful to now be spending their first full school year in it in 2014-15.

"The opportunity to collaborate with all the grades has increased on every level due to the now ease of access," Speech Therapist Jeri Wilcox said of the new building.

• STATE OF THE ART KITCHEN ADDED

With the move into the new Stanley County Elementary School, there are some fantastic changes that have taken place at the Stanley County Schools Food Service.

The district now has a state of the art kitchen.



The new construction brought new kitchen equipment and allows our kitchen staff to cook foods in a variety of healthy ways. A new convection oven, coupled with a more efficient kitchen,

provide opportunities for our kitchen staff to offer the students a greater variety of menu choices.

Students have a choice of a hot entrée every day, the option of yogurt or cheese stick and a full fruit and vegetable bar.

Our new food service manager, Nicole Prince, has implemented these changes since coming aboard in June.

The fruit and vegetable bar is all-you-can-eat and is filled with a large variety of delicious fresh fruit and vegetable options. More of the school menu features homemade items, fresh breads, and new choices for students.

The addition of the all-you-can-eat fruit and vegetable bar insures that none of our students leave the cafeteria hungry.

NEW ELEMENTARY BUILDING OPENS

• *TODD COUNTY STARTS YEAR WITH NEW SCHOOL*

By 2011, it was determined that because of the increased student population in the two elementary schools in Mission, a new building was probably inevitable. Classrooms were overcrowded and several trailers were being used at North Elementary for classes.

That fall, a Facilities Planning Committee of Board Members and Administrators began preliminary plans for the new home for the K-5 students. They visited other recently erected schools across the state for ideas about the new building.

Land was purchased just south of the Middle School and on August 4, 2012, North Elementary students turned the first shovels of dirt for their new classrooms.

Design of the \$15.5 million facility was by Great Horse Architects of Minnesota. The entrance of the building features



singing Meadowlarks from sacred literature of the Lakota Oral Tradition.

Inside, the above and below connection of Lakota Star Knowledge, compliments the large central commons area, which is also the lunchroom. Three halls, with 10 to 12 general education rooms in each of them, branch out from the commons area. The facility is built to hold 730 students and the gymnasium will seat about 750. Roberta Bizardie and Bobbie Cox are the principal and assistant principal, respectively.

Administration was aware that along with a new building came new opportunities for improving school climate and academic achievement. Plans were made for a three-year Responsive Classroom Initiative and 1003a grant funds were used to provide Responsive Classroom training for all instructional staff before school started.

Responsive Classroom is a research and evidence-based approach to education that leads to greater teacher effectiveness, higher student achievement, and improved school climate. The approach is one that encourages safe, challenging, and joyful learning environments.

On Wednesday, August 27, 2014, the doors of Todd County Elementary School opened and 650 wide-eyed students happily entered their brand new classrooms.



STUDENTS SOLVING FOR TOMORROW

• PROJECT EARNS 8TH GRADE CLASS NATIONAL FINALIST SPOT

Vermillion Eighth Grade Science students under the guidance of their teacher, Natasha Gault, were named as the South Dakota winner and a National Finalist in the Samsung Solve for Tomorrow Contest.

The class's project on Asian Carp was chosen for its innovative approach to advancing interest in STEM and making an impact in the community. The STEM research and experiences were summarized into a three minute video submission.

Eighth Grade students at Vermillion Middle School submitted the Asian Carp topic as a result of their passionate concern for the Missouri National Recreational River.

The flying fish invasion of Asian Carp into the Missouri National Recreational River is an environmental threat to the historically and environmentally significant

waterway. Asian Carp are inundating and threatening the Missouri National Recreational River ecosystem.

The invasion of Asian Carp into the Missouri River required a scientific investigation to understand the cause and determine potential solutions.

Students became informed about this local environmental

issue through expert education, innovative experiences, and data analysis with the following: The South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks, Gavin's Point National Fish Hatchery and South Dakota State University.

The class developed a technological platform for educating our community regarding the threat, prevention and control of the invasive species in the Missouri River waterway.



Students advocated for Missouri River protection from Asian Carp by presenting the educational information and their proposed solution to local governmental/interest groups.

The Samsung Solve for Tomorrow national competition allowed the Eighth Grade students to conduct STEM research on Asian Carp outside of

the traditional classroom and resulted in the students earning a \$35,000 technology package for the Vermillion School District.

A group of students and a teacher were one of 12 groups from across the nation to give a competitive presentation at Houston, Texas. All expenses for the students and supervisors for the trip were covered by Samsung.

RESPONSE TO READING

• V-H ELEMENTARY SEES RESULTS FROM READING PROGRAM

The Viborg-Hurley School District is in its second year of implementation of a RtI (Response to Intervention) program.

Initially, the program was geared towards K-2 students and incorporated instructional strategies from the district's Reading Recovery program. The second half of last year the district expanded the program to include 3rd and 4th grade students.

Students receive 30 minutes a day of individualized reading instruction in small group settings. The incorporation of the RtI program has resulted in positive gains in the district's DIBELS and DRA data.

Teachers who work with the students meet regularly to discuss each student's individual levels and adjust instruction to assist students in the process of developing reading skills.

"The collaboration between teachers has allowed us to come up with a uniformed reading menu of interventions for teachers to use in meeting students reading needs," Reading Integrationist Michelle Schoenefeld said.

"It really feels like a team in meeting students instructional needs."

Because of the RtI programs initial success, the district decided to expand it this year by utilizing a Reading Plus program.

The Reading Plus program is geared towards grades 3-8. Students are not only reading, but learning about topics that are individualized to each student's interests. The program

tracks areas students may have difficulty with and generates additional lessons for teachers to incorporate into individualized lessons at different times of the day.

"The Reading Plus program has given our middle school educators reading data that is allowing more individualized instruction to take place in those grades." Middle School Principal Amy Brandriet said.

Viborg-Hurley rewards students for their hard work.

The elementary has implemented a monthly reading incentive that rewards students for reading at home with parents. K-2 students need to read or be read to for 15 minutes a day and 3rd and 4th 20 minutes.

Each month, they offer different rewards for students to earn if they had enough days marked on the calendars at the end of the month. Students in grades K-2 have leveled reading books sent home with the students. The books are individualized to the student's reading levels that are also tracked.

Through the hard work of the students and parents, the school saw reading levels improve throughout the year and students enjoyed events like sock snowball fights, putting a pie in a teacher's face or drawing a mustache on a teacher or principal.

"The incentives have been helpful for me as a parent to get my own child to read at home," Superintendent Rob Syliaasen said.



STUDENTS SERVE AS ROLE MODELS

• MENTOR PROGRAM MATCHES HS STUDENTS WITH ELEM. KIDS

Mentoring is a program that allows Wagner High School students to share their time with elementary students. It involves giving up time and sharing it in a positive way.

The mentoring program is open to high school students in grades 10-12. Students who wish to be involved in the program must demonstrate good attendance and must be passing all of their classes. In addition, they must demonstrate a willingness to serve as positive role models in and out of school.

Mentoring also involves serving as a positive friend and providing help, advice, and encouragement to younger students to help these younger students care more about themselves, about school and about the future. Wagner School Counselor Dana Sanderson trains the high school mentors in the fall.

“(Mentors) agree to be accountable for all facets of the mentoring process and for their own success in and out of school,” Sanderson said.



Mentors meet with the younger students they mentor at least twice each week for about 30 minutes each time throughout the entire school year.

They use study hall or SRB time in classrooms, in the library, in the gym, or in other places inside the school building to help younger students with homework, to sit and talk or to play games to get to know one another.

Sanderson explained that a student’s involvement in mentoring is a commitment for the entire school year. He advised students who want to participate in the mentoring program to plan accordingly.

“We are looking for mentors who really want to help someone else to be a better and happier person and a better student,” Sanderson added.

“Mentors are expected to be consistent, even when they are busy.”



SHADOW ART SHINES

Everyone says the silhouette on the wall at school library in Wagner looks like Brooklyn Tolliver.

And it is her. She did, after all, model for the piece of art that she created.

But Tolliver, 17, is not fully convinced that it looks like her.

"I don't see it as myself," she said. "I just see it as a shadow. I was told that it looks like me from the side, but I don't know."

Regardless, it's been selected as the nation's most unique art structure in a community library.

Tolliver's shadow art display, titled "Reading in the Shadows," was selected as "Most Unique Structure/Art Installation," in a contest put on by book supplier Cengage Learning, as part of National Library Week. The contest is part of National Library Week, which started April 13 and runs through Saturday. The whole month of April is School Library Month.

The cardboard model is not your typical art. It's assembled with scraps of boxes, not painted and is mostly colorless.

But when the light comes on, the sculpture springs to life.

"I just like how simple it is," Tolliver said. "There's really not much to it. It took me about an hour and a half."

The idea for "Reading in the Shadows" stemmed from a class project on shadow art by teacher Jim Peters. Seeing initiative in Tolliver, Peters asked if she would create larger-scale work to display in the library. With the help of a few classmates who traced around Tolliver to create the model, the Wagner junior then pieced together cardboard segments. A large spotlight sits about 10 feet from the cardboard, casting a yellowish glow on the wall, but leaves a perfect outline of the finished product. The shadow shows a student sitting against a wall on the floor with her knees raised and her legs at an angle, holding a book. That shadow, her teachers insist, is a perfect representation of Tolliver.

"That was the first thing I thought when I saw it," Peters said. "I said, 'That looks just like her.'"

Others agreed.

"Look at how much that looks like her," school librarian

Brenda DeHaan said later. "Right down to the eyelashes."

The display has been up for a few months since its completion in January. But DeHaan almost didn't enter it into the contest as the deadline approached because of some problems uploading the correct file to the website for the contest.

"I figured we might as well give it a shot," DeHaan said. "I didn't imagine this."

The exhibit made it into the top five.

Although she was competing against people in larger communities like New York, some small-town campaigning paid off. The school advertised the online voting on its website and teachers encouraged students to vote when making announcements in class.



The school will receive \$500 from the company that put on the contest, money that will go toward the library.

Tolliver said she's not that into art, if she's being honest. She plans to study for a medical career when she graduates next spring. But on a list of accomplishments that includes playing volleyball and basketball and participating in student council and National Honor Society, she can add

accomplished artist to her list as well.

"I guess it was better than what I thought it would be," she said. "I wasn't expecting it to be out this long and like this."

DeHaan, who also serves as librarian at Andes Central, said the shadow art is a great example of the two worlds of books and art meshing perfectly.

"I think it's because you have to use your imagination in both cases," DeHaan said. "They say that a picture is worth a thousand words but there's some of us that would rather read the thousand words. This is really a perfect balance."

Peters said the school is making a more concerted effort to display student art and said Tolliver's standout shadow art is a great example.

"We have a lot of talented kids and Brooklyn just did a great job," he said. "You can't ask for anything more."

PERSONALIZED EDUCATION

• *WSSD STUDENTS DEVELOP OWN ACADEMIC GOALS*

The mission of the Wessington Springs School District, as a leader in innovative education, is to provide a high quality, personalized learning experience that inspires and fosters student creativity, success and self-confidence by embracing best practices and collaborative partnerships.

Wessington Springs School District continues to enhance the personal experience of education for all students. The process has been ongoing for several years, as the district developed personal learning plans for every K-12 student.

Students develop goals related to the areas of Math, Reading, and Character. To assist in writing of Math and Reading goals teachers and students base their goals off assessments that are done in the fall of the academic year.

The character goal focuses on Character Counts Pillars. For each goal, student's list steps in helping them achieve their goals. Middle School and High School students use SD-MyLife as tool to monitor goals and utilize other career path tools.

Goals are monitored and reviewed throughout the year. The personal learning plans drive instruction and assessments in the district. The plans are used in student-parent-teacher conferences as students share with parents their personal learning goals.

"This process has led to increased parent involvement and has built a solid partnership from home to school enhancing the learning process," Wessington Springs Superintendent Lance Witte said.

Middle School students use personalized online reading curriculum called Reading Plus. The teacher monitors progress and provides interventions to students.

Math instruction is personalized at the Middle School and High School utilizing Accelerated Math. Student's progress at their own pace as they master objectives aligned to the Common Core standards and can complete a course and



begin the next course at any point in the academic year.

High school students have many opportunities to take classes offered outside the building, as they are given an opportunity to enroll in online distance coursework.

Many juniors and seniors are enrolled in college courses receiving dual credit. These courses are financially supported by the school district and provided to students at no cost.

Wessington Springs Schools also offers an Open Enrollment – Cyber School – Program, providing personalized learning opportunities for 22 students from across the state. Students are able to take coursework to meet graduation requirements through the South Dakota Virtual School and Wessington Springs online course offerings.

"At Wessington Springs Schools we are excited about the personal learning experience we are striving to achieve for our students," Witte said. "As new technologies and curriculums present themselves the school will look to strategically engage in activities to support personalized student instruction."

A PLAN TO GET THINGS DONE

• *WILLOW LAKE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY WORK ON STRATEGIC PLAN*

For two days in October of 2013, school administrators, personnel, parents, community members, and students gave their time to a “Strategic Planning” session for the Willow Lake School.

“A lot of the community turned out for our strategic planning and everyone is going strong to get things done,” Willow Lake School Board President Caryl Schmidt said.

“It is an unbelievable event that so many have come together to discuss, plan and work for the betterment of not only the school, but for every single person in the community.”

More than 20 people participated in the meeting to analyze, discuss, and plan for the future of our school. The meeting was facilitated by Lance Witte, who is Superintendent of the Wessington Springs School District and also an associate with The Cambrian Group, which specializes in strategic planning for schools.

“Mr. Witte pointed out that a good Strategic Plan will put your school on the path of success, and will provide continuity and consistency that guides the direction of the school,” Willow Lake Superintendent Scott Klautdt said.

“The Strategic Plan created through this process will be a five-year plan, with many check points on the progress to make sure it’s on track.”

Willow Lake’s strategic planning group identified the values and beliefs that will guide the school and drafted a new Mission Statement. They discussed in detail factors both within and outside of the school that could impact the future, addressing threats as well as opportunities.

From the discussion emerged four key strategies that will be focused on:

1. Technology,
2. Curriculum,
3. Facilities, and
4. Positive Characteristics.

Willow Lake will implement their strategic plan through “Action Plans,” for each of the four strategies identified.

“Action Teams” will be appointed to discuss the four key



strategies and will have co-leaders and team members. The teams will include community members who are matched to the teams according to their interests and talents.

A kick-off event was held in November of 2013 at the school for the public to hear more about the strategies identified in the two-day Strategic Planning meeting, and more about how the Action Plans & Teams will work.

“This has been a very positive process thus far, and much enthusiasm has been shown for the future of our school. The School looks forward to sharing this with the community at the November meeting.



CONSTRUCTION COMPLETED

- *SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PARTNER ON PROJECT*



Don't be surprised by the new addition to the Wilmot School's remodeled lobby and concession area, it won't bite.

A mounted wolf, which is the school's mascot, highlights the updated area. A display that would have cost the district upwards of \$3,500 was donated by WHS alumni Craig Osterloh and Sean Tennis.

Renovations were completed just in time for the start of the high school volleyball season.

Wilmot Superintendent Larry Hulscher said the confined quarters of the area limited what could be served at events and was the district's motivation for improving the area.

Renovation began in July with much of the labor and upgraded features being donated by community members, said Hulscher.

The size of the school's concession stand was doubled and an oven, an ice cream machine and increased counter and storage space added inside. WHS Class of '89 donated a television display board for the area, as well.

Hulscher said the response to the upgrades has been very positive and commended the community for providing a much needed helping hand.

"Our community is great," Hulscher said. "If they see a need they're coming to our assistance and lending an helping hand or making a donation."



AG ED. GROWING OPPORTUNITY

• *WHS AG PROGRAM GRABS STUDENT INTEREST*

Winner High School's agricultural education program is providing great opportunities for its students.

The school's agricultural curriculum offers a wide array of courses – eight in all – for students to find their passions and explore possible careers through applied sciences in a community offering growth and development for students while they are still at the secondary level and beyond.

WHS ag ed courses include Introduction to Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, Animal Science, Ag Business and Marketing, Agronomy, Natural Resources, Horticulture and Ag Communications and Journalism.

"Students are able to choose their interests through the Ag coursework offered to a great extent," Ag Ed Instructor Wyatt DeJong said. "Students then get to choose to dive deeper into the areas of their personal interests."

"Many of the students have already taken advantage of the course offerings so far."

DeJong said after the first semester of the 2014-15 school year approximately 20 percent of WHS students successfully earned a half credit of Ag science.



WHS's ag classes are deeply seeded with STEM education principles, which have seen growing integration in all disciplines.

"In Ag, STEM is not added, it already has these principles that must be learned in combination with language arts and in a hands-on delivery method that tends to engage students through all areas of visual, audio, and kinesthetic learning," DeJong said.

Work-based learning is a key focus of the program in addition to STEM infused coursework. Students have an individualized work-based learning plan known as their Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) project.

DeJong said students have projects ranging from owning their own cattle, horse, pigs, and fish, to renting land to farm or working on a farm for their family or neighbors.

Other projects include students working in the food service industry, community development and health care, conducting their own research in Agriscience or exploring career options through educational field trips and job shadowing.

As WHS's ag program grows, so do the facilities available.

The district is constructing a 24 by 30 foot greenhouse that should be in full operation by the second semester.

"This will give the Intro to Ag, Food, and Natural Resources and the Horticulture classes time to have hands-on learning about plant growth and also to conduct personal experiments to better understand how plants perform," DeJong said.



IMMERSED IN INVESTIGATION

• *STUDENTS LEARN FORENSICS IN CLASSROOM*

Last February, Wolsey-Wessington students in grades K-12 spent a week immersed in Forensics in the Classroom a program designed to help students transition from the traditional classroom setting to transdisciplinary problem-based learning.

Nearly 300 students participated in the rigorous STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) focused program requiring participants to draw on all content areas to solve mock crime scenes set up at their school. The learning experiences was made possible by Wolsey-Wessington Staff and Students, the PAST Foundation, Mid-Central Educational Cooperative, Sanford Research and South Dakota Innovation Lab.

Students in grades 6-12 spent the first part of the week learning and applying their new skills in fingerprinting, trace evidence, anthropology and other forensic science skills required to solve crimes. Employees of South Dakota Innovation Lab helped deliver content and facilitate lab activities. Eddie Aamold, a forensic biologist from the SD Crime Lab, served as an industry partner who shared his expertise in the area of DNA collection and analysis.

Later that week, the students were put into groups and assigned to one of several mock crime scenes to apply all that they had learned.

As students worked with different content experts in all areas of the school, they methodically documented and mapped every detail. Everyone had a specific role to play from taking pictures to dusting for fingerprints, and analyzing handwriting. Student groups used all the information they had gathered to put together the story of the crime they were investigating.

Students took their cases to “court,” with each student offering testimony in his or her area of expertise at the end of the week. Local judicial officials assisted in evaluating the cases that students presented.

Elementary students played an important role in the crime solving adventure, as well.

Early in the week, they discovered \$1 million ransom notes for their kidnapped classroom stuffed animals. They learned about many of the same topics as the older students, and by the end of the week, they too, had determined the culprits.

Local law enforcement officers were contacted and given the evidence reports written by each classroom and the kidnappers were



apprehended.

Their activities culminated with a visit from South Dakota Highway Patrol Trooper Mark Chamberlain who assisted with their investigation and returned the missing stuffed animals to an elated Wolsey-Wessington student body.

“It’s finding real-world problems and issues that are of interest to the kids, that get them motivated to learn and to explore and take education in a different direction,” Wolsey-Wessington Superintendent James Cutshaw said. “It’s more exciting than just trying to read out of a textbook something that maybe doesn’t apply to you or you can’t relate to.”



CELEBRATING SOUTH DAKOTA

Celebrating South Dakota's 125 Birthday was a high point for Woonsocket 4th graders this fall.

The class hosted a living museum for the school and community. Each 4th Grader portrayed a South Dakota legend of new and old, such as Doane Robinson, Peter Norbeck, Guzman Borglum, Oscar Howe, Gladys Pyle, and Tom Brokaw.

During the living museum, each student referred to a biographical report with information about their legend. Woonsocket Fourth Grade Teacher Carrie Gutierrez said her students researched biographical information about the legends and prepared outlines before writing their reports. She proudly noted how great the two-month learning process was for class.

The 4th and 8th grade classes cooperated in hosting the 125th Birthday event at the school.

At one of the stations, the 8th Graders had written South Dakota trivia questions where participants could test their knowledge about the state. Santel Cooperative also sponsored a hands-on display about the history of the telephone in Sanborn County. The Dakotaland Credit Union's table highlighted the history of money which showed how money and coins have evolved over the last 125 years.

There were also hands-on displays of South Dakota animals and the state's unique geographical features. The students and adults could touch the animal displays and read where their habitat was located. The living museum was a fun experience for the school and community.



The 4th Graders especially loved telling the stories of their South Dakota Legends.

"It was fun to tell people about Harvey Dunn," 4th grade student Kristian Kesary said.

Gutierrez said her students were challenged by the creativity of the project and excited to see the rewards of their hard work, as a highlight for them was being participants in the living museum.

"The best part was being able to see all the people listen to us and learn," 4th grade student Dylan Klich said.



OUTDOOR EDUCATION

• STUDENTS STUDY SWANS LIVING AT LAKE NEAR SCHOOL

Woonsocket is the town with the beautiful lake and this lake exists right across the street from their school.

The district's teachers decided to take advantage of this lake as an outdoor classroom and have embarked on several projects with the lake as their focus while also using community assets and opportunities to design problem based learning experiences for their students.

The Woonsocket teachers designed the framework of all of these projects as part of the South Dakota Innovation Lab Summer Professional Development; coming together to collaborate with each other and teachers from surrounding communities to design classroom projects that brings the theories behind Student Learning Objectives and Teacher Effectiveness into actual applied practice.

The Kindergarten and 1st Grade classrooms are referring to their project as the Swan Condo Project.

The two swans that live on the lake lay eggs every year, but the eggs never hatch. This is a problem for the swans and a problem for the residents of the community that never get to see their swans with a family.

Students, along with their teachers Judy Hinker and Sarah Jensen, are devising a plan to track the swans' habits and also human impact on their swans to discover what factors might be contributing to the hatching problems. They started out learning more about the history of the lake and creating scaled models of the lake. Parents and community members were invited in to see the displays of the lake as it was in 1912 when it hosted a Water Festival complete with a Shoot the Shoots ride and a circus.

Another group of students created a design of the present day lake with attention to details like the number of street-lights and benches around the lake. The Kindergarten and 1st



grade kids intend to use the present day map to track where the swans are at different points during the day to help determine a better location for nesting structures for the swans.

The 2nd and 3rd grade classrooms are using the lake as a space to study water and land animals, fish, and birds that frequent the lake.

They worked together with the high school students to do soil sampling around the lake and learn more about the soil structure and what plants can be supported by it. Students tested water from the lake and are using that data to find out more about how fish and water birds are affected by the quality.

WOONSOCKET SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOME

>>> CONTINUED FROM [pg. 67]



Students have also been in contact with the development corporation in their community to devise a plan for building nesting structures for other birds that might want to make Lake Prior their home. This has been a long time concern of local residents and the 2nd and 3rd grade students are working on a plan together to improve the lake habitat and the quality of life in Woonsocket.

Fourth and 5th graders are partnering together to improve the recycling opportunities for their residents.

Students are working closely with a recycling firm, Vans Dray Recycling in Corsica, and collaborating with other schools that have implemented community recycling projects to design a plan for Woonsocket.

The first step of the project was to implement a paper recycling system in their school. Containers to collect the recyclable waste have been placed in every classroom and 4th grade students have been designated as the "Recycling Retrievers" and "Recycling Captains" to help monitor the collections.

The students had to write an application letter for each job, so that they could tell me their strongest attributes that would assist with the responsibility of collecting recycling.

"We think it is a good idea to recycle so that we can show the younger students, and maybe they will do recycling at home too," Woonsocket Elementary Student Camden Jost said

The 5th grade students are weighing their recycling to check how much they are saving from the trash; they are using a luggage scale and 4th graders collect the paper from each classroom and package it for delivery to the recycling center.

Their goal is to get a recycling trailer for their community to share with a neighboring community.

Sixth grade students decided to take their status as the oldest students in the elementary to share the character traits



that make a good citizen with the younger students in their school.

They put together a plan to share the six pillars of character counts with the younger kids in the elementary and to also live by example. Their project culminated with a Veteran's Day Program to demonstrate respect for those who have served our nation. Leading by example has become the words they live by.



LEADERS OF THE LIBRARY

The following story appeared in the Yankton Press & Dakotan paper.

Books can be a child's best friend. They can take you to far off places, tell you about the moon and teach you to expand your horizons.

However, for the last three school years, Yankton Public School students have had limited access to the districts libraries, due to the cut of librarians at the elementary schools.

That shortage changed at the beginning of this school year when elementary librarians were reinstated full-time in each of the districts four elementary buildings.

"When the opt-out failed and the district had to make cuts for the 2011-202 school year, the elementary library positions were eliminated," explained Stewart Elementary Librarian Kathleen Bergeson. "It was such a loss. It was the one cut that the community really vocally voiced their displeasure over. During the recent school survey every group (teachers, parents, students and the community) wanted the librarians back."

The following two school years, the district had two librarians serving the four schools.

Bergeson said that the district's school board and Superintendent Dr. Wayne Kindle listened to the community's demand for the librarians.

"They worked at finding the funding to bring us back," she said. "I have heard a lot from the community since the announcement was made they were bringing us back that it just feels so right — that the community is glad the school board took action and found a way to fund the libraries. The community is offering praise for reconsidering this cut."

Stewart Principal Jerome Klimisch said in a lot of ways people didn't realize how utilized the librarians were in the schools until they were no longer there.

"The librarians know what the kids are reading, what genres they like," he said. "They impact all areas of education. The more kids read the better they test and learn."

Yet Bergeson said the most important aspect of having accessible libraries for the students is that, in the library, every child is a winner.

"The library is the heart of the school," she said. "Unlike sports, or grades, when you leave the library, everyone leaves with a book



— everyone is a winner in the library. That is such a big confidence builder for the students."

Bergeson said the biggest disappointment for her when the librarian positions were cut was that it increased the difference between the haves and have-nots.

"The parents who could afford to buy their children books did, but the students whose parents couldn't go out and buy them the books lost out," she said. "The door to engage children in lifelong reading habits closes in elementary school. We don't want to lose that opportunity to engage these students as life-long readers."

Bergeson said it is proven that a staffed library is one step to having higher achievements for students.

"Librarians are here to help the school," she said. "We help with curriculum support, purchasing, cataloging and mending books - but most important we are here to help the students with research skills and technical skills needed to independently do their school work."

Bergeson said learning to research is one of the most important things a student will learn at the elementary level, as it is a skill they will use their whole life.

Serving as librarians for the elementary schools are: Bergeson at Stewart, Yvonne Huennekens at Beadle, Sylvia Fedde at Lincoln and Deb Enfield at Webster.

"You know when the kids walk in and cheer that you are here, that this was a great move by the school board to reinstate the elementary librarians," Bergeson said.

CTE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

• *OPEN HOUSE SHOWCASES CTE PROGRAM*

Yankton High School opened its doors to parents, students, teachers, and community members last April to showcase its career and technical education program.

The open house allowed people from the community to visit the various career and technical education classrooms that YHS offers and show how broad and far-reaching CTE has become.

“Many may think of the shop and home-ec classes in the past, but our classes now are so much more and this event helped to define those classes,” YHS Principal Jennifer Johnke said.

Attendees of the open house were given student-guided tours.

In each of the classrooms and labs, students explained the various skills they were learning and showcased their projects,

which included a building trades house, 3-D Printers and audio-visual equipment, to name a few.

During this event, 8th grade students were bussed from the Yankton Middle School to Yankton High School, divided into groups and also given tours of the various labs and classrooms.

“This was a way to help these students think of avenues they could take at the high school level to become college and career ready,” Johnke said.

Yankton High School CTE Day brought 221 people through the hallways of YHS.

“It’s an event we plan to hold and to grow annually so students are given more opportunities to showcase their skills and projects,” Johnke said.







Cedar Grove Student Project Based Learning Project
GROUND

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