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## WADE'S WELCOME



**DR. WADE POGANY**  
ASBSD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

South Dakota's public education system is one of the state's finest assets.

The Good News Bulletin is our way of highlighting some of the stories that illustrate the many different avenues of achievement and success in our schools.

Whether our students are demonstrating academic achievement, athletic or fine arts talents or success in clubs and organizations or our teachers, administrators, school support staff and community members are enhancing their school district, it's important we tell these stories.

This year we are sharing these stories in our print book and online, at our new website: [www.goodnews.asbsd.org](http://www.goodnews.asbsd.org). This new avenue will allow us to share these good news stories year round, in addition to our annual publication.

We want to thank the board members, administrators, teachers and staff members from our school districts who submitted stories this year and invite everyone to continue to submit your good news stories and ideas throughout the year!

ASBSD is proud of our state and our schools and after reading these stories, online or in print, we hope you will agree South Dakota's education system is truly one of our greatest assets.

These are the stories about our great South Dakota public schools.



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# ABERDEEN SCHOOLS AMONG HEALTHIEST

Five Aberdeen Schools were recognized for being among the healthiest in America.

Aberdeen's Holgate Middle School and CC Lee, May Overby, OM Tiffany and Simmons Elementary schools received a Generation for a Healthier Alliance Bronze Award.

"We were very excited to be recognized by a prestigious national organization that promotes wellness for students and their families," Aberdeen Superintendent Becky Guffin said.

"We know that healthy bodies support healthy minds and we wanted to provide students with more than just academic support."

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation is an organization founded by the American Heart Association and Clinton Foundation that seeks to empower kids to develop lifelong, healthy habits through serving healthier meals and snacks, getting students moving more, offering high-quality physical and health education and empowering school leaders to become healthy role models.

Alliance for a Healthier Generation Award-winning schools serve as examples of a nationwide movement to create healthier environments for kids and are recognized for:

- Meeting or exceeding updated federal nutrition standards for school meals, which include increased fruits and vegetables, whole grain-rich items and meals lower in saturated fat;
- Offering school breakfast to their students every day;
- Meeting or exceeding snack and beverage requirements for the federal Smart Snacks in School standards;
- Implementing district wellness policies and report progress annually; and
- Providing students with at least 60 minutes of physical education per week and ensure activity throughout the school day.

"We have made some very simple but significant changes with how we promote health and wellness with our students," Guffin said.



"Changes have been made in District policies and practices that have made a positive impact on students that we hope will help them create life-long healthy habits."

Each school building in Aberdeen has a staff representative that serves on the District's Healthier Generation committee, along with the Assistant Superintendent, Food Service Director and a School Board member.

Individual schools implemented wellness activities, such as ramped up recess, walking or activity groups before school or during open periods and wellness activity nights, with student participation at all schools having seen a significant increase.

Aberdeen has participated in the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, as well as the Fuel Up to Play 60 program, for the past three years. Each of the last two years the Fuel Up to Play 60 South Dakota Student Ambassador has been a student from Aberdeen.

Alexia Hoven of Holgate Middle School and Dustin Hermansen of Simmons Middle School had the opportunity to travel to a national summit where they picked up great ideas to bring back to the district to continue to enhance students' wellness opportunities.

"The wellness activities that students and their families have engaged in will make a long-term positive impact now and into the future," Guffin said.

"We're excited about building upon our successes."

# STANDOUTS AT SULLY BUTTES

Two Sully Buttes students are standing out by succeeding in the bee and rocking a beat.

Sully Buttes Junior High Student Griffin Petersen won the school's National Geographic Geography Bee for the third consecutive year this school year.

"Winning the bee once is excellent, but three consecutive times is quite a feat," Elementary Principal Shana Davis said.

Students in the fourth through eighth grades participate in the Bee with all 100 eligible students participating in this year's event.

"Having students participate in an academic competition such as the bee allows our district to showcase the academic talents of our students and encourages students to excel in the classroom, as well as on the court, field and stage," Davis said.

The Agar-Blunt-Onida School District has competed in the Bee since the 2002-03 and Griffin's great interest in geography propelled him to be the district's first student to win the local Bee three years in a row.

"The district is pleased to see a student have such a strength in the social sciences," Davis said. "It raises the bar for other students to work on their geography skills and strive to do better in the bee."

The skills of a musical kind by Sully Buttes High School Senior Kole Pickner have been on display for a number of years.

"Whether it's in the elementary, junior high, or high school, our student body knows who Kole is and what he



has accomplished in band and chorus," Band Teacher Erica Guthmiller said.

Kole's musical success started in seventh and eighth grades playing the euphonium. He was selected to the South Dakota Middle School All-State Band both years.

As a freshman in 2014, Kole was selected as a member of the South Dakota All-State Band, which marked the first such selection from Sully Buttes High School since 1990.

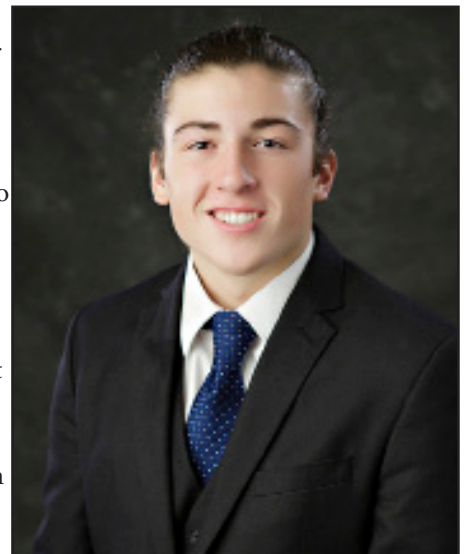
"When Kole was auditioning as a freshman, I knew there had to be a good chance of him making it or at least being very close to making it," Guthmiller said. "When the result lists came out, I remember staring at my computer screen, looking at his name and repeatedly saying, 'He did it - he really did it!'"

"When I told the band about him making it, the excitement in our room was overwhelming. This is a great accomplishment for not only Kole, but for our band department in general."

Kole has been a four-year euphonium player in the South Dakota All-State Band, having the highest audition score in the state both his junior and senior years and earned the honor as the section leader those two years. He was also selected as a member of the All-State Chorus all four years of his high school career.

A musical career students in the district have taken notice of.

"They look up to him, they appreciate him," Guthmiller said, "and most importantly, they respect him for what he has accomplished throughout his junior high and high school years."



# A-H COMMITTED TO YOUNGSTERS



Alcester-Hudson continued the district's commitment to the development and education of their youngest students this year.

With the help of a 21st Century Grant, the district added an after-school program for all kindergarten through sixth grade students.

The after-school program along with the district's more than a decade long commitment to providing free pre-school to all 3 and 4 year-old children in the district have parents particularly pleased with the opportunities.

"The parents are appreciative of the school's efforts to provide as many educational opportunities as possible," A-H Junior and Senior High School Principal LeeAnn Haisch said.

The after-school program hosts 25 to 30 students per day from the time of school dismissal until 6 p.m.

"We wanted to provide an opportunity for students to have a structured and safe environment where they could go after the regular school day was done to engage in educational activities, monitored recreation, and homework help," Haisch said.

Each afternoon the students' time is divided among homework, physical activity, STEM, library and Makerspace, educational games and a snack. Once a week students spend time at the school and community library as part of the program's makerspace lab.

"The students are happy to have a place where they can get their homework done and where they can interact with

their classmates and after-school staff in a fun environment," Haisch said.

From a structured timeslot after school for students to the importance of getting them in school early, the Alcester-Hudson School Board and Administration recognize the importance of early childhood education and for 14 years have committed to a free preschool program.

The pre-school program's enrollment has greatly increased since its inception – this year 60 students at both age levels were enrolled – resulting in staff members being added and free transportation to and from school, as well.

"The parents are supportive of the program," Haisch said.

"They know that our pre-school teacher is a certified early childhood teacher, so the children get age appropriate curriculum, experiences and expectations. They also like that we offer free transportation to and from school which takes that stress off the parents."

Students who may need early interventions are identified by the district and given the help they need to be successful in school, which has resulted in students entering kindergarten with a strong understanding of numbers and the ability to write short sentences.

"Our initial purpose for looking at adding the free pre-school was twofold," Haisch said.

"We were hoping to draw people to our community and school, and we were looking to have more students enter kindergarten better school prepared."



## AC STUDENTS SUCCEED IN RESPECT CHALLENGE

*The Respect Challenge: So many of our elderly population are forgotten about or disregarded... One day we will all be where they are. Is this how we will want to be treated? Our elderly deserve to be honored and respected.*

Positive relationships and respect for all are two human qualities which are stressed at Andes Central.

This year, the district's students took those qualities, and expectations, outside of the school walls and reached out to the elderly members of the Lake Andes Community through monthly visits to the Lake Andes Senior Living Center.

The idea came to be when Lake Andes Senior Living Center Activities Director Crissy Longe approached the district's administration about forming a partnership between the two entities with the hope her residents would benefit from regular student visits and the district's students would gain a special appreciation for the elderly and their importance to everyone's lives and to society.

Visiting schedules for Junior and Senior High students were developed and coordinated with Longe in order for at least monthly visits by Andes Central students to be made.

Throughout the year, Junior and Senior High students sang to residents, played games with them and even conducted some interviews with them about their lives.

"After a visit from the school children the residents here at Lake Andes Senior Living have huge smiles on their faces and it is the topic of the facility for several days," Longe said.

Elementary students also provided some music for the



residents and enjoyed reading to them.

"The Senior Living residents thoroughly enjoy the visits by the students and smiles are abundant on both young and old," Andes Central Elementary Principal Bill Kitchenmaster.

Andes Central Second Grade Teacher Sayde Slovek felt like her students were very respectful when visiting the residents in December as she watched them display a special level of kindness and compassion for them.

"While they were initially a little reluctant and shy, the students quickly warmed up to the residents and enjoyed reading to the residents," Slovek said.

Longe has also witnessed the numerous interactions between the residents and students and believes the endeavor has been well worthwhile.

"The Students from Andes Central have been a great addition to our activity program. It allows the residents an opportunity to engage in intergenerational activities," Longe said

"We greatly appreciate the visits and hope to continue them indefinitely."

Kitchenmaster confirmed Longe's hope, saying, "The Andes Central School District intends to do just that!"



# AMS BAND MEMBERS SHOWCASE SKILLS

Arlington's middle school band members were masters of the music this year.

The 29 members of the seventh and eighth grade band were the only middle school band selected to perform at the South Dakota Bandmasters Association conference in February.

"The students were excited that they were selected,"

Band Director Kelli VanOverbeke said.

The South Dakota Bandmasters Association is a professional organization made up of band directors dedicated to promoting music education

throughout the state.

South Dakota Bandmasters Association hosts an annual conference in which bands can submit entries to perform. This year's conference was held in Brookings. Bands are selected by a committee based on their re-

corded audition.

Arlington's middle school band proved a great platform to display their talents.

"It was a great honor to have our band selected to perform at this event," VanOverbeke said.

"Our district enjoyed the opportunity to showcase our students at this state conference."



# BFHS PROMOTES MCL OPPORTUNITY

In the fall of 2015, Belle Fourche High School started a Mass Customized Learning pilot program with sophomores that showed interest in the opportunity to learn independently.

In the program students are exposed to carefully developed curriculum in English, math, science and social sciences, which allows them to work at their own pace. Though MCL students still have a traditional schedule, they are allowed much more flexibility from their teachers on the time they devote to each class.

“My staff has devoted a lot of time in the summer and on weekends developing rigorous curriculum for these students,” Belle Fourche High School Principal Mathew Raba said, adding that the program is well received by students, parents, and staff.

Customized learning is designed to meet students at their current ability level, and allow them to have more voice and choice with their assignments and time.

Students strong in a particular content area get the chance to work ahead, or dedicate more of their time to a content in which they are not as strong. The learning is mastery based and students do not move on to the next standard, unit or concept until they prove to their teacher they understand and can



apply the material.

“Our hope is that by allowing students to work independently and potentially get ahead in school, they will have more opportunities late in their high school career to take dual credit post-secondary courses,” Raba said.

“They will also have career-based internship opportunities or may choose to dedicate their time to career skills such as welding and carpentry.”

The Belle Fourche Independent Learning Academy (BFILA) began with 14 excited students and four enthusiastic teachers in the fall of 2015.

Now in its second year, BFILA includes 38 students (sophomores and juniors) and eight teachers. The BFILA will bring in another group of sophomores in the fall of 2017 and may look to expand to freshman in the fall of 2018.

“Though it has been a lot of work, they enjoy the unique relationship they’ve formed with their students in helping reach their goals,” Raba said.



# BSC STUDENTS HEAD WEST

For being one of most easterly located districts in the state, the students of the Big Stone City School District still get a Wild West adventure.

Students in the fourth grade class having been visiting West River South Dakota as a part of a class trip for more than 15 years.

“Each fourth grade teacher we have had has kept up the tradition,” Big Stone City School CEO/Business Manager Christopher Folk said. “It all began because the teachers wanted to take the students to experience these wonderful South Dakota places.”

“I think it continues because it is an experience and not something just read about.”

Travelling by bus, students head west to see Mount Rushmore, where they tour the museum and view the monument, visit Wind Cave National Park and take a ranger led tour of the cave, head to the Mammoth Site in Hot Springs for a tour and paleontological dig, finding replica bones of actual size.

Fourth graders and their chaperones hike the Harney Peak #9 trail from Sylvan Lake, weather permitting. If the weather doesn't cooperate, the group rides the 1880 train and visits the School of Mines Geology Museum. There are also stops at Custer State Park and a scenic tour through Badlands National Park.



“As we travel the things we have talked about come alive for the students,” Folk said.

BSC fourth graders visit the “Capitol City” as well, completing a scavenger hunt at the Capitol Building, visiting Capital Lake to see the Fighting Stallions and World War II Memorials and the Korean War and Vietnam War Walls, and going to the Cultural Heritage Museum.

The trip is an exciting opportunity to cap all the students have learned.

“The study hard the entire year preparing for the experience,” Folk said. “They are enthusiastic about going on the trip. For some it is a once in a lifetime trip.”

# BISON'S BRIGHT YEAR

There was a great deal to cheer about in the Bison School District over the past year.

Last spring the 12-member high school boys track team took home the Class B State Championship, as well as the Region Eight championship.

“Those boys had an amazing season!” Superintendent Marilyn Azevedo said.

In the fall, the Cardinal football team earned a 6-2 record and for the second year qualified for the playoffs.

“Our students represented us well and displayed excellent sportsmanship,” Azevedo said. “We will be sadly saying our goodbye to our five seniors who were a major factor in our winning season.”

Bison’s volleyball team reached the District Championship game in the fall after posting a 21-4 record. The team was led by their seven seniors and Head Coach Kalin Chapman.

“This year’s group of senior volleyball girls were lucky enough to have had Coach Chapman from seventh grade through senior year,” Bison School Board Member Marcie Brownlee-Kari said, adding that Chapman has been a great influence on not only her players, but all students in the district.

“Consistent training, coaching – mental and physical – and mentoring made a huge difference in lives of those senior girls.”

Bison’s Oral Interp team also had a wonderful year, representing the school district well at the State Oral Interp Festival in Harrisburg. Students Veronica Voller and Katherine Kvale competed in Duet, and Sarah Hatle competed in Story Telling.

Elementary students in the district had the opportunity to participate in a scheduled Art class exposing them to another exciting hands on curriculum area. This is the second year of the Cardinal Character program for the elementary school.

“It is a school wide effort to foster good character and decision

making skills focusing on citizenship, respect, caring, fairness, responsibility, and trustworthiness,” Azevedo said.

Each year the school participates in a Artist in Residency program and Dakota Players performance residency; this year the district added the Author

in residency program to allow students the opportunity to work with a professional writer.

“These are positive learning experiences that our students truly enjoy!” Azevedo said.

Finally, the school district completed its second year of their mentoring program for all teachers in their first three years in our district.

“It helps them with their day to day challenges and to foster teacher growth in our small community,” Azevedo said.





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# BVIS STUDENTS SUCCEED WITH PBIS

Brandon Valley's Intermediate School piloted a program promoting positive interaction and behavior among its fifth and sixth grade students and staff.

The PBIS program, which stands for Positive Behavior Intervention Support, began this year at the Intermediate School. BVIS uses PBIS to:

- Teach and Model Expected Behavior;
- Reward Positive Behavior;
- Provide Interventions in a Consistent Manner.

"I think PBIS is an outstanding program. It creates common verbiage and common language regarding expectations on student behaviors at our Intermediate School," Superintendent Jarod Larson said.

PBIS comes with four expectations:

- We are Respectful;
- We are Responsible;
- We are Active Learners;
- We are Safe.

Those four behavior expectations come with rules under each category for the school's lunch room, hallway, playground and the restroom.



"I like the four rules and everything to follow. I thought the teachers (had) a great idea about this," Fifth Grade Student Ben Livingston said.

Students following the rules – by being active learners, helping their fellow students or respecting the rules set forth in PBIS, among other things – earn tickets they can use to participate in fun activities.

"I earned my first ticket by staying after orchestra in the orchestra room and picking up chairs and putting stands away," Sixth Grade Student Sam Dickson said.

One of the activities fifth and sixth grade students earned tickets to this fall was for a Fun Day where they could pick a movie to watch.

As PBIS continues to grow and will be implemented district-wide for 2017-18 school year as part of "The Lynx Way" program, which encompasses a broad version of this PBIS model.

"I'm really excited to see it grow and become a key component of our school system," Larson said. "I think it's excellent."



# PLC'S BRING BENEFITS TO BROOKINGS



This fall the Brookings School District embarked upon a new education endeavor to continue their focus of enhancing student achievement.

“Brookings has been and continues to be a high achieving school district,” Brookings Superintendent Klint Willert said. “We are continually focused on improving student success and supporting teacher quality and effectiveness.”

To support high levels of student achievement and improve and invest in teacher quality the district established Professional Learning Communities (PLC’s), which are collaborative teams of educators engaged in an ongoing process of improvement.

Teachers work interdependently within their team – organized based on common grade levels and in shared content areas – to improve instruction by reviewing and narrowing essential standards, by consistently monitoring student progress using common formative assessments and reviewing the impact of instruction on the assessment results.

The organization of the teams creates opportunities to focus on the essential standards and create consistency across sections in buildings and, ultimately, across the entire district.

“Over the last two years, the district has made a very concerted effort to function as a school system rather than a system of schools,” Willert said.

“We are deeply committed to the effectiveness and quality of the teachers and the professional learning community model is an evidence-based model for systematically and systemically improving instruction.”

Brookings embraced the DuFour PLC model, which focuses on four questions:

1. What do we expect our students to learn?
2. How will we know if the students are learning?
3. How will our team respond when students don’t model or demonstrate success in their learning?
4. How will our team respond if students already know it?

This spring the teacher PLC teams started focusing on the first question of the model, pulling apart the academic standards and focus on narrowing the curriculum to the essential standards. Once the district completes this first step in the process it will enter the next phase of implementation by focusing on the understanding, developing, and implementing common formative assessments in the district.

“Ultimately, the Brookings School District anticipates several significant and lasting benefits,” Willert said.

Willert said the district aims to create a culture that embraces collaboration across many levels, adding greater depth in the curriculum, improve teacher effectiveness while also creating a culture of support and, most important, the improving student outcomes.

“Each of these efforts requires time, commitment and dedication. The Brookings School District and community is committed to preparing students to be successful learners for life,” Willert said, adding that feedback from teachers on the program has been overwhelmingly positive.

“While it may take time and dedication, we know that improvements and results will be worth it in the end.”



# CHS BUILDING BRIGHT FUTURE IN ORAL INTERP

What does it take to build a program from the ground up? The answer, of course, is not simple and the process is not quick.

The Chamberlain High School Oral Interp program, which is the actual performing of literature aloud to communicate meaning to an audience, is an example of an activity that is growing, one building block at a time.

In 2010, the Oral Interp program was cut from the Chamberlain School District, but in 2015 the school board decided to bring back the program, as many students had expressed an interest and there were willing staff members to fill the advisor position.

Rita Cook, a former Chamberlain High School teacher, began the resurgence of the program with six students participating in the activity during the 2015-16 school year.

At the end of the season, CHS Student Mikayla Meyer made it to state competition and two other students were selected as alternates.

Since then, Amanda Longhenry has enthusiastically taken over the Oral Interp advisor role.

The 2016-17 school year boasted 24 students who participated during the season, nine qualifying for region and eight qualifying for state competition.

“The resurgence began with students from the previous year encouraging others to join the activity,” Chamberlain Superintendent Debbie Johnson said.

Students had meetings in the spring, met during the summer for “Oral Interp Camp” and planned fun activities together and began discussing and choosing their selections for the up-coming competitions.

Even though students have a wide variety of choices for their selections, what they choose must fit into one of the following categories:

1. Non-Original Oratory;
2. Serious Reading;
3. Poetry Reading;
4. Humorous Reading;
5. Duet Interpretation;
6. Story Telling; and
7. Readers Theatre.

Before competing at events, the group sponsored a very successful Dinner Theatre, which helped them defray some



costs of the program. Students performed their competition selections for their families and community members.

“Students gain confidence in speaking in front of others, learn aspects of timing and transitioning and understand the importance of taking deep breaths,” Johnson said, adding that other benefits of Oral Interp include meeting new people and making new friends.

“There is no score board and there are no time outs in Oral Interp, but practice time is the key to success.”

During the regular season CHS students competed in Pierre, Sioux Falls and Chamberlain, which was a home contest with staff and community members being the judges.

“The judges were impressed with the quality and variety of the selections that were performed,” Johnson said.

After the regular season there was a region competition and finally the State Oral Interp Festival in Harrisburg. Students had worked all season to earn a superior rating at the state competition, which is the equivalent of a state championship in the sports world and

Longhenry took several students to Brandon Valley after the season was over to meet with Gina Koehn, an Oral Interp Coach and former CHS Graduate, where they observed an Oral Interp class, reviewed new pieces that they could possibly use for next year and gathered tips and ideas to improve their performances and program.

“The building of a program from the ground up takes time, patience and commitment,” Johnson said. “All of which are represented in the current Oral Interp program.”

“We look for it to have a bright future!”

# C-E STUDENTS STEP UP TO HELP

Colman-Egan Student Mark Collins, who has nonverbal Cerebral Palsy, moved into his own apartment this January located in the Harth House in Madison, which is a supervised residential group home for people with disabilities.

This big step for Mark, 19, wouldn't have been possible without some generous support from peers and others around the Colman-Egan School District and Madison community.

The Colman-Egan School District and Montgomery's Furniture of Madison teamed up to donate furniture for Mark's new apartment.

With the smile that Mark put on everybody's face, the C-E Class of 2017 wanted to repay him and did so by rais-

ing money through 50/50 raffle tickets at basketball games, with funds used to buy Mark his own dresser. Montgomery's donated a bed and sold the dresser to the C-E students at a discounted price.

A number of students took a bus over to Madison to pick up the furniture and help Mark move to his apartment.

"The Colman-Egan School has been such a good experience for Mark," Special Education Consultant from Valiant Living – where Mark has

attended since August of 2016 – Perry Johnson said.

"The social acceptance and social courtesy this high school has shown to him, is exemplary."

Mark's family is very thankful of how much Montgomery's and the Colman-Egan School District helped them along the way.

"I wish all students that come here would have

the positive self-esteem and determination that he has," Johnson said. "I think the Colman-Egan Special Education program deserves credit for that."

Mark, who was chosen as homecoming king in 2015 by his fellow students, is thankful for the support he has received along the

way and very happy with his new apartment.

It's happiness shared by those from the district, who are very excited for him to be on his own and doing well.

"You think of someone who's nonverbal, who can't talk, and he's got the personality of a rock star," C-E School 7-12 Special Education Teacher Tara Pemrick said.

"The student body just loves him."



# HAWKS ACTIVITIES SHOWCASED ON SPORTSCENTER

At the beginning of the 2015 school year a weekly episode titled: Colman-Egan Sportscenter, kicked off on the Colman-Egan School's YouTube page.

Colman-Egan Sportscenter is a weekly sportscast that showcases the athletics and fine arts events that happened that week in the district.

It started as just an idea at the beginning of the 2015-16 school year – with the first episode airing on September 2 – but has grown into a big hit around Colman-Egan.

“As the sportscast grew over the first few months of being ‘on the air,’ content of the video improved and delivery of stats and highlights became more fluent,” Colman-Egan Junior Carter Schmidt, host of the sportscast, said.

A lot of work goes in to the making of Colman-Egan Sportscenter, beginning with

retrieving the stats for the event, writing the script, editing video for highlights, recording on camera takes, editing the final video and, finally, uploading the brand new episode to the Colman-Egan School YouTube page.

Approximately three to five hours of work could be put in a week to deliver the sportscast to viewers.

At the beginning of 2017, a one-time deal with KSFY-TV to record an episode of Colman-Egan Sportscenter in the ABC affiliate's studio turned in to an opportunity to record the sportscast every Sunday at the brand new KSFY news station and the chance to

use their editing software to edit the video at a faster rate.

“This has brought in more viewers and made the job much easier,” Schmidt said.



# C-S SENIOR'S PROJECT LENDING HELPING HAND

Each year, senior students in the Corsica-Stickney complete a project that includes an event, physical project or job shadowing, as well as a paper, to promote college readiness and independence.

This year, Corsica-Stickney Senior Hunter Johnson lent a helping hand for a family friend through his project.

Johnson hosted a bean bag tournament with free will donation supper afterwards to benefit Les Groeneweg, who was battling pancreatic cancer. Les unfortunately lost his battle with cancer in November.

"He's always been a family friend to us," Johnson said.

Thirty-three teams paid the entry fee for the bean bag tournament more than 300 people were served at the supper, which also featured an auction of homemade and donated gifts and baskets.

The events raised \$20,000 to help with treatment and travel costs.

"I expected it to go as good as it did," Johnson said. "A turn out like this is only possible because we live in a small community."

Along with the funds raised, Johnson, who plans to attend Mitchell Technical Institute for Electrical Construction and Maintenance, constructed a wooden bean bag board set and all who attended the "Tossin for Les"



event signed the board, which Les was given as a keepsake for the event.

"I believe Hunter displays the character exemplified in the caring and family culture of rural South Dakota Communities where you help your neighbor in a time of need," Superintendent Scott Muckey said, adding he hopes fellow C-S students "never forget where they came from and continue to display and practice the caring and respectful culture of rural South Dakota."

Character exemplified by Johnson is also ingrained in the community, said Muckey.

"The Corsica-Stickney area residents are very generous and supportive of community members," Muckey said.

"I believe it is typical of South Dakota communities that when a cause presents itself the people are supportive, caring and compassionate for their neighbors."



# DE SMET GOES ONE-TO-ONE IN FOURTH-EIGHTH GRADES

DeSmet School District equipped students with critical thinking and technology skills by rolling out a one-to-one laptop initiative for their middle school and fourth and fifth grade students this year.

“Our goal is to enable teachers to deliver more personalized content to students, to boost students’ technology skills and to empower children to do more complex and creative work,” Superintendent Abi Van Regenmorter said.

More than 60 middle school students and 30 in the fourth and fifth grades benefitted from the laptop initiative, which was funded through local capital and general tax dollars, as well as teachers, who have been excited to see the increase of engagement with their students.

“As a district we have provided them with opportunities for professional development and some training along the way for moving forward with the initiative,”



Middle and High School Principal Mike Warne said. “The reaction of the staff has been pretty good.”

“We dispersed the laptops to the (middle school) students on one of the first mornings back in session after Christmas Break and some of the staff members were utilizing them in classrooms in the afternoon of the same day.”

The students were excited to have more access to technology as the fifth grade class connected with a class in Texas to share learning and projects with one another and used Google Hangout to discuss a novel and learn about one another.

These opportunities provide students at the fourth and fifth grade and middle school levels the chance to gain skills necessary to promote growth in utilizing technology to make them successful in a high school and post-secondary institution setting, along with skills necessary to function in a workplace setting with technology.

“We hope that students having access to technology and materials for their classes at school and at home will increase their knowledge and understanding of the concepts that they are learning,” Warne said.



# CUSTOMIZED LEARNING COMES TO DEUEL MS

The implementation of Mass Customized Learning produced many positive results for Deuel Middle School this year.

Deuel was selected to become part of the Bush Foundation Grant through TIE leading the administration to identify areas they thought could have the most success in implementing the customize learning programs.

“Through various meetings with staff, we felt that the middle school teachers were ready to take on the challenge of moving to a customized learning environment,” Middle and High School Principal Eric Bass said.

“We felt that the students in the middle school would be more open to the idea and it would be a good starting point that we could expand from in the coming years.”

All middle school students in the four core classes – English Language Arts, Social Studies, Science and Math – took part in fully customized courses with other middle school teachers encouraged to try to customize as much as possible this year with the expectation to be fully customized in 2017-2018.

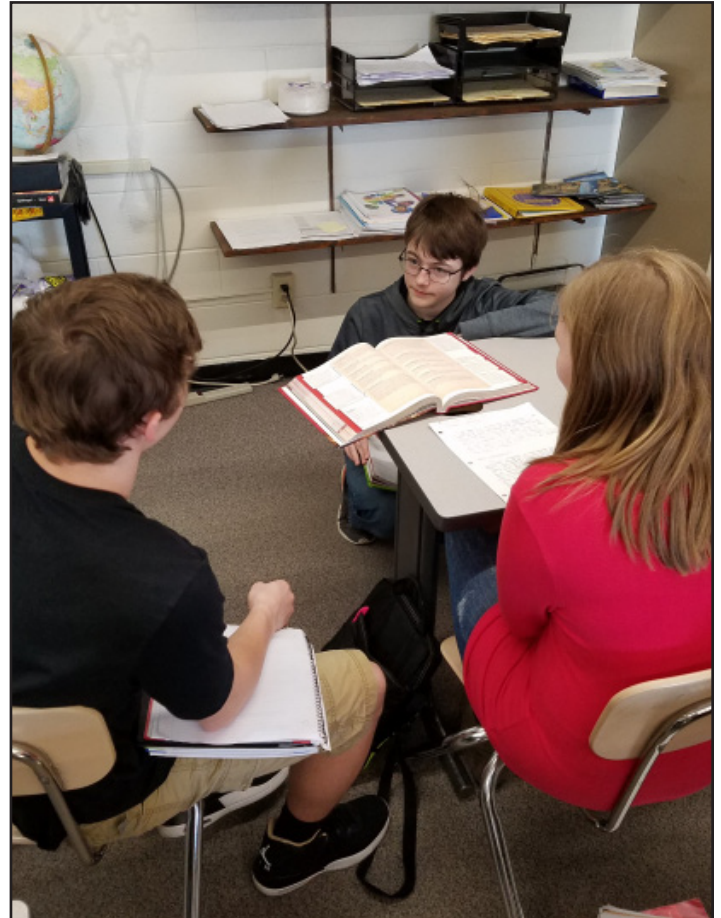
“The reaction from the teachers has been very positive,” Bass said. “They feel that they have a better understanding of each one of their students and where they are at in their educational needs.”

“Their willingness to work through issues that may arise has been a big reason the program has had the success we have been able to have.”

Teachers led large and small group instruction throughout the day and met one on one with students more often than in a traditional classroom. The district utilized a learning management system called Schoology as the central hub for all student materials, and the Kairos program, which allows students the flexibility to select which classes they attend on a daily basis and teachers the ability to schedule individual students or groups of students throughout the day.

The district focused on the mastery concept of learning, allowing students to show what they know and move at their own pace in order for students to have a solid grasp of the ideas or concepts before they can take on the next step in the class.

“We have allowed students to have some choice in their scheduling throughout the day in which they can schedule



themselves into teachers’ classrooms where they may need extra help in,” Bass said.

“Students really enjoy having the choice and we have seen students take more responsibility for their learning because they have to identify where they need help.”

That responsibility of choice coupled with the parameters of customized learning have Deuel Middle School urging students to start to take more of an interest in their education and become more responsible learners.

“When students have choice in what they get to work on, when they get to work on it, and have more access to teachers, their joy for learning increases,” Bass said.

“We want our students to become curious about the world around them and want them learn about things that interest them and we feel with customized learning we can meet the needs of all of the students in our school.”

# DUPREE PROJECT PAINTS A PICTURE

The Dupree School After School Program offered Dupree High School students an opportunity to get involved artistically by painting a unique chalkboard mural.

The purpose of the project was to get more high school students involved in participating in after school activities and to also have a location in the school showcasing school events by announcing activities, congratulating students on their successes and welcoming the public.

Last year high school students worked on an “interactive chalkboard” project with Art Instructor Jessie Longbrake.

Students began the project by turning a brick wall into a flat paintable surface by applying joint compound and sanding it smooth to prepare wall for paint. The students used acrylic paint markers, which gave them the freedom to create amazing details.

The chalkboard mural designed by the students features many different origins of actual students who attend the Dupree School.

“The month long after school project was an awe-



inspiring opportunity for students to leave their mark on the school,” Dupree Business Manager Connie Alspach said.

Enthusiasm was piqued among students, who are expressing interest in doing a number of smaller murals throughout the school to tie in with the original project.

The district received a NIISA Stepping Stone Grant that was utilized this year for a project titled “Mural – Mural on the Walls ~ Pride & Culture Tells it All.”

Through the mural project, students are able to connect and interact with an artist who mixes heritage & artwork in a distinctive way. The approach will then allow students to paint “real students”; either themselves or classmates on the school building walls illustrating pride in their roots.

“Both project activities have allowed us to bring arts to our school community,” Alspach said.

“Students have been given an opportunity to demonstrate pride in their culture, pride in their art work, pride in their school and an opportunity to showcase their accomplishments to their parents/guardians, our community and visitors.”



# CEB STUDENTS HIT BULLSEYE IN ARCHERY

Cheyenne-Eagle Butte Upper Elementary School and 21st Century Education have sponsored Archery in the Schools and an After School Archery program for several years.

Each year, about 400 students participate in the Archery in the Schools program as part of the school's P.E. program with Physical Education Teacher Allen Benoist. The South Dakota Game Fish and Parks helped the school get started with equipment and training and Benoist was recently trained as an archery trainer.

The archery unit in P.E. teaches all third through sixth grade students the basics of archery and gives them practice in proper stance and basic shooting techniques. Students start out with lessons for archers and they become familiar with the 11 steps of excellence in archery. Students practice with 3-D and Bull's Eye targets.

"The school sees this program as a positive, culturally relevant activity for students," Eagle Butte Superintendent Carol Veit said.



The school and tribal youth programs work together to sponsor a tournament each spring with tribal youth programs and 21st Century sponsoring after school archery practices, support personnel and travel to tournaments.

The After School Archery program allows students who have learned about archery in Physical Education classes to participate in after school archery practice, as well. These students then participate in Archery tournaments and the state archery contest.

For the past two years, the C-EB Upper Elementary team of students in the third through fifth grades have won the state contest and competed at Nationals and sixth grade students who were in the state's top ten archers also participated at Nationals in Kentucky.

This year, students in the third through 12th grades practiced as a part of in-school and after school archery program with about 50 students participating in tournaments.



# EDGEMONT CUSTOMIZES STUDENTS' EDUCATION

Change is a very difficult process, especially in a school, but after much research and discussion, staff, school board and community meetings and conversations with parents and teachers, the Edgemont School District moved forward with customized learning.

With assistance from the Bush Grant through TIE and the Classroom Innovation Grant, the district moved to the totally a learner-centered concept of customized learning.

“Our teachers have really been searching for a way to better reach students and to ensure they are actually mastering the concepts we are teaching them, not simply getting exposure,” Assistant Principal Amy Ferley said.

“Since our school is so small, we already have a close relationship with students and know them quite well; it makes sense to use those relationships to better the education experience.”

The district combined its Kindergarten, first and second grade classrooms with two teachers in order to group and regroup students according to their needs with the third through fifth grade teachers working together to group and regroup students across grade levels as well, focusing on a math unit as well as reading groups.

“At this point, our elementary levels are all in customized learning,” Ferley said.

“We have combined grade level classrooms in order group and regroup learners according to their learning levels, rather than their ages.”

In the middle school, teachers are working together



between classrooms to help students learn at their own pace and levels and at the high school level, individual teachers are flipping their classrooms and customizing learning.

“In the middle and high school, there is a lot more self-paced learning happening, especially in the English classroom, as well as more customized units in other classes,” Ferley said.

“The technology teacher has done a lot of project-based learning and is also using self-paced assignments. Our middle and high school science teachers are working on improving learner agency.”

In the customized learning model, students have to take more responsibility for their learning, trying a concept and problem solving before running to the teacher to have them approve every step of the learning process.

Ferley said overall students have appreciated the self-paced work, in that those who master a concept quickly do not have to wait for the rest of the class to understand it before moving on, and those who struggle with a concept do not feel pressured that they are the only person in the room not getting it.

“We know that not every student learns in the same way or on the same day,” Ferley said.

“We hope that by teaching students in the way that they learn and by giving them more of the responsibility to learn at their own pace and at their own level, they will be more excited about learning and carry that love of learning into their adult lives.”



# ELKTON ENHANCES ELL EDUCATION

In March of 2016, the Elkton School Board approved a recommendation from the district's enhancement committee to enhance the education of English Language Learners.

The Board and the committee asked themselves the following questions from Georgia State Director of Educator Preparation Dr. David Hill:

- Is this decision in the best interest of our children?
- Is this decision in the best interest of teachers?
- Is this decision in the best interest of parents?
- Is this decision in the best interest of school leaders?

Because the groups were able to answer yes to all of the questions, the school district partnered with South Dakota State University to provide an English Language Learners Endorsement for all interested staff members and opened it up to neighboring school districts, as well.

"We were faced with an unfamiliar responsibility, teaching a growing population of ELL students in the general education classroom," Elkton Superintendent Brian Jandahl said. "This is an opportunity for the enhancement committee to transform teaching and learning for our ELL population."

Twenty cohort members from Elkton, two from the Rutland School District and one teacher from SDSU started the endorsement classes first semester last fall. The course's delivery method is a hybrid model with two face to face class sessions each month in Elkton and two classes per month completed online.

The district is paying for the twelve credits needed from SDSU with staff members successfully completing the endorsement set to receive a \$500 bonus this year and a \$500 pay raise for the 2017-18 school year. Two additional teachers in Elkton who completed a similar endorsement program will also receive the same pay raise.

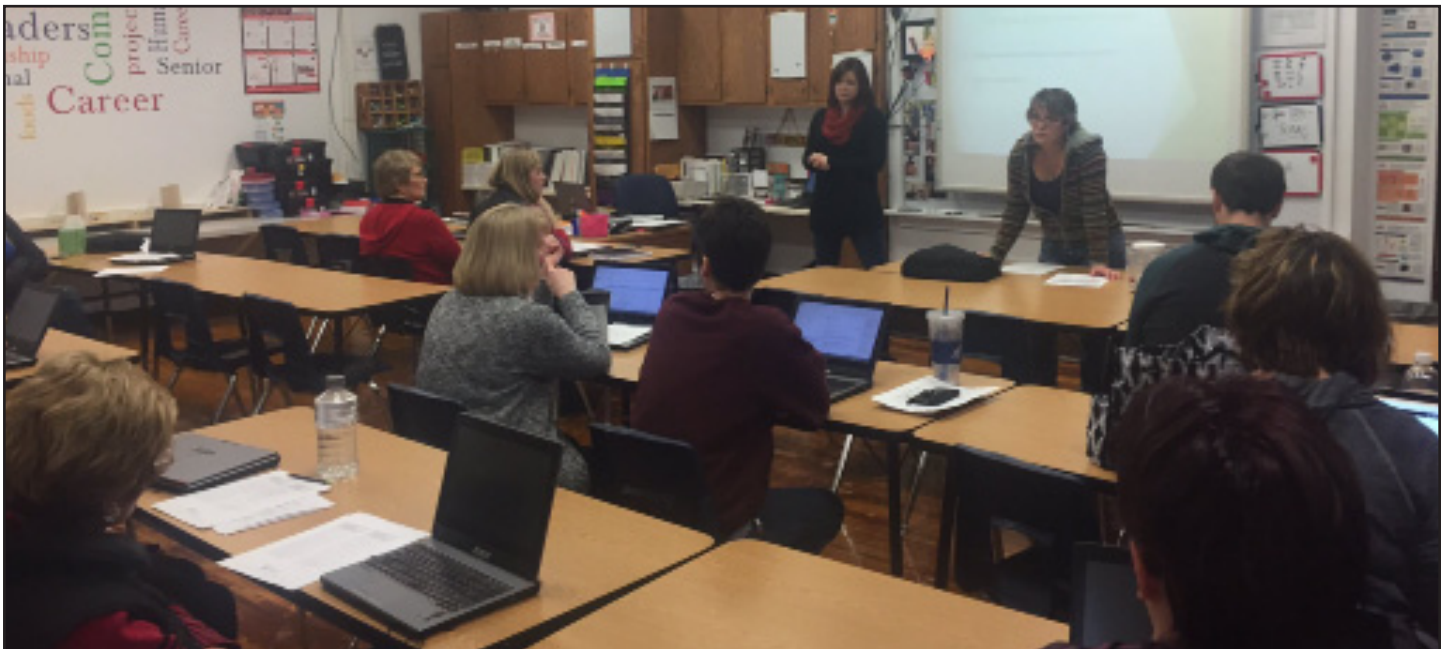
Partnering with SDSU and other school districts allowed Elkton to work with more diverse colleagues and constituents.

"In order to get results without formal authority, we realized that we needed to get formal training. We are seeing highly visible results in the form of positive relationship development with our new partners," Jandahl said.

"We are looking forward to next year as we will be able to fully implement our new methods."



# FAULKTON FINDS PARTNER FOR PROF. DEVELOPMENT



In rural South Dakota it is not always easy to find professional development opportunities close by that will be as beneficial as possible for staff members, so the Faulkton and Redfield school districts joined forces for a joint in-service day.

“The idea that we could partner with a school district close by, pool some resources and learn from each other was the motivation,” Faulkton Superintendent Derek Barrios said.

“Every school district is full of professionals that can teach and collaborate with other teachers to grow professionally.”

Classified and certified professionals, as well as administrators, from both districts took part in the joint venture with staff members both presenting and attending best practices sessions of their choice that included: Standards Based Report Cards, Edgenuity, Using Outlook Calendar, Osmo, Working Beyond Behaviors with Adobe Spark, How a School Coun-

selor Can Help and grade level or content-specific meetings.

“The biggest benefit was the ability for our staff to choose what sessions they attended and for them to be able to have those meaningful conversations with other staff members,” Barrios said.

“I feel like it also confirmed that we need to work to grow this opportunity for staff in the years to come.”

Feedback suggested the same with survey reporting 70 percent of the staff felt it was an effective use of their time that day and 81 percent of staff felt that the in-service improved their teaching skills, as well.

Those results merited another cooperative learning opportunity.

“We already have a date set for next year’s joint in-service,” Barrios said.

“We are looking to grow this in-service to a yearly event and involving many more schools from the Faulkton and Redfield areas.”

# FAMILY NIGHT FUN AT GROTON AREA

The third annual Family Night was held at the Groton Area Middle and High School Gym and Arena on this fall.

Family Night originally started as a replacement for Open House, previously held the day before school started each fall. Open House did not and cannot offer all of the opportunities and benefits, which have been incorporated into Family Night.

“Parents and students often visit the school for a variety of athletic events and other activities,” Middle and High School Principal Dr. Anna Schwan said, “but I’d like to have them come to the school together for our most important mission: academic purposes.”

“That is the main goal of Family Night. We want to highlight what the teachers do here; what the students learn here.”



Students shared with their parents the various projects and activities they were involved in while other students might be involved in instrumental and vocal presentations.

Each middle and high school teachers was involved in some way, with all of them having a “booth” of sorts to showcase their students and their work. Teachers used computers, their Smart Boards, or displaying work handed in for special assignments.

Tours of the middle and high school building were offered for people to see the old part of the building and take a look at the plans for updating and improving the facility.

The night was a positive experience for attendees, as there were at least fifteen post-secondary representatives in attendance, which was convenient for the parents and students, school shirts, jackets and other items of clothing were sold and a performance of the all-school play: *The Blithe Spirit*, was performed.



# GROTON AREA, LOCAL DISTRICTS RAISE FUNDS AND AWARENESS

The sixth annual Breast Cancer Fundraiser (BCF), which is an annual event taking place at a home volleyball game during Breast Cancer Awareness Month, was held at Groton Area High School.

For the past three years, the volleyball teams from the Groton Area School District and the Northwestern Area School District have co-sponsored this event.

The t-shirts last year were designed by Groton with Northwestern coming up with the design this year. For the last three years Northwestern School has printed the t-shirts in a class called N/W Ink.

Even though this year's event was held at the Groton-Langford volleyball game, it usually corresponds with the volleyball game between the Groton Tigers and the Northwestern Wildcats. A large BCF event is held every other year, with this year's fundraiser being a smaller, "off-year" observance in Groton.

A full-fledged BCF event includes a bake sale, the sale of pink t-shirts, a silent auction, and all athletes wearing pink. For a smaller observance the host school will simply have a bake sale, the t-shirt sale, and a small silent auction. By looking at the event held in Groton on October 3, 2016, it is hard to imagine what a "full-fledged" event would look like!

Many individuals help make the a big success by donating baked goods, items for the silent auction, and other support for the project with their generous purchases and donations.

The food donations, almost all of them pink, of course,



include cup cakes, cookies, dipped pretzels, puppy chow, candy, banana bread, and much, much more!

Groton Area School District Employee Karin Bartell donated many unique food and craft items and plush pumpkins, made from old sweaters, were donated to Avera's Imaging Center in Aberdeen for every woman who has a mammogram during the month of October receiving them as a gift.

Jan Hoffman, a paraprofessional in the special education department at Groton Area High School, and Kelli Hanson, a Groton graduate and an employee of the Avera Imaging Center in Aberdeen, have been spearheading the event since 2011.

Hoffman and Hanson have help from a committee of thirteen, including: Liz Doeden, Denise Raap, Peggy Simon, Ann Gibbs, Chris Wheeting, Stacey Oliver, Tiffany Unzen, Alexa Schuring, and Kristie Flihs.

For the last 3 years, Groton's donation has been designated to the Don and Carmen Meyer Center of Excellence. A rotating screen, located in the lobby of the west entrance to St. Luke's Hospital, shows all of the donors. Groton School is listed as a "Patron" with a donation of \$5,000 - \$10,000.

The total changes as the donations continue to pour in. The previous total donated from the Groton Area School District was \$14,201. That amount will now be changed when this year's donation of \$2164.00 is added.



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# PHS FCCLA CARRIES ON CHRISTMAS TRADITION

For the 20th year the Philip High School FCCLA (Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America) Chapter sponsored the district's FCCLA Maggie Grace Angel Tree, which collects Christmas gifts for children in need in Haakon County.

Gifts are collected and distributed about a week prior to Christmas, so they can be in place for the holiday, and this year volunteer Santas delivered more than 300 gifts to area children in need.

"Our generous community never fails to provide more gifts than are asked for!" Philip High School FACS Teacher and FCCLA Adviser Brigitte Brucklacher said.

"The gifts are gratefully received and generously given!"

The tradition of generosity came to be after a tragedy when, in 2002, Maggie Grace Mehlhaff passed away a few days before Christmas. The angel tree is named in her honor.

"Because this little girl never got to open a Christmas present, we collect gifts for

area children who may not get a Christmas due to family or financial circumstances," Brucklacher said.

Through teachers, churches, social services, and community health nurses, a list of children in need is compiled. The Haakon County Courthouse hosts a Parade of Trees each year, which is where the Angel Tree is located.

Brucklacher said students give gifts for community service activities, classes or school groups often partner together to provide gifts and FCCLA members dedicate their time to the project, often times

being thankful for the opportunity to help.

"Once a FCCLA member helps with the Angel Tree as a Freshman, they are hooked for the next three years!" Brucklacher said.

"They see such appreciation and generosity it truly is life changing. The members who help are full of compassion and service!"

"They would tell you it makes their Christmas knowing what they have done to make the difference in the life of a child."



# PHILIP HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS SHINE

In Laura O'Connor's Philip High School English Class, 2016-17 proved an accomplished and fun year.

In order to encourage an enjoyment of reading, O'Connor provides reading time for her students in each class period and to try something new this year, she and her students competed against a nearby school in reading time.

Each quarter, O'Connor and Kadoka English Teacher Jessica Magelky tracked the amount of pages each class had read independently. Students read more than 355,000 pages in the first two quarters of the year.

"Having the teachers compete against one another has also added to the spirit of the competition," O'Connor said.

It's become a tradition at PHS to decorate O'Connor's classroom on the day after Thanksgiving vacation. Classes get a specified amount of time to decorate the classroom; at the end of the day, the classroom lights go off and the Christmas lights go on!

"My students and I enjoy class by Christmas lights for just about three weeks during the

Christmas season," O'Connor said. "It is a tradition we all look forward to!"

Finally, the district's one act play group had a successful year.

To perform at the state festival, schools participating in the SDHSAA one act play event must first compete at the region level. Typically in Class B, there are seven schools vying for the two spots from each region, which qualify them for the state festival.



In January, the cast of "Gossip" competed at regions and advanced to the state festival held at the Northern State University campus in Aberdeen in February.

While there, student performers were able to watch multiple shows in addition to performing their own.

When the awards ceremony was held, PHS actors brought home four Outstanding Performer awards and one of the five Superior Play awards given to Class B school plays, of which there were sixteen at the festival.

"The kids are to be commended on a job well done!" O'Connor said.



# HANSON'S EXPANSION

*Courtesy of Caitlyn Peetz of the Mitchell Daily Republic*

If history repeats itself, the Hanson School District could soon see an enrollment spike.

On Monday, school officials held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for its recently completed \$2.6 million expansion, another item added to the long list of renovation projects the district has undertaken in the past half-decade.

In the past five years, the district has built a new elementary wing and a library wing, and prior to these projects, the district added band, choir and special education classrooms.

Then, in a separate project, renovated the school's gym, all of which Superintendent Jim Bridge said likely played a major role in the district's influx of 125 students in the past 10 years.

"Every time we've built onto our school, we've added kids. There's no rhyme or reason to how that happens, but it happens and I don't think a lot of communities in our area are able to claim that," Bridge said.

"I hope 10 years from now we're up another 125 kids."

But, for now, the district is focused on reveling in the rewards of a years long process to complete the project.

Today, students will be tasked with helping faculty and staff move into the 10-classroom addition, and Bridge said he couldn't be more excited. And part of that excitement comes from being able to do so two months ahead of the original April projected completion date.

The expansion is located between the community library and garage structure on the south side of the school, and is attached to the existing school structure. The classrooms will be used for middle and high school English, science and math.

Additionally, there are administration offices and a centralized entrance to the school.

"How could you not be excited?" Bridge said. "It's very encouraging for our community. It feels like the



*Courtesy of the Alexandria Herald*

first day of school, the last day of school and Christmas vacation all piled into one."

Next, the district will begin working on an extra addition in the school's courtyard which will add two more classrooms and install new heating and cooling systems.

Because of its location, School Board President Gary Jarding said school officials opted to hold off on starting this phase of the project because certain classrooms will be out of commission while the courtyard expansion is being completed. Thus, the board felt it prudent to ensure the main expansion would be completed to squash any space concerns, Jarding said.

A 17-year member of the Hanson School Board, Jarding has been part of several renovation and expansion projects, but he said they've all gone over with ease among the community members.

And this project is no exception.

"They've seen before that we can do it, so they have faith that the projects we do will help us grow," Jarding said.

"Every building project we've done has been positive and nicer buildings always contribute to bringing in more kids — this one should do the same."

## BIG PLANS IN PERSONALIZED LEARNING AT FREEDOM ELEM.

Think about this familiar situation, for a second: Student A is in 2nd grade and struggles with reading. Students are not finding their passions, and instead sitting in classes consuming information. The end of the year comes, and the student is ready for 3rd grade in math—but not 3rd grade reading.

See where frustration starts to kick in?

To combat this issue, Harrisburg School District took concrete steps to go from teacher-driven to student driven learning. How? They eliminated grade levels and implemented a flexible collection of learning environments for students.

“At Harrisburg Freedom Elementary, we have big plans for our personalized learning model,” Assistant Principal Travis Lape said. “Essentially, our personalized learning program moved from teacher-centered to learner-centered classrooms.”

Freedom Elementary was able to make the transition by utilizing:

1. **More active learning**, so that learners are not merely more active through creating, deciding, and so on, but are also more actively learning through the positive review of their experience and the meaning-making this involves;
2. **More collaborative learning**, so that learners come to see themselves and others as resources in meaning-making, rather than the teacher being the sole fount of knowledge;
3. **More learner-driven learning**, so that learners come to drive the agenda as they generate questions, organize inquiry and evaluate their products and progress.

“The big kicker: we have decided to eliminate grades for our learners,” Lape said.

The personalized-learning track utilized by Freedom Elementary is designed for 94 students in the second through fifth grades and is moving away from the grade specific classrooms.

Instead of being confined to grade-level classes, students moved in “studios.” Studios are aligned to grade level standards determined by four teachers – identified as “studio coaches” – but the students won’t know if they are moving up or down. In fact, there are no numbers involved; each studio will be a letter of our program, called EPIC (Empowering, Personalizing, Innovating, Creating).

Each school day started with a morning meeting to explain the offerings for the day, followed by a healthy dose of student choice. Students selected which studio activity they’d like to use – each and every single day.

“This will give the learners voice and choice in what area do they need to be in to work on the different assignments, without confining them to grade level-specific activities,” Lape said.

A group of learners tackling “reading and writing” have the following experience:

- Students arrive to school and head to their “studio” for the Daily Dish. This will be where they get any announcements



for the day;

- After the Daily Dish, when students head into Reading and Writing, they can select a studio activity from the chart above. Learners will have “must do’s” to complete, but once they are ready to show mastery, they will be able to show it however they choose;
- At the end of Reading and Writing time, learners reflect on what they did well and what they need support on tomorrow. This feedback to the teacher is vital to provide what the learners need the next day.

The school sets standard operating procedures with their learners from the start in order to manage the system.

“It is important that we have a system that will not only show growth, but communicate that growth with the parents on a weekly basis,” Lape said, adding the school’s assembled a list of three non-negotiables that will always be in place:

1. SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures)
2. Use of a communication tool to alert parents on their learners’ progress. An LMS is critical for our learners to have access to.
3. Time—specifically for teachers to collaborate and review learner needs from the day before.

“There are few other non-negotiables we need: trust and hard work, with teachers combining their philosophies to reach all the learners,” Lape said. “This won’t be easy, but at the end of the day, we know it’s worth it.”

“Instead of students being bored in school, we hope to have them running to the teacher because they are so excited for what’s next.”

# HENRY'S ONE-ACT PLAY REACHES NEW HEIGHTS

This year was a pivotal one for Henry High School's One-Act Play cast.

Last year, after the cast again did not earn enough superior ratings at the region contest to compete at the state level, one student decided to try something different and took on the task of writing a play himself.

Henry High School Senior Carter Hoffer has been active in Henry's performing arts program since the 7th grade, with a passion for performing that began in oral interpretation.

Each year his Oral Interp scores inched their way to the top, and eventually Carter joined Henry's tradition of competing and medaling at the state competition.

As a senior, he also wanted a medal for One-Act.

Carter spent the summer working on his first script; not only did he want subject matter conducive to high school students, but also he wanted an original angle. And so from Carter's mind to his paper came "Chasing Juliet" a play which takes bullying, stereotypes, and school shootings and offers the audience an intimate glimpse into the mind of the victims and perpetrators.

In a school the size of Henry, One-Act Play Director Shana Vander Grift had to find time between classes, job schedules and athletics for rehearsals. It wasn't easy.

Rehearsal time was scarce, but since the cast was so deeply embedded in Carter's script, they took a unique ownership in their characters.

"If something wasn't working or flowing like it should, the cast all collaborated together to make it better," Vander Grift said. "It was astounding to watch."

At the region competition in Watertown the cast earned their way into the State Competition. The judges praised the cast and playwright Carter for a fantastic job.

"It was awesome," Carter said. "Finally our school made it to state for the first time!"

That Carter wrote and co-directed the play made

the region tournament moment all the more special for the tiny cast of three seniors, five juniors and one freshman.

"The performance was flawless. I cried through the entire thing," Vander Grift said. "I was so proud of them, and yet very sad to know this was the last time I would see the seniors on stage."

Although Henry did not earn a superior medal at the state competition,

Carter took home an outstanding actor award. He hopes to continue his writing after graduation and is looking into publishing his play, potentially marking "Chasing Juliet" as the first step in the young author's very promising future.

"This has been the best performing arts season Henry has ever seen," Vander Grift said. "It has been such a blessing to see these kids work so hard. These seniors will be deeply missed. Some of their class has been pivotal in turning the culture in Henry around."

"They are truly wonderful young people."



# H-H STUDENT PROMOTES COMMUNITY

A Highmore-Harrold student took it up on herself to promote her community.

Digit Aasby, in conjunction with the Highmore-Harrold FCCLA, created a brochure to use as an item to market the district's community.

"Digit wanted to do a project that showcased our community and that could be used for marketing her hometown," Superintendent Quinton Cermak said.

"She is proud of what her community has to offer and believes many people could benefit from living here."

Digit, who will be a senior in 2017-18, began the project in January and finished it in March after receiving feedback from her teacher, school administration and the Highmore City Council.

The brochure highlights annual activities held in Highmore including the Veteran's Day program, Old Settler's Days and the Snow Queen competition, as well as what the area has to offer in terms of hunting and fishing and area businesses.

"The Council was very appreciative of Dig-

it's work and thought that she was doing a very good service to not only them but to the community as well," Cermak said.

In conjunction with the community brochure, Digit created a school pamphlet to use in the recruitment of new teachers; offering more proof of her commitment to her community and school.

"I think the aspects of Digit's character that are evident with this project is her sense of community pride and her willingness to be a team player" Cermak said. "Many students her age take their community for granted or spend their time wishing their community had more exciting things to offer."

"Digit recognizes Highmore's strengths and knows that, in order to have a sustainable future, growth in the community must happen."





M A T H S P A C E

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# AG PROGRAMS GROW IN HOT SPRINGS

Agriculture Education and FFA in Hot Springs are proving to be strong and sustainable programs.

The Hot Springs School District implemented the programs in the fall of 2015 and have seen continued growth and community support.

“With 27 active members in only its second year, the chapter is growing and the students are excited about the new opportunities available to them through FFA and agriculture education,” Ag Education and FFA Advisor Tanna White said.

“The community quickly rallied behind the addition of a new and exciting program to enhance agriculture education, agriculture advocacy and knowledge.”

Through the Ag Education program students have the opportunity to enroll in Animal Science, Veterinary Science, Companion Animals, Introduction to Agriculture and Middle School Ag classes.

In these courses the students learn about essential information regarding animal science including correct terminology, breed information, anatomy and physiology, diseases, animal husbandry and welfare.

The Introduction to Agriculture students have an introductory unit on each of the agricultural pathways including animal science, leadership, natural resources, plant science, ag mechanics and ag business, among others. The students also have the opportunity through the courses to receive certifications in Beef Quality Assurance & OSHA certification.

The Hot Springs FFA Chapter has been off to a great start in only its second year with 17 members qualifying for State competition in Pierre this year.

White said FFA members are always eager to begin projects, compete at the State competition and organize school activities and FFA Week activities, as well as community service activities for the chapter.

“At Christmas the FFA Chapter gathered donations and donated 10 holiday meals to families in need throughout the community,” White said. “The students enjoyed this experience giving back and look forward to enhancing this holiday meal delivery year after year.”



# HOVEN'S RESOLVE SHOWS IN REBUILD



In the early morning hours of a Sunday in May a fire damaged most of Hoven's high school building.

The damage was done to the building, but not to the district's determination to move forward and this fall construction was completed on a new building that included an Ag Shop and Wellness Center.

"The ag shop needed repairs following the fire and the idea for a wellness center came out of discussions of a new building and how best to build and repair the damaged building from the fire," Hoven Superintendent Bob Graham said.

Hoven's ag shop and wellness center are located in the same building with the ag shop featuring a classroom, paint room, wood working-welding room, an auto mechanic area

and three vehicle garage area off the auto mechanic area.

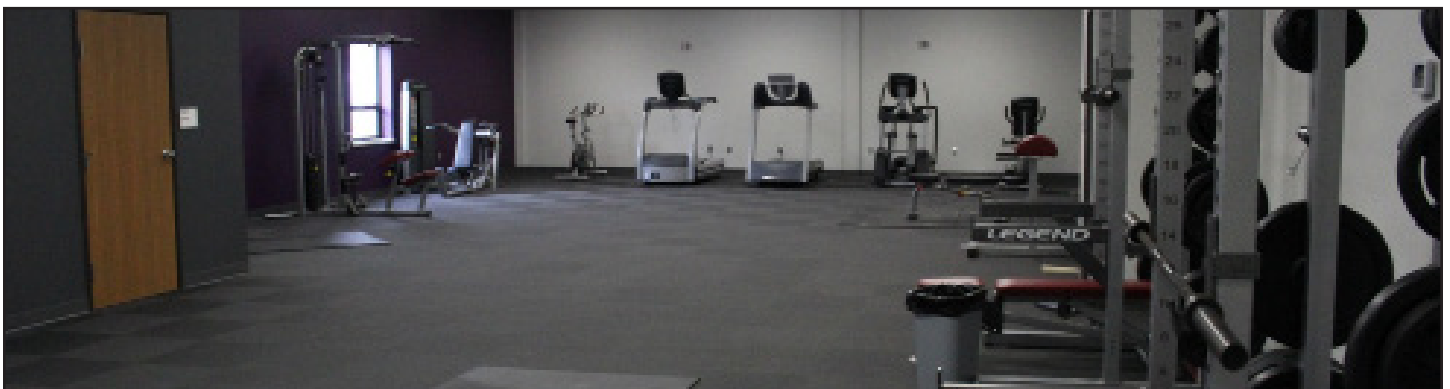
"The ag program now has a permanent classroom and the shop area has updated materials to work with," Graham said.

The wellness center includes free weights, bikes and treadmills and in addition the building contains a bright and welcoming commons area.

Faculty and students worked together in moving into the new building, which has received a warm welcome from the community.

"There are a number of benefits for the district," Graham said. "The community has two buildings that they are proud of and both can be used for community activities.

"These buildings will meet community needs today and in the future."



# CONSISTENCY IN AG ED. IN KADOKA

When traveling west on Interstate 90 across South Dakota, you'll come across Kadoka, a smaller town of just around 700 people, but a big draw for students from multiple surrounding zip codes.

Kadoka Area High School students come from not only a geographically diverse area, but culturally diverse backgrounds, as well.

"I tell the students, I think the Kadoka area is great place to live, but you are probably going to have to leave and go somewhere else to get the skills or the degree to have a competitive paying job," Kadoka Vo-Ed Instructor and FFA Advisor Brandy Knutson said.

"Go ahead and gain those skills or a degree and then come back."

The challenge of offering quality, relevant curriculum often leads to broad stroke changes. As education at Kadoka Area has evolved and reinvented itself, the Ag, Food and Natural Resources program with its Student Organization, FFA, has proven its value year after year.

KHS's Ag, Food and Natural Resources program offers students a variety of areas to study in those topics, as well as hands on wood working, metal fabrication, and electricity training in addition to coursework which ties in more with Career Development Events like Horse Judging and Natural Resources.

"We spend a lot of time talking about careers, wages and job requirements. We talk about what skills employers are looking for and where the students can go," Knutson said.

"I think it is important that students find some area of interest that they may want to pursue, but it is also important

to figure out what they don't like."

Lessons such as those have been taught at Kadoka High School for many years, as former Vo-Ed Instructor Veryl Prokop set out to get approval for the first classes and for chartering the Kadoka FFA chapter in 1989. Knutson joined the staff in 1994 and both taught classes for several years until Prokop retired.

The FFA component adds a great deal to the classes as it allows the students to compete academically at the local, statewide and even national level.

Over the last two decades, students from the Kadoka FFA have won more than 30 state competitions in a variety of



events which allowed them to participate in national competitions.

Some have even team and individual national championships and placings in the areas of Farm Business Management, Range Judging and Homesite and Land Judging.

"When we compete on the National

level it can be intimidating when you are competing against California and Texas teams," Knutson said.

"When we go and are competitive on that (national) scale it is an eye opener for our students and it really shows them that they can achieve more than they ever imagined."

Knutson said the opportunities presented through the FFA program reach students at all levels and leave lasting memories that can lead to budding careers.

"Traveling to different parts of the country, industry tours and meeting other students from across the nation, these are truly memories which last a lifetime," Knutson said, "and for many students have led to a career."



# **LEARNING NEW LANGUAGES AT LEAD-DEADWOOD ELEM.**



Students at the Lead-Deadwood Elementary School receive a rather worldly opportunity.

Through the Middlebury Interactive Languages program all students in Kindergarten through fifth grade have the chance to learn one of four foreign language's online.

"It's exciting to hear our students practicing their foreign language lessons in the hallways of our school," Elementary School Principal Tim Kosters said.

The foreign language class is offered during the spring semester with students able to complete Spanish, Spanish 2, French, German and Chinese. Last year, 219 students studied Spanish, 47 studied Chinese, 67 studied French and 44 students studied German.

"I love it when my students make connections between their foreign language class and the stories we read in the classroom," Second Grade Teacher Nancy Mertens said.

"It makes our class discussions more engaging when students can share what they've learned."

The Middlebury software, which is aligned with national standards, allows for a self-paced learning environment for each student. In addition, the program has proven beneficial through the enhancement of student ELA skills, exercise in cognitive function, cultural awareness and opportunity for interactions with those who speak other languages.

"Speaking, learning, or even just having an understand-

ing of a foreign language is one of the best and most valuable tools we can give our children and ourselves," Second Grade Parent Tessa Allen said.

"You embrace people, their cultures, and their differences because you have an understanding of how they live."

The program can also be accessed by the students from home so they can share it with their family.

"The Lead-Deadwood Elementary School's Foreign Language Program is a wonderful opportunity for the whole family," Kindergarten and Second Grade Parent Natasha Fuller said.

"Our daughters are excited and positive about learning a second language at school and bringing their new knowledge home to share. We find ourselves inquiring about other places, talking about the world outside of our small community, and dreaming of places that we want to see and experience."

Research shows students who study a foreign language understand the English language better and the increased vocabulary and stronger listening skills carry over to the general education classroom, which Kosters says is exactly what the school is after.

"We focus on providing as many opportunities for success for our students as possible," Kosters. "Our foreign language program is just one example of our District's strategic focus on student success."

# LEMMON'S COWBOYS AND COWGIRLS HAVE NEW RIDE



The Cowboys and Cowgirls of Lemmon have a new ride to and from activities.

In February the district leased a 52-passenger, activity bus to replace their previous transportation model, a yellow school bus with activity seats and under storage.

“The motivation was that our other activity bus was not running well and was costing a lot of money for upkeep,” Business Manager Anita Stugelmeyer said.

Lemmon’s activity transportation has sufficient storage under the bus, as well as storage over the seats for small items,

and features high back seats, six small TV screens and one large one up front, two USB ports and a plug in for every two seats and shades that can be pulled down if students want to sleep.

The new activity bus will transport students in sport, music and other activities, which getting to and from can result in many miles on the road and a need for reliable travel.

“The students and their parents are very excited,” Stugelmeyer said.

“We now have a sound bus to transport the students to and from the activities.”

# LEOLA EARNS HONOR FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Leola Elementary received national recognition for its efforts in improving student achievement.

The school was one of only two in South Dakota named a National Title I Distinguished School.

It was picked for its work closing the achievement gap between the district's disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged student groups

“To be recognized by our state and then at the National Title I Convention reinforces that what we are doing for kids must be working,” Superintendent Brian Heupel said. “As a school you are always working to do what is best for all students.”

“It is what we are here to do.”

The school focused on interventions on disadvantaged students to provide them with the successes and did not permit environments, social economic status or

other factors act as barriers to educating students.

“Our philosophy is all students are capable of learning and we want to break down the barriers that some of our disadvantage population students encounter,” Heupel said.

“Once these barriers are removed these students have an equal opportunity to learn.”

Leola Elementary School was recognized at the Title I National Convention in February for their efforts, which enhanced the feeling of pride the community has in their school and education system.

“The community was excited and proud of the recognition,” Heupel said.

“They want the message to be out there that we have a good school system and provide quality education even if we are a small school.”



# MADISON MAKES ROOM FOR MAKERSPACE

Unleashing the creativity and innovation of students at Madison Middle School is transforming how they're educated.

To advance its goals to promote STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) Education and career readiness, the district is using the Middle and High School Library for its new Makerspace, which provides a more flexible, multi-purpose space with a variety of technologies, tools, materials and workstations for students to work on computer and robotic, electronic and craft projects.

"The Makerspace concept allows students to use the information they have learned in a different way or to connect what they are learning to different environments," Middle School Principal Cotton Koch said, adding it also provides students another place to connect with our school and personalize their learning.

"Ultimately, we want to encourage students to look at STEAM careers, careers in technical education, and the concept of lifelong learning."



The Makerspace is open to all library patrons and run by the library department. The program was funded with a Classroom Innovation Grant.

Students are encouraged to experiment, create and design their own projects in the Makerspace utilizing among other things, coding skills, a 3D printer, drones, snap circuits or by making parachute bracelets and beading.

"This type of exploration promotes our goal of student-driven learning," Koch said. "With exploration and creating, students are connecting learning across the disciplines of science, math, the arts, technology and engineering."

"Helping students be more creative and innovative is always a goal of our school."

The freedom to be creative and innovative, as well as the opportunity to try and fail multiple times in the Makerspace environment has encouraged and enriched the education of the students.

"Most students love Makerspace and look forward to going to the library and will even stay after school to keep exploring," Koch said. "This concept of trying, failing and succeeding hopefully carries over to classes like math and language arts where trying and failing are part of the process of being competent."

"When they succeed it is wonderful to see the smile on their faces."



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## NEW HS BUILDING MEETS NEEDS IN MCCOOK

McCook Central School District set forth on a project for its future in 2015 and saw it come to fruition this year.

More than nine decades after the district's original high school building was constructed, the district completed construction in March on its new high school.

"While still structurally sound, it was no longer functionally sound for the needs of the school," Superintendent Daniel Swartos said. "We also had needs for additional locker room space, better facilities for performing arts and a space for wrestling."

"The project gives the district a sustainable facility for the foreseeable future."

McCook's project included an addition to the north side of the existing gymnasium containing new locker rooms, band and choir rooms, an athletic training room and a wrestling room, as well as the new high school building featuring new administrative areas, 11 new classrooms, two commons areas, a new entrance area to the gymnasium, a new concession stand and a performing arts area.

"It provides a facility that the staff, students and community can be proud of," Swartos said.

"A new facility provides incentive for families to stay and keep their kids at McCook Central and will help draw candidates for teaching and administrative positions well into the future."



Swartos added there's been much support for the approximately \$7.5 million project, which was funded through a bond and Capital Outlay certificates.

"The community has largely been supportive of the building project," Swartos said.

"Since completion, the community's reaction has been very positive."



## MCINTOSH FIRST IN STATE WITH OPERATOR PROGRAM

The McIntosh School District accomplished a first this year...for the entire state.

In January, the district learned it had been awarded a Workforce Education Grant to purchase three Heavy Equipment Simulators, which will be used for South Dakota's first Heavy Equipment Operator curriculum.

The newly developed curriculum and concurrent credit courses will integrate academic content, work-readiness skills, and entrepreneurship education and through on the job learning, it will provide students with first-hand knowledge about equipment and techniques currently being used in industry.

The catalyst for the curriculum development and grant application came after a visit to the 2015 National CTE conference by McIntosh and Lemmon School Districts' CTE Instructor Jim Hartwell, who returned with a wealth of information on Heavy Equipment Operations and simulator.

"Mr. Hartwell was so convincing that there is a need in South Dakota and our area to have such a program that we started to research opportunities so we could purchase the simulators," McIntosh Superintendent Rob Davis said.

Hartwell was approached by S.D. CTE Southeast Region Director Brad Scott about applying for the Workforce Education Grant and with the help of representatives from Lake Area Technical Institute completed and submitted the application.

With McIntosh on its way to beginning this first of its



kind program this fall, students will be able to earn a concurrent college credit through LATI, who will also provide McIntosh students and staff with the opportunity to observe instruction and hands-on learning activities.



Hartwell will teach the HEO 100 class, which feature three different simulators, an excavator, bulldozer and front-end loader.

At the National CTE Convention Hartwell was able to see and operate the SIM/LOG simulator system, which comes with one monitor and vibrating seat for the frontend loader, the excavator with three monitors in the front and a vibrating seat and the bulldozer with four monitors – three in front and one in back – and vibrating seat.

Supported by numerous local and statewide company and industry personnel, the program will provide career-focused, hands on and relevant learning opportunities to students, as well as one night a week adult education course for those that need practice operating equipment or may be considering a career change.

"We feel education and development in the operation of heavy equipment would be a great asset to our community," Corson County Highway Department Superintendent B.J. Schell said.



# MV TECH PROGRAM TAKING TOP PRIZES

It is lights, camera, action in Mount Vernon with the school's technology program experiencing success far beyond the classroom walls.

Besides producing original content for the school district's television channel – MVTV 105 on the Santel network and livestreaming sports events on [www.mvpti-tanslive.com](http://www.mvpti-tanslive.com) – students in Communication Arts and Technology Instructor Jeff Sand's technology classes are provided genuine, real-world opportunities to extend their learning beyond the curriculum and standards taught in class.

"The eighth grade students in technology class took their learning to a new level by competing in the Verizon Innovative Learning App Challenge and winning the 'Best in State' award," Sand said.

"This contest provided students with an outlet to collaborate, think creatively and work together to meet deadlines."

For their top performance in the Verizon Innovative Learning App Challenge, which featured more than 1,800 submissions, Gavin Franks, Kolby Kayser, Lily Mikkonen and Logan Tlam earned the Mount Vernon School District \$5,000, which will fund STEM-related training and tools in the district, and each student received t-shirts, Verizon gear and Verizon Ellipsis tablet.

The contest challenged students to design an app concept they believed would better their school, community or the world.

M-V's eighth grade designed an app titled: FitFresh.

FitFresh integrates a meal sharing program where people can create a group with different people assigned days to cook meals each week and a calorie camera, which would allow a person to take a picture of a meal and the app would calculate the calories and nutritional value of the meal.

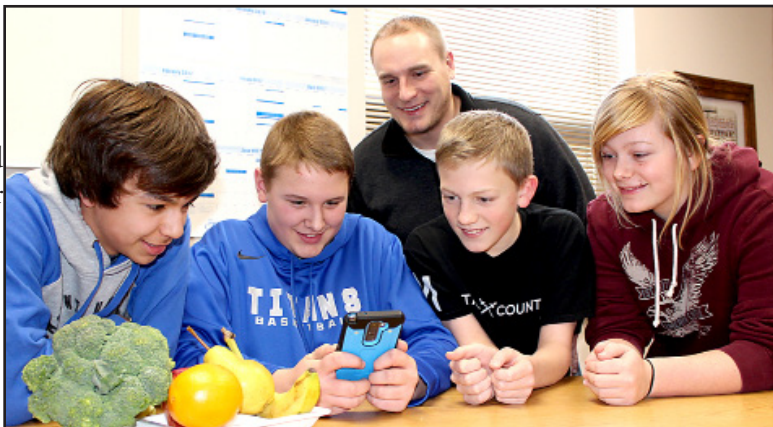
These features combined with a BMI calculator, food journal and user-friendly interface helped the team earn the distinguished honor of best in state.

The eighth grade tech class also created a video for the "What's So Cool About Manufacturing?" Video contest created by South Dakota Manufacturing and Technology Solutions, an organization founded by the Governor's Office of Economic Development. The students were paired up with Dakota Pump, a pump station manufacturer located in Mitchell.

This real-world learning opportunity allowed students an opportunity to tour Dakota Pump Inc., interview owners and employees, and record footage of manufacturing in progress. Students then edited the video and interviews to create their own video for the contest.

The team of Franks, Mikkonen, Dylan Reimnitz and Naomi Troutman and their video were selected by Dakota Pump Inc. to be entered into the contest.

"Students' knowledge of manufacturing, video editing and technology has grown tremendously during the 2016-2017 school year," Sands said.





# STEAM TEAM STANDS OUT IN PARKER

Parker School District is on a modified 4-day school week with Fridays reserved for student-help time in the morning and teacher in-service in the afternoon.

Beginning last year, Parker Technology Coordinator Marci Leberman started a club called the STEAM Team, which is offered to all students in the fifth through eighth grades this year.

“We do any projects dealing with Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math,” Leberman said.

Students worked on Popsicle bridges with a competition date of April 7 at the school.

“We learned about different types of bridges and what makes them strong,” Leberman said. “They are now taking that knowledge and building their own Truss bridges.”

Parker fifth graders also completed a unit on electricity and circuits with an electrical engineer brought in to teach students some background on electricity.

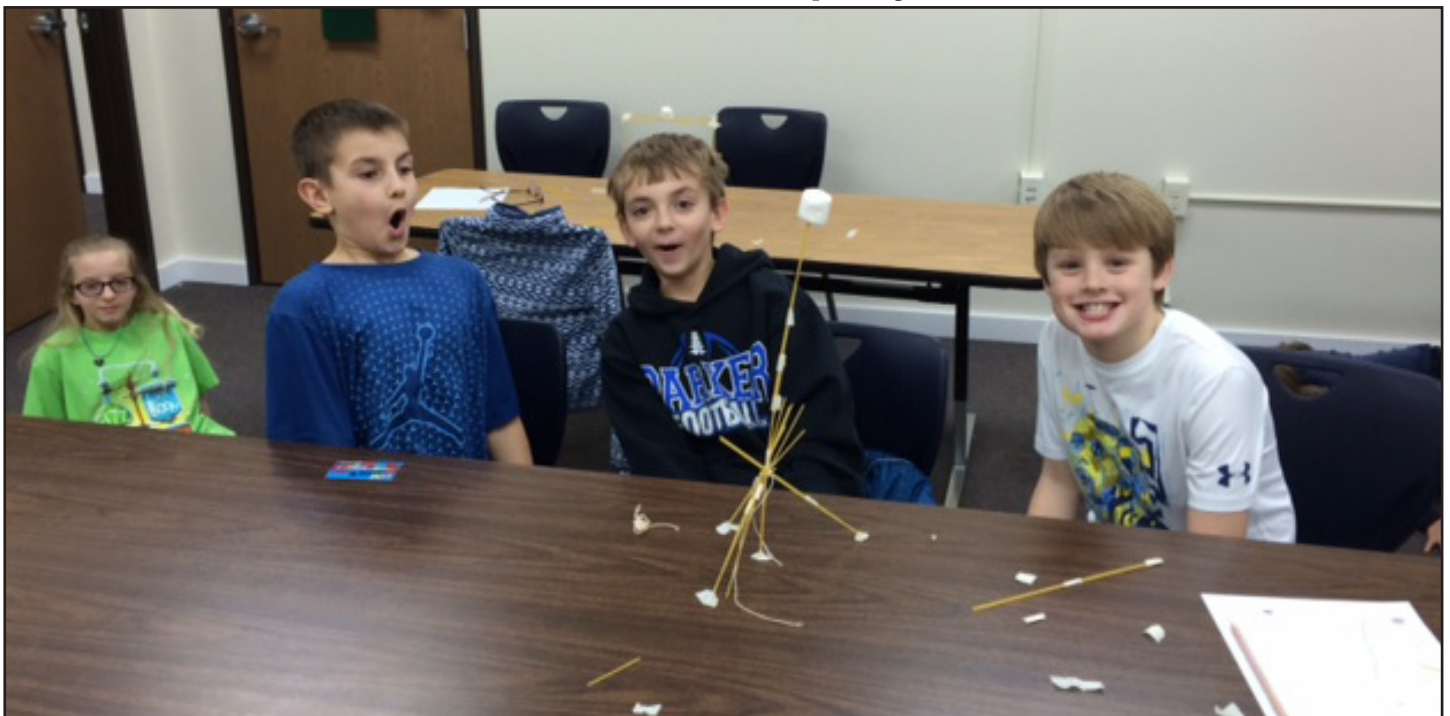
“We are working on scratch programming with the Makey Makey circuit boards and making all sorts of magic happen!” Leberman said.

Last year, students in the program designed and built



cardboard guitars, created programs in the coding program Scratch, played music on the guitars and penny bridges and spaghetti towers.

“The kids have a great time doing these projects,” Leberman said. “It’s fun to see them thinking of different ways to accomplish a goal.”



# PARKSTON PRIDE



The past year has brought great academic success and much to be proud of in the Parkston School District.

Both Parkston Elementary and Parkston High School had some of the highest School Performance Index scores in the state and the District's colony schools saw tremendous growth with their scores.

"We are very proud of our students and staff for the hard work and dedication they have provided in achieving this success," Superintendent Shayne McIntosh said.

Day in and day out, students at Parkston Elementary School can be observed working with, helping and compli-

menting each other.

In order to recognize and support the positive behavior of students and build a stronger school community, Parkston Elementary implemented: "The Trojan Way" initiative, which outlines positive behavior expectations and also gives the school community a common language for consistency.

"Students now have ownership for their own behaviors as well as a sense of pride of being a Parkston Trojan!" McIntosh said.

>>> SEE **PRIDE** [PAGE 49]

## PRIDE

>>> *CONTINUED FROM [pg. 48]*

In order to recognize students for their positive choices, staff members give students “Shout Out” awards and the certificates are proudly displayed on a public bulletin board in the school.

Each week, Parkston Elementary Principal Matt Yost, addresses students with a “Trojan Talk” character building message and then gives a “Shout Out” to the deserving students. At the conclusion of each quarter, groups of classroom teachers plan a Trojan Way celebration activity that includes the entire elementary student body.

The celebrations build school culture and help foster positive relationships with staff and students. The school has teamed up with the parent teacher organization to provide prizes for the Shout Out awards.

In addition to the “The Trojan Way” initiative, the Parkston Elementary Student Council has also engaged in activities to build community and global awareness with our students.

The group started a recycling program, raised \$1819.95 for our local hospital cancer treatment center, organized a school-wide food drive and helps distribute weekend food backpacks for families in need. These activities focus on global awareness and community pride.

“We have a lot to celebrate at Parkston Elementary School,” Principal, Matt Yost said.

“Our students consistently score in the top 15 percent of the state on state standardized tests, we have a community who believes in our school system, and now with the Trojan Way initiative, students are able to be recognized for all of their hard work and dedication to our school community.”

Parkston High School is having another great year, as well.

Parkston High School and Junior High students scored high on the yearly Smarter Balanced testing and the dual credit course options available continue to be utilized.

“We have 39 students taking 60 classes this year for dual credits, which adds up to 180 credits towards graduation at their next level of schooling,” McIntosh said, adding that the district has also continued to use the Mitchell Career and Technical Education classes to help students expand their courses.

An ICU program was also started in Parkston High

School and Junior High in order to help students who are struggling academically.

“We have found a major decrease in the late and missing work, as well as student GPAs having increased throughout the year,” McIntosh said.

A new 1,000 square foot greenhouse was constructed on campus with Agriculture Teacher Jacob Englin expanding his curriculum to include the facility. The greenhouse is used for the high school’s Agricultural Education classes, which will be growing vegetables for the culinary arts classes.

The school’s FFA chapter grew to 38 students and last year, sophomores Dawson Semmler and Tanner Griebel placed second at statewide Agriscience Fair.

PHS’s FFLA chapter won the national “Families First” Award in 2017 out of 128 applicants. Overall, they had 16 students compete at the national level in San Diego. Other organizations such as FBLA and HOSA continue to thrive at PHS.

Parkston’s strong tradition in extra-curricular activities has continued to shine.

After winning three consecutive state titles, the Wrestling team made its way to a second place finish in 2016 and the Girls’ Golf team also showed their dominance winning its fifth straight State A Championship, which included State Champion Sydney Bormann and State Runner-up Sydney Weber.

In the fall, the PHS Competitive Cheer team placed 6th and Boys’ Golf team had individual State Champion, Jacob Lee. The Volleyball team earned a Little Missouri Valley Conference Championship and the Football team had an All-State selection in Long Snapper Kyler Holzbauer.

Parkston’s Fine Arts department also saw growth and success over the last year.

The One Act play had three students earn Outstanding Performances at Regions, including Brooklyn Van Zee, Tucker Bigge and Sammi Murtha. Bigge also qualified for the statewide Oral Interp competition.

PHS students Bigge, Timothy Schmidt and Chloe Wegehaupt qualified for All-State Orchestra. Schmidt was also selected for All-State band. Schmidt, Felizitas Helmsstadt, Samantha Kinneberg, Maggie Graber-Heisinger, Jonah Murtha, Madison Zwinger, Kim Weber, Katie Weber performed as part of the All-State Choir.

# PLENTY OF CTE COURSES AT P-G

With more than 20 Career and Technical Education courses to offer and greater than 100 students enrolled in these courses, the Platte-Geddes has plenty to be proud of with these programs.

“We’re pretty proud of the number of CTE courses we offer at Platte-Geddes,” Superintendent Joel Bailey said. “The majority of our students are enrolled in more than one CTE course.”

“Our goal is to assist students in finding their interests that may lead to a college major or career.”

Platte-Geddes has offered numerous CTE programs for many years – the most recent addition being Principles of Biomedical Science – with students learning real world skills that lead to college, career and life readiness.

“Our students appreciate the opportunities they have at their disposal,” Bailey said. “The CTE courses offer a change of pace from the standard curriculum. They appreciate the life skills they leave our CTE courses with.”

The district utilizes the CTE courses to partner with local businesses allowing them to build community partnerships with industry professionals.

“The business gains a well-trained employee and the students immediately begin giving back our community with their services,” Bailey said.

Services that will benefit the students’ futures.

“We know that not all of our college graduates are college bound,” Bailey said. “CTE courses provide great opportunities for students to find their niche.”



## Platte-Geddes CTE courses:

- Accounting I
- Accounting II
- Advanced Photographic Arts
- Ag. Business
- Ag. Mechanics
- Ag. Metals
- Ag. Structures
- Business Law
- Business Math
- CASE Animal Science
- Digital Media Technology
- Desktop Publishing
- Food Science
- Foundations of Technology (Middle School)
- Intro to Ag. Food and Natural Resources
- Intro to Engineering
- Personal Finance
- Photographic Arts
- Plant Science
- Principles of Biomedical Studies
- Principles of Engineering
- Wildlife and Fisheries

# RUTLAND SENIORS SOAR ACADEMICALLY



Low numbers, but high achievers best describes the Class of 2017 in Rutland.

Just 10 students graduated from Rutland, but eight earned National Honor Society recognition, six were named as Academic All-State members and the group as whole posted an ACT average score of 24 and pulled more than \$225,000 in academic and athletic scholarships.

“All of these students display a very strong work ethic,” Rutland English and Social Science Teacher Lauren Olson said. “Rutland values the ‘Three R’s’ – Respect, Responsibility, and Results. But I believe that there’s another ‘R’ that the teachers incorporate into their classrooms: Rigor.”

“When the Rutland teachers set a high standard they force the students to meet and exceed it.”

Rutland’s Class of 2017 is a group of well-rounded students with many different areas of interest with graduates headed off to Northern State University, Augustana, Southwest Minnesota State University, Dakota Wesleyan University, and South Dakota State University and one to the S.D. National Guard.

“They are so diverse in their interests—both in and out of school,” Olson said. “To me, this says they must be very intrinsically motivated.”

“The community is very proud of the academic achievements of this group of students.”

# COMMUNITY COMES THROUGH IN RUTLAND

When Rutland School District needed an assist, the community was there to make the pass.

Needing to replace all the scoreboards in the gym to meet the new shot-clock regulation, as well as having one scoreboard malfunctioning, the district mailed out a letter to the community and spread the word the district was buying new scoreboards and shot clocks.

The district decided to do “donor recognition” plaques and advertisements on the new scoreboards to help offset the cost and offset they did.

“District patrons and local businesses really stepped up and donated enough money that they are completely paid for without anything coming from our budget,” Superintendent Peter Books said.

“I was really impressed with how dedicated the community was to helping us”

Donators included: First Bank and Trust, Mustang Seeds, Breske Crop Insurance, Klassy Electric, Inc.,



Citizens Bank-Sinai, Helena, The Rutland Booster Club, CHS/Eastern Farmers, Tim and Kim Breske Family, Overski Seeds, Rutland Alumni, Lakeco Crop Services, Inc., F & M Co-Op Oil, DCJ Jatou Bale Wrapping, TNT Construction, The Truck Washout, Sparkle & Sass Boutique, Streng Farms, The Eggbraaten Family, The Nunda Bar and Grill, Troy and Erika Powell Family, Tutsch Trucking, and Jon and Dawn Klassy Family.

The district unveiled the new scoreboards in November with student athletes stopping in the gym while the old scoreboards were being taken down and the new scoreboards put up.

Along with the new scoreboards going up, so too did the community’s excitement.

“The entire community was extremely excited for our new scoreboards and recognition boards,” Books said. “A number of community members mentioned what an exciting time for Rutland is was!”



# SCOTLAND STUDENTS SUPPORT GREAT CAUSE



Red Ribbon Week at Scotland Elementary instills in students ways to help themselves, as well as others.

It's a week dedicated to encouraging students to say no to drugs, tobacco and alcohol along with discussing ways to say no to those items each day, as well as an annual food drive to support another great cause, the Scotland Food Pantry.

"They watch the items brought in daily to see how the pile is growing," Scotland Superintendent Damon Alvey.

"I think it makes some students appreciate what they have and it certainly sheds light on the needs in our community, as well as other communities."

The Elementary Student Council chose the theme days for the week with classrooms competing against

one another so classes that bring more items earn an extra recess.

Students were encouraged to bring canned items or non-perishable food items, collecting about 100 pounds of food.

The student council delivered the donated food items to the pantry and saw how their contributions were put on the shelves for others to benefit from.

"Our students realize that the pantry is a great addition to our community," Alvey said. "Some of our student's families either use the pantry themselves or know someone else who does, so that makes a strong connection."

"I believe students learn valuable life lessons in empathy, character and being charitable."

# CTE BRINGING DISTRICTS AND EMPLOYERS TOGETHER

School districts around South Dakota are partnering with employers to implement modern, high quality Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.

“These strong, sustainable partnerships are proving to be successful by informing classroom instruction and providing students with real-world connections,” Assistant Director of Secondary CTE Erin Larson said.

Employer partnerships show students the value of career skills and open their eyes to a wide range of careers, engaging them in their education and preparing them for college and careers. In fact, South Dakota students who participate in two or more credits of CTE graduate at a rate of 97 percent compared to the statewide average for all students of 84 percent.

Business partnerships come in various shapes and sizes.

In the Burke School District, the high school has partnered with Community Memorial Hospital to share an employee. A medical lab technician works part-time at the hospital and part-time at the school district teaching Project Lead the Way Biomedical Science courses.

The hospital holds the employee’s full-time contract and the district pays the hospital for a portion of the instructor’s time. This partnership allows students to network with an instructor experienced in the healthcare industry and the hospital has the opportunity to develop potential future employees.

At Madison Central High School, the high school has partnered with numerous businesses in the community in order to offer additional coursework to students.

Gehl Manufacturing has opened their factory space to students; veteran employees teach students how to weld. The Golden Living Center, a local nursing home, provides students with the opportunity to earn their CNA certification. Students take online coursework at the high school and complete their clinical at the nursing home.

In both instances, if students successfully complete the course, they can also earn dual credit from Lake Area Tech and get a jump start on their college education.



The Meade School District has had a long history of positive relationships with business and industry through a well-established student internship program. The district was able to draw from these industry relationships to develop a new course with real-world work experiences.

Through the Sturgis Economic Development Corporation, space in an incubator building was made available to house a high school machining class. During this class, students have the opportunity to work side-by-side with other business start-ups in the community as well as develop skills that meet the needs of employers in Sturgis and surrounding communities in the Northern Black Hills.

In McIntosh, the Hospitality & Tourism program provides students with opportunities to network with industry professionals, earn industry certifications, and engage in entrepreneurship experiences.

Based on their geographic location, access to a restaurant setting is limited. As such, ProStart students provide a service to the community by operating a restaurant in the McIntosh city hall. Students use technology to coordinate with mentor chefs in other states and often fly in food from across the country for special events. In addition to the restaurant, the young entrepreneurs also operate a Coffee Shop twice a month where they learn the financial and business aspects of running a restaurant.

In Platte-Geddes, the Agriculture program recently received a Workforce Education Grant from the South Dakota Department of Education to renovate their lab space and expand opportunities for students related to welding and metal fabrication.

Through the planning stages of the project, the district worked closely with Meyerink Farm Service to determine the best equipment, materials and layout for the lab. Additionally, Meyerink Farm Service employees have spent time in the classroom training students on the new equipment.

The district has noted that the students may not always want to listen to their teacher, but when someone who is in the job teaches, the students tend to be fully engaged.

If your district is interested in increasing student engagement through strong business partnerships, consider applying for a Workforce Education Grant. Workforce Education Grants provide up to \$2.5 million to South Dakota public school districts annually to make transformative changes in career and technical education programs.





# MAKERSPACE MAKING IMPACT IN S.F. SCHOOLS

What do an old ceiling fan, cardboard cylinders, and brainpower have to do with one another?

They are just some of the inexpensive tools necessary to create a successful makerspace in classrooms and libraries.

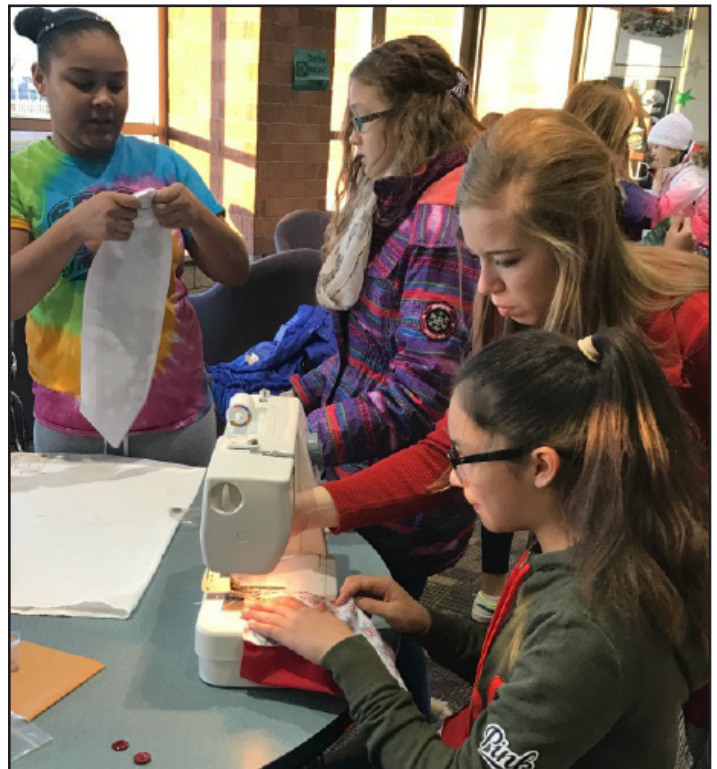
In nearly every elementary and middle school across Sioux Falls, students are exploring engineering principles, photography, sewing and more thanks to a grant from the South Dakota Department of Education.

The grant awarded the District nearly \$100,000 to implement Classroom Innovation Projects. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) or STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) labs are now in operation in nearly 30 schools.

Makerspace activities allow students to create, invent, tinker, explore and discover using a variety of inexpensive materials and tools. Driven by curiosity, need-to-know learning, tinkering and problem-solving makerspaces encourage authentic learning.

Students learn to think like scientists and engineers, to build stamina and perseverance in problem solving, and develop the imagination and curiosity that feeds our innate human desire to create.

The challenge for schools is to implement makerspaces in a curriculum and schedule that is already overloaded. District leaders found school libraries are the perfect fit for these activities because of the flexibility to become the center for makerspaces, providing time for students to experiment with



makerspace activities during library time or in small groups before or after school or during recess.

One Sioux Falls librarian used the makerspace project as action research for her master's degree program. Her research question was whether participating in makerspace activities would help encourage a growth mindset in students.

A 10-question quiz administered before beginning makerspace activities and again after several months of participating in makerspace activities showed a greater percentage of students with a growth mindset after the makerspace experience.

Prior to implementing makerspaces, 55 percent of students showed a fixed mindset and after makerspaces only 10 percent of students showed a fixed mindset.

Librarians are now looking for ways to expand makerspace activities to support students who are challenging themselves to apply their reading and math skills to become creators and innovators and are building their own problem solving skills and capitalizing on their creativity as they identify inexpensive activities that engage students as well as searching for alternative funding sources.



# STORM SPREAD SUPPORT TO SIOUX FALLS SCHOOLS



While some schools enjoy wildly successful fundraisers through their Parent Teacher Organizations or Associations that allow them to purchase elaborate playground systems or field trip experiences for their students, still others have a difficult time raising just a couple hundred dollars annually to support their student body and teachers.

The Sioux Falls Storm Football Team, an indoor semi-pro football team, recognized this disparity and wanted to help.

The team has a Foundation with a purpose of raising funds to support local needs. In the past, they have generously helped cancer victims, accident victims and now students from schools where fundraising is a challenge.

The Team hosted “A Night of Hope and Caring” at their game on March 25th. A percentage of ticket sales, all proceeds from raffle tickets, the Thunderball Toss, and a silent auction added up to more than \$27,000!

Sioux Falls Schools that do have a healthy PTO/PTA balance also added to the total by paying for a Staff Jeans Day and staff members at the Instructional Planning Center gave their money to purchase tickets for students who might not otherwise be able to attend the game.

Local businesses also stepped up by giving a portion of their restaurant sales on one night, proceeds from special events or a flat donation to support the cause.

The Sioux Falls School District has formed a committee to review PTO/PTA balances and will distribute the money raised to the schools with the greatest need.

These thoughtful contributions – thanks to action by the Sioux Falls Storm - will not only give students experiences they might not otherwise receive, but also create an awareness in the community about the need to “level the playing field” among schools with differing socioeconomic populations.

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# SUCCESSFUL SERVICE PROJECTS AT SMS

Students at Sisseton Middle School learn quickly that service projects are part of their educational experience.

Last year, the Sisseton Middle School participated in the Ronald McDonald Pop Tab Pandemonium challenge, which was organized by the South Dakota Ronald McDonald House Charities, along with 43 schools competing in the statewide event and collecting more than 3,500 pounds of pop tabs.

Sisseton Middle School received an honorable mention for being in the top five schools collecting the most pop tab weight per students with a total of over 150 pounds collected.

This service project was chosen by the SMS student council as they have had, and currently have, teachers who have benefited from the Ronald McDonald House.

“As they heard the personal stories from the staff, they realized how something so small can make such a huge impact on people and knew it was something they wanted to and could accomplish,” SMS Principal Tammy Meyer said.

With the success of last year, the student council once again decided to accept the Ronald McDonald House challenge this year have already collected over 80 pounds of pop tabs.

“This project shows students firsthand the power of each student, and each pop tab, and how they can truly make a difference in the world!” Meyer said.



## STEM CONTENT SPROUTS PLTW COURSES IN SPEARFISH

Prior to the 2014-2015 school year, the technology-based elective offerings at Spearfish Middle School were limited.

With the elimination of a traditional industrial technology program after the 2003-2004 school year, students were left only with a basic computers course.

During the past three school years, the number of classes offered to sixth, seventh and eighth grade students interested in STEM content has grown dramatically, thanks to some innovative individuals and a few generous grants along the way.

Students can now elect to take classes such as Design & Modeling or Automation & Robotics, which are part of a national curriculum offered through Project Lead the Way (PLTW). PLTW offers K-12 students, as well as teachers, engaging, hands-on classroom environment and develops in demand knowledge and skills.

SMS STEM Teacher Teri Bauerly realized the potential benefits to students that PLTW offers and was instrumental in bringing the program to Spearfish.

In 2014, SMS secured a Perkins grant totaling \$21,000, thereby



enabling the implementation of Spearfish's first PLTW offerings: Design and Modeling and Automation and Robotics.

Design and Modeling students apply what they learn about the Engineering Design Process to design and construct a therapeutic toy for a child with cerebral palsy, while Automation and Robotics students learn about energy transfer, machine automation, and computer control systems using the VEX Robotics platform.

Students and teachers alike enjoy the experience of the PLTW courses and the opportunities they provide.

"What I love best about these courses is the opportunity for students to lead the learning, to showcase their creativity, and to connect the dots between content knowledge and careers," Bauerly said.

While Bauerly prepared to teach the first two PLTW classes, she was also busy planning for the implementation of another PLTW module.

In 2014, more than \$8,000 in grants was awarded to SMS by the Spearfish Foundation for Public Education with support from the

Spearfish Community Foundation.

The increased funding allowed for the addition of Energy and the Environment for the 2016-2017 school year.

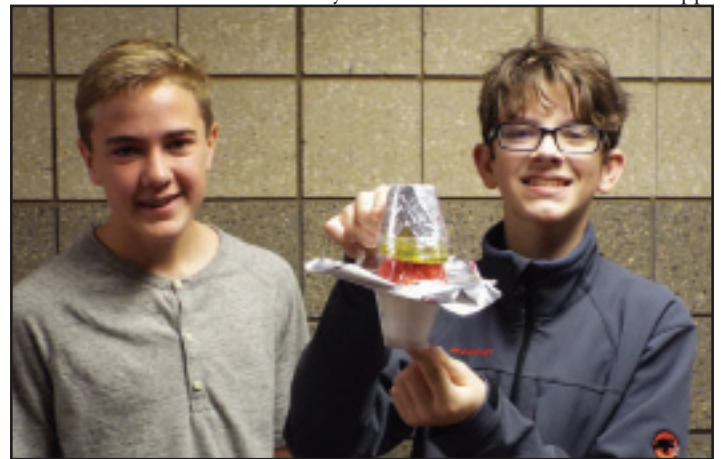
In Energy and the Environment students investigate the impact of energy on their lives and use what they have learned to design and model alternative energy sources, as well as evaluate options for reducing energy consumption.

The latest round of grants, along with increased funding from the district, did not simply provide an additional single course offering at the middle school, but allowed for the addition of another STEM teacher.

John Dagit was hired by the Spearfish School District specifically to teach PLTW curriculum.

During the 2016-17 school year, Dagit is teaching App Creators (Computer Science I) to sixth, seventh and eighth grade student. Students are learning about computational thinking and problem-solving while developing Android-based mobile applications.

SMS Sixth Grade Student Kylie Wheaton decided to enroll in App



Creators and Design and Modeling as two of her electives this school year.

"I like that I can do something different than my core classes, and they are extremely fun," Wheaton said.

With the four PLTW classes currently offered, few could argue that Spearfish Middle School lacks a well-rounded STEM foundation.

However, those responsible continue to diversify course offerings with plans to add two more modules in the near future. When students register for the 2017-18 school year, they will also be able to choose Computer Science for Innovators and Makers (Computer Science II), an extension of App Creators.

An entirely new module Flight and Space, which will also be offered for the upcoming school year, offers students the chance to explore the science behind aeronautics and use their knowledge to design, build and test an airfoil.

The addition of these two classes brings the number of available PLTW modules to six.

# NATIVE AMERICAN DAY PROGRAM PRESENTED AT STANLEY COUNTY

Students and community members in Stanley County attended the district's first Native American Day program this fall.

Attendees in Parkview Gymnasium for the program viewed Native American items including quilts, a buffalo robe and medicine wheels and were treated to a live drum crew performance and two talented speakers.

"We were privileged to host our speaker Sid Bad Moccasin and a poet Blaine Nordvold," Stanley County PE and Health Teacher, and Event Organier, Lex Heathershaw said.

"They did a great job presenting to our school."

Heathershaw said it was the goal of the district's Native American committee to bring a better understanding of Na-

tive American culture to our students and community here at Stanley County.

"We hope that our program provided people with a good experience and gave them a clear vision to what Native American background is all about," Heathershaw said.

"We hope that our students take away a better understanding of Native American culture and history."

The program accomplished the committee's goal with thoughts now turned towards the future.

"The program was a success and was received very well by all members and people in attendance," Heathershaw said. "It is something we can use to build on and will look to continue this in the future."



# SUMMIT SEIZES CHANCE TO ENHANCE SCHOOL DISTRICT

With just under 150 students enrolled in the district, Summit may be one of the smaller schools in South Dakota, but it's undergoing some big changes, which are having an immense impact.

The district undertook building project to add a more than 25,000 square foot addition to the school's existing facility. The new addition includes a new basketball and volleyball court with seating to accommodate about 870 people, four locker rooms, a new music room, a new reception center and superintendent's office, spacious commons seating area outside the gymnasium, which also hosts a concession stand, storage closets, and restrooms and community wellness center.

"After a handful of state titles and state appearances in basketball, it will be a bittersweet sentiment leaving behind the old gym, which is filled with many great memories from the past decades," Superintendent Kurt Jensen said.

"However, the seating of the new facility will be a welcome change, as will be the comfort of the overall facility."

Throughout the building planning and construction phases of the new addition, the school also remained focused on its commitment to the community and its families.

Last summer, the school partnered with South Dakota CANS and through a grant sponsored by the Rural Child and Poverty Nutrition Center, was able to offer lunch during the summer months to children in the community.

Anybody, from ages 1-18, was welcome to a free lunch at

the school during that time and this summer the school will be continuing the partnership and will also serve free breakfast to the same age group.

"The school saw tremendous enrollment in the program last summer, which exceeded its expectations, and have no reason to believe that it will not be just as popular this coming summer," Jensen said.

The school district was also awarded a \$750,000 21st Century Community Learning Center grant last summer designed to fund an out-of-school time program for students.

"The program launched in the fall and is going remarkably well with high student participation enrollment," Jensen said.

During the school year, students involved in the after school program participate in opportunities, which include arts and crafts, mathematics, vocabulary, Spanish, community service, cooking, exercise and more.

Beginning this summer, students can participate in the summer enrichment program

offered, which is designed to promote retention of what they learned throughout the school year, while fostering the further development of social skills. Both the after school program and summer enrichment program offer fun-filled field trips throughout the year.

"Although Summit is a small town in a small district, the school and community are excited and grateful for the big things on the horizon and the big things in store for them in the future," Jensen said.



# FRONTIER ELEM. FRONT AND CENTER WITH DESIGN



Tea Area School District holds a foundational goal for Future Titan Graduates to be civic leaders engaged in the community through action and service.

Students at Tea's Frontier Elementary have actively engaged in being future civic leaders and third grade students painted a picture of their active engagement.

With the integration of art a focus for the project, students took part in Sioux Falls' Paint the Plow competition.

The students' design focused on "We are all one family here at Frontier" which reflected their diversity and goal of watching out for one another. This reflection is supported by mixed grade level seating at lunch, cross-grade level buddies and recess teams.

"We also love the collaborative aspect that this project brings to the students each year as they work on the design and the painting," Tea Area Frontier Elementary School Principal Kristi Nelson said.

The collaboration paid off as Frontier's plow won Sioux Falls' Paint the Plow competition.

"They were thrilled! Our staff was thrilled, also," Nelson said.

Frontier was the first elementary outside of the Sioux Falls school district to be chosen as winners and was featured in the Parade of Lights providing Frontier students, families and the District as a whole a sense of pride.

"We hope they take away a sense pride and accomplishment on a job well done," Nelson said.



# ENGAGING IN ENRICHMENT AT TL ELEMENTARY

When opportunity knocked, the Timber Lake Elementary staff answered.

This marked the first year the school incorporated MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) testing into the district with a common goal of using data to drive our instruction while utilizing other assessments.

Data showed Timber Lake students benefiting from Intervention and Enrichment Strategies and set goals as a team.

“It was the perfect opportunity to make learning a reality for every student at Timber Lake Elementary!” Elementary Principal Danae Paxton said.

A total of 19 teachers, 12 classrooms, four paraprofessionals, a reading interventionist and a PE teacher were



involved in creating and planning engaging intervention and enrichment activities.

Staff collaborated and arranged students in small group and large group formats based on Intensive, Strategic, and Benchmark categories, created folders to communicate from teacher to teacher and teacher to student for setting academic goals, rearranged schedules and set 40 minute uninterrupted blocks for student meetings.

“It truly takes a team of amazing educators to unite and do what’s best for students,” Paxton said.

The group also developed and implemented Panther Academy, which focuses on targeted instruction and teaching practices designed to meet a student’s individual learning needs. Panther Academy aims to improve the reading and math skills of struggling students and accounts for the unlimited skills of all students.

“Hearing the echoing shrills and squeals of students engaged and learning will never get old in our hallways,” Paxton said. “Opportunity knocked and we are willing to take risks, make mistakes, and succeed in order to reach our goal of increasing student achievement for all.”



# SCIENCE EDUCATION STRIDING FORWARD AT TIMBER LAKE HS

Success and achievement have been the controlled variables of the experimental design that is Timber Lake High School's science program.

In the past decades, students have participated in both a local fair in Timber Lake School, as well as traveling to the regional fair in Rapid City, which is sponsored by the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology.

"Great success has been found by our students," Middle and High School Principal Julie Marshall said. "In the past three years, two students have earned a trip to the International Science Fair!"

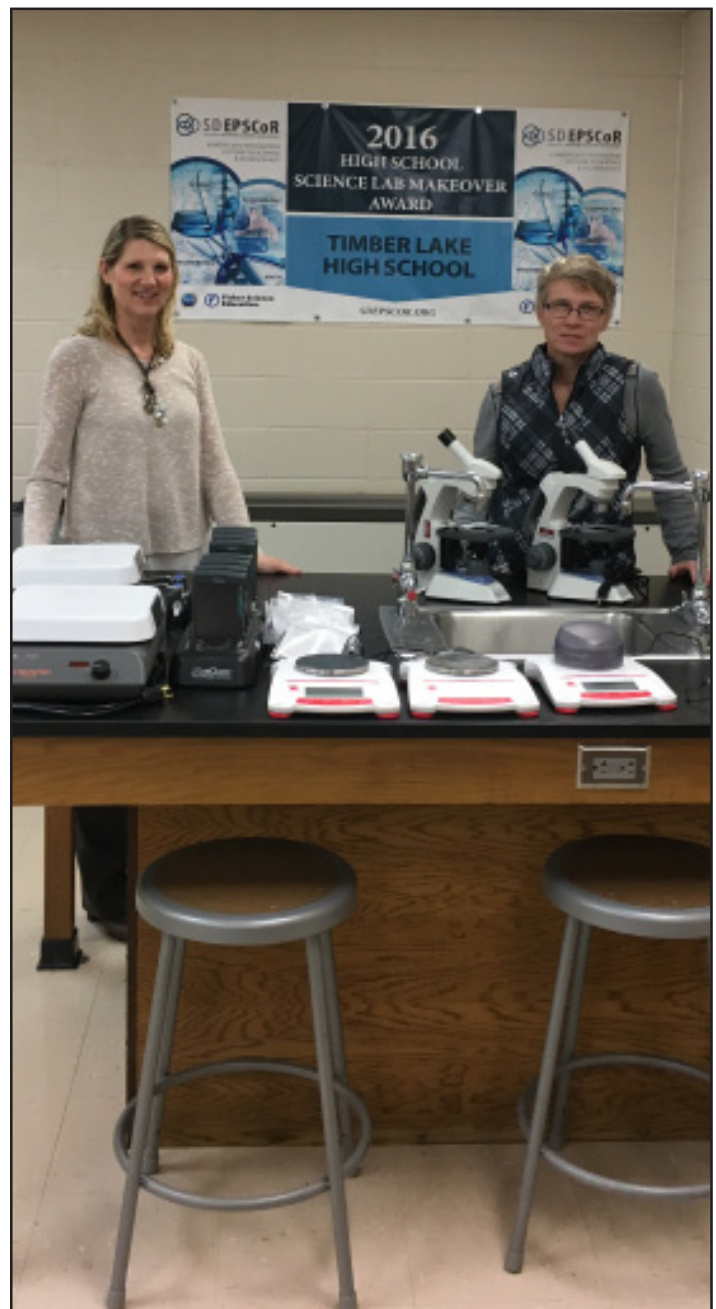
TLHS Science Teachers LuAnn Lindskov and Donna Aberle received a surprise at the regional fair when the school's science lab was chosen by South Dakota EPSCOR for a \$5,000 lab update. In addition to the prize from S.D. EPSCOR, Fisher Science Education also contributed to the gift, which brought the grand total to \$7,500 in free equipment to benefit our students.

The update added state of the art microscopes, Vernier Lab Quests with digital probes, a micro centrifuge, electronic balances and hot plates as well as additional supplies.

The lab was also able to update their digital data collection devices so students have greater access to the types of experiences that prepare them for success in college and their careers.

"This amazing opportunity allowed teachers to bring in cutting edge equipment to provide top notch learning opportunities to students in Timber Lake," Marshall said.

"Our district is grateful to SDEPSCOR, especially Phillip Huebner, for their commitment to STEM education and increasing opportunities for students involved in science research."



# TIMBER LAKE BOARD PROUD OF POLICY



This fall, the Timber Lake School Board revised and passed the district's Tobacco Policy while maintaining a respect of the Lakota culture.

Utilizing local resources, Timber Lake School made changes to the policy, which is pro-student in its proactive approach to student education, by incorporating protection for the use of traditional Lakota tobacco.

Board Member, and a public health nurse, Rae O'Leary provided valuable input toward the final product.

"With a high portion of American Indian students and staff in our district, the school board was supportive of this modified policy," O'Leary said.

A feature incorporated into the new policy is the opportunity for students in violation of the policy to engage in educational lessons that teach them about the dangers of commercial tobacco use. The lessons also

encourage students to make better, more informed decisions in the future. The new tobacco education component has been well received.

"We are very proud of our school board for acknowledging the difference between traditional Lakota tobacco and commercial/manufactured tobacco in the new tobacco policy," O'Leary said.

"We are also excited about our school's proactive, educational approach to handling tobacco violations and are optimistic that this change will have a positive impact on the students of Timber Lake School District."

In addition to the Timber Lake School District, O'Leary will assist other schools.

"Mrs. O'Leary will also be working with other school districts on the Cheyenne River Reservation in the near future to adopt similar changes," Superintendent Dan Martin said.

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# TC ADDS ADDITION TO KLEIN SCHOOL

Nestled near the few houses of a settlement known as Hidden Timber, southeast of Mission, sits one of the finest examples of small school education in the state.

Klein School – so named for one of the earliest families to come to the area – has endured decades of close calls from those wishing to close its doors.

The student achievement it has produced keeps it not only on course but prospering with Janen Epke having taught at the little school for 30 years and as Head Teacher the last 25.

State statistics showed the school number one in achievement and attendance for the Todd County School District.

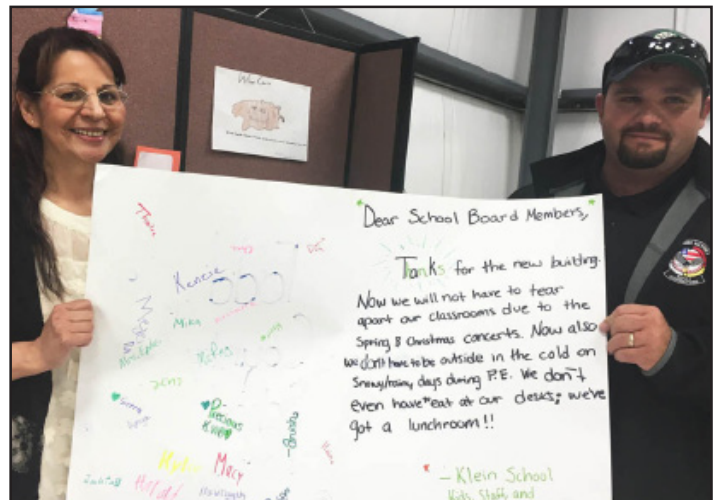
Klein School began as a one-room country schoolhouse.

But as the student population continued to grow because of its reputation, space was at a premium.

Student Christmas Programs and Eighth Grade Achievements, always attended by every family whose child was a student there, resulted in a lot of people being crammed into a very small space.

In 2015, the current school board said, “Enough” and construction began on an addition, which would house a kitchen, bathrooms and a gym with plenty of room for classes in it.

Klein students are extremely happy with their new “digs” and parents and community members agree.



## VERMILLION PARTNERSHIP PAVES WAY FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

A partnership paving the way for professional development for teachers was established in Southeast South Dakota.

Vermillion's Jolley Elementary School and the University of South Dakota are using grants from the Bush Foundation and USD School of Education to develop

new teaching methods to adapt to student strengths.

Jolley Elementary received a \$100,000 Teacher Effectiveness Initiative grant

through the Bush Foundation, which invests in quality K-12 field experiences in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and 23 native nations, and a \$50,000 contribution from USD's School of Education to create a strength-based professional development school (PDS).

The PDS will help teachers and students identify and use their strengths and talents in teaching and learning for customized instruction for individual students.

The school will follow national accreditation standards and focus on professional



preparation of student teachers, faculty and teacher development, improving teaching practices and increasing K-12 student achievement.

ment.

"The strength-based classroom will provide a more personal, more relevant approach to education that empowers all students to discover their talents and believe the impossible," Jolley Principal Sue Galvin said.

# WCHS STUDENTS SET AN EXAMPLE



A group of Wagner Community High School students are playing a vital role in the lives of their elementary counterparts.

Twenty-three high school sophomores, juniors and seniors began serving as mentors of elementary students in early November. The mentors work with younger students to try to improve academic and social skills.

“I love being able to help an elementary student do better in school,” Senior Kristan Soukup said. “It’s a wonderful feeling seeing my mentor kid smile after finally understanding a math assignment.”

In addition to the mentors helping with homework, the pair shares in a variety of other activities including, reading, playing games, studying, talking, coloring and even playing with Legos.

“It’s something I enjoy doing,” Junior Janae Patterson said. “I hope that my mentee enjoys this as much as I do.”

Being a positive role model for the mentees motivated the mentors to get involved in the program.

“I really wanted to help a kid and be a role model for someone,” Sophomore Maggie Barnett said. “When I was a kid, I always wanted a mentor so I thought it would be good to do that for someone.”

Being a good role model for the mentees means making them feel good about who they are.

“I want him to understand that it’s okay to be the way he is,” Sophomore Megan Merkwon said about her mentee.

Merkwon added she saw mentoring as “a great way to help a child in need.”

High School Counselor Vanessa Iverson oversees the mentoring program, which includes Sophomores Tysin Arpan, Maggie Barnett, Emilio Cournoyer, Sam Cournoyer, Haley Drapeaux, Britney Krcil, Dawson Lensing, Megan Merkwon, Madison Mora, Aneissa Olson, Kirstyn Roth, Faith Tyler, KaCee Zacharias, and Joi Zephier; Juniors Abby Freier, Sierra Juffer, Janae Patterson, and Halley Zephier; and Seniors Abby Beeson, Cheyanne Greger, Chloe Noteboom, Kristan Soukup, and Brycen Zephier.

# WAGNER COMMUNITY SCHOOL COMMITTED TO COMMUNITY

Wagner Community School students showed their commitment to the community last fall.

Students contributed more than 1,500 pounds of food to the local food pantry as part of a food drive for the American Education Week celebration.

Contributions were accepted between November 14 and November 30.

Grade levels went head to head to see who could collect the most food with the winning groups receiving a root beer float party for their generosity.

The competition was particularly fierce in the elementary grades.

The first through fourth grades collected 926 pounds of food with the third graders bringing in 331 pounds alone!

Early Learning Center students brought in 306 pounds of food, while the middle school students



gathered 200 pounds of food and the high school students accounted for 138 pounds of food.

“The true meaning of Christmas is certainly exhibited by our students at WCS!” Wagner Elementary Principal Carol Erslund said. “It is more blessed to give at this time of year. A huge thanks to all who contributed.”





# DUAL CREDIT CLASSES CREATING CHANCES FOR WHS STUDENTS

State legislators passed a law in 2014 that paid for eligible high school students' dual credit classes and that decision is paying off for Junior and Senior students at Wall High School.

WHS students have completed 94 dual credit classes – ranging from Math, English, and various Social Studies, to Theatre and Music – through at least one of the South Dakota Board of Regents Schools and/or one of South Dakota's Technical Institutes.

"I think the participation in the dual credit classes reflects the high standards students set for themselves," Wall Principal/Federal Programs Director Charles Sykora said.

"The results have been very positive."

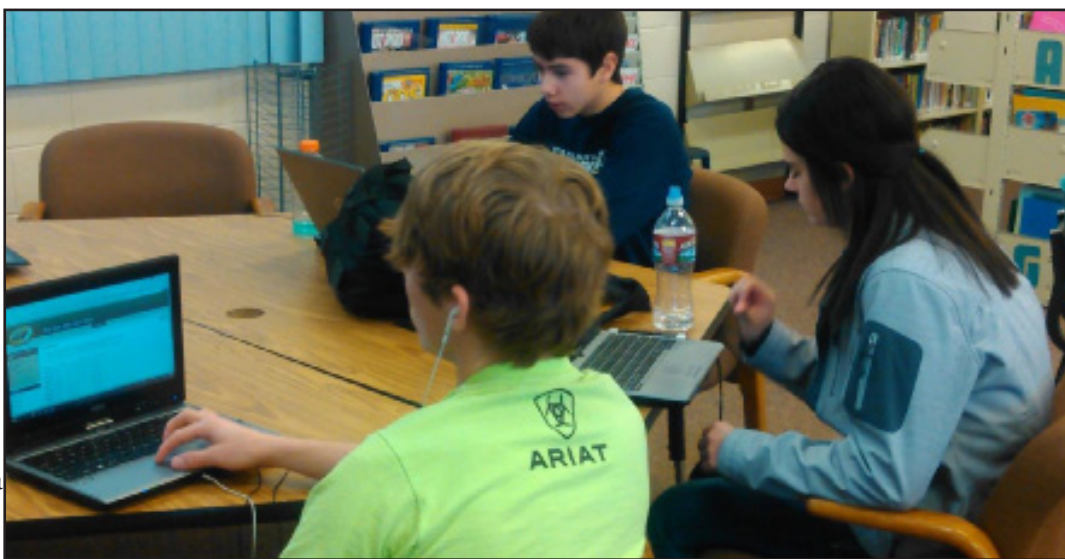
Students have earned an A or B in more than 80 percent of the classes they've completed with enrollments increasing each year the academic opportunity has been in place and students very pleased with the results.

"Returning graduates have indicated how pleased they were to have this experience," Sykora said.

"They believe they were more prepared for post-secondary education because they had opportunities to complete dual credit classes.

Sykora said Wall's success in dual credit classes are due to several factors.

School personnel, primarily Counselor Kelli Sundall, work closely with middle and high school students to set goals and ensure they reach them, helping them allot their time, assigning "e-mentors" to dual credit students to monitor progress, offer assistance, and ensure students stay on track to complete their coursework in a timely manner.



Parents are also included in the process as early as eighth grade in order to encourage and inform their students of necessary requirements so as high school students they qualify to register for dual

credit classes.

These reinforcements coupled with encouragement are enhancing Wall's student achievement and dual credit program.

"Students in the Wall School District continue to look into options beyond typical Wall School District courses," Sykora said.

"Continued attention to high achievement and feedback from students will help Wall improve students' dual credit experiences."

# WEBSTER AREA STAFF SUPPORT WORTHY CAUSE

To support their local Veterans programs, Webster Area School District staff donned denim.

Webster Area staff members raised funds as part of the first ever Denim Days for Veterans.

“With Veterans Day drawing near, and learning that veteran service volunteers sometimes personally provide veterans with needed items, Webster Area School Staff

wanted to help,” Webster Area High School Librarian Angie Garry said.

In order to wear denim on certain Friday’s during the school year, the staff

donated funds; eventually raising \$1,675 to provide to local Veterans programs.

“In an effort to show our support to our local veterans, the staff collected donations for this worthy cause,” Garry said, adding that the district plans to

hold the fundraiser again next year.

The support shown by the staff amazed those involved with the veterans programs.

“Day County Veterans Ser-

vice Officer Kevin Bohn said he was stunned,” Garry said. “He said that it was gratifying to come home and help the veterans in Day County.”



# SIGHTS SET ON FUTURE IN WESSINGTON SPRINGS



*Courtesy of Kristi Hine of the True Dakotan*

A strategic plan mapping out how the Wessington Springs School District will improve communication, provide continuation of school programs and plan for the future of school facilities is underway, and the school board and administration are asking the community to engage in this important process.

The 2016 – 2020 draft plan, inserted in this week's paper, aims to focus energy on three strategies:

1. Improve communication at all levels internally and externally.
2. Provide resources for continuation and enhancement of student development.
3. Ensure best use of facilities, equipment and staff.

A group of 10-15 people per strategy will further develop the strategic plan during a series of planned meetings over the course of three months with action teams helping form specific results and action plans to successfully carry out the strategies outlined above.

"We generally are able to implement the plans in three to four years," Lance Witte, Wessington Springs School District Superintendent said. "This is because of community help in facing up to the strategic issues through the involvement of students, parents and community members."

Strategy number one aims to enhance current lines of communication internally among faculty, staff and administration as well as externally, between the school, students, parents and the entire school community.

"Communication is something that can continuously be improved," said Witte.

"Through this strategy we will explore a variety of methods utilizing new technology and traditional lines of communication to find a positive, effective communication mix for all stakeholders in the Wessington Springs School community."

The continuation and enhancement of student development within the realms of classroom curriculum and school programs is the focus of strategy two in the Wessington Springs School District Strategic Plan.

With two of the most vibrant and robust Future Farmers of America (FFA) and Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) chapters in the region, Wessington Springs Schools has determined that

attention needs to be placed on the continuation of these programs well into the future.

"There has been a lot of conversation around Charlotte Mohling and Craig Shryock who have led students to great success within the FCCLA and FFA programs for many years," he said. "Eventually they will make retirement plans and we need to have a plan in place to keep these programs viable well into the future."

Additional focus within this strategy will be on continuation and enhancement of curriculum including reading, math and technology programs.

With an aging yet solid high school structure, growing student enrollment and changes in the state's school funding formula, a plan for the future of the district's facilities, equipment and staff has been identified as the final strategy in the 2016-2020 plan.

"The high school is as structurally solid as you're going to find, but internally, it needs some updates, specifically the electrical along with the heating and cooling system," said Witte.

Witte said that preliminary estimates to update the 100-year old building's heating and cooling system are upwards of \$1.5 million.

Under the direction of the school board, a feasibility study is currently underway to evaluate the school district's facilities and equipment in order provide solid numbers for different scenarios and help guide the board, administration and community plan for the future.

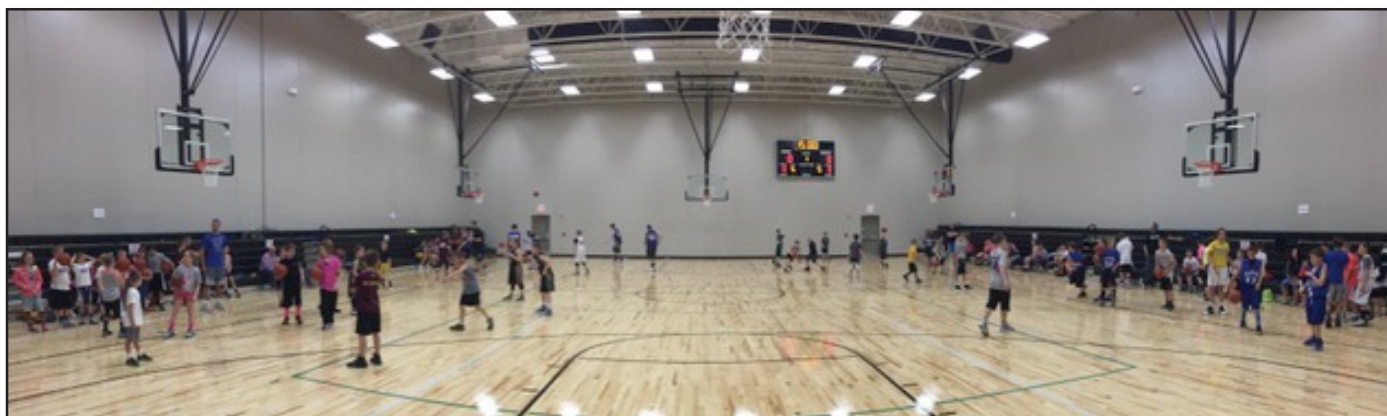
"The elementary school has had many recent improvements and is most likely good for another 30 years," Witte said. "Our facilities present a very complex scenario and we are looking to the community to get as involved as possible to help us plan for the future."

Witte added that recent legislative shifts in South Dakota school funding have added a new dynamics to capital outlay funds.

"The complexity in the state's funding changes adds into this," he said. "The new legislation means that money is more fluid between capital outlay fund and general fund. But the catch is that the general fund surplus needs to decrease by next year or the state will reduce our state aid."

Witte said that action teams working on this strategy will look at information and results from the feasibility study while taking the recent budget shifts into consideration.

# NEW FACILITIES ENHANCE ENVIRONMENT AT WL



Meeting the needs of students was on the minds of those in the Willow Lake School District when they broke ground on their building project.

In June of 2015, the two-phased building project set out to update and add to the school's classroom, library and other facilities and construct a new activities center. The district saw it to fruition this year.

"Our motivation was to update and improve the functionality of our facilities," Superintendent Scott Klaudt said. "We identified five major benefits to our district."

Those five benefits included:

1. Offers more flexible academic scheduling to allow the district the chance to offer additional curriculum within a positive environment;
2. Provide a safe environment and enhance school safety and security;
3. Affords the opportunity for facilities to offer Adult Education in the new library media center;
4. Modernizes the district's technology infra-

structure;

5. Enhances athletic equality for practices, games and facilities.

Those benefits and informational meetings brought the community together on the plan.

"The Willow Lake community was very supportive of the idea," Klaudt said. "We conducted four public informational meeting to discuss the vision the community had going forward, as far as the size of the project and the limitations."

"From these meetings came the vision based on needs and not wants."

Funded with capital outlay certificates, the project renovated and replaced the district's nearly 90 year old, two-story building, provided a new place for activities and brightened up the school's entrance, reception area and classroom and library spaces all in the name of student achievement.

"Providing a positive and modern learning environment to all of our students and the flexibility to meet their needs to be successful achieves our goal of college and career readiness," Klaudt said.

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# GOODWILL IN WILMOT

A community meal in Wilmot came to be from goodwill and a casual dress code.

During the Thanksgiving and Christmas weeks, Wilmot School District staff donated \$20 to put on a pair of blue jeans. The money raised was used to serve a free community meal to any and all people in the Wilmot School District Area as a way for staff to not only become more involved in the community, but also give back to it.

“It was a great opportunity to give back to the community,” Business Manager Stacey DeBoer said.

“Many of our community members attend the school’s sporting and music events and contribute to our various fundraising efforts. It’s nice to be able to show our appreciation for their support.”

School staff prepared and served the soup and sandwich meal in McKenna Hall (the school lunch room) on the evening of December 19. Art classes from both elementary and the high school posted work around the lunch room.

“It was amazing, because it got our parents and community into our school to see what we are doing,” Head Cook Julie Nelson said.



Wilmot’s Honor Society delivered meals to the elderly and other individuals not able to attend the event.

Approximately 250 were served to those who attended and received deliveries. Staff members were very happy with the results and plans are already in the works to hold another and improve on the event.

“It was a great idea,” First Grade Teacher Renae Neuharth said. “I think that it showed the community how much we supported them and I hope it becomes a tradition.”



# STUDENTS AT WHS DOING WORK ON DUAL CREDIT

For Winner High School Junior and Senior students one thing is certain, dual credit classes are creating college ready kids.

“I highly recommend taking dual credits courses to anyone that is able to take them,” Junior Riley Calhoun said. “Being able to take dual credit classes has not only helped me get ready for college, but will also make my college experience easier.”

Over the past three years, the Winner School District has seen a major increase in students who are taking dual credit courses, which are offered by all six of South Dakota’s public universities and the four technical institutions.

The 2016-17 school year marked the third year WHS offered dual credit opportunities and 40 students enrolled in 40 different courses, which was nearly quadruple the number of students and ten times the number of courses enrolled in during the opportunities first year.

“If I had one thing that I could do over, it would be to take more dual credit classes,” Senior Wyatt Ewing said. “Our school has done a wonderful job of supporting us through this process.”

For the 2014-15 school year the district switched from Advanced Placement (AP) to dual credit.

“The district changed because while AP courses gave students rigor and academic advancement, it did not always provide college credit,” Curriculum/Title I Coordinator Kimberly DeMers said

At the end of the school year, WHS students had earned a total of 351 college credits.



“The benefits to dual credit courses are proving to be valuable,” DeMers said. “Students get the chance to take courses that interest them.”

“The possibilities are limitless, and it prepares students for what college will be like.”

DeMers noted students earn college credit through the dual credit courses at a significantly reduced rate, which is a big draw for students.

“Dual credit classes have been extremely beneficial to me,” Junior Meredith Calhoun said “My family is saving lots of money by having me take these classes now instead of at college. I am able to take classes that are challenging and interesting.”

Students must qualify for dual credit courses through their class rank, GPA, or ACT score in order for the higher ed. institutions to know the students are ready for the rigor of college courses.

Rigors that WHS Juniors and Seniors are embracing – juniors are averaging two courses in their second semester and at least four courses during their senior year – and relishing.

“I like that dual credit offers more variety and more challenging courses that will prepare us for college and life after high school,” Junior Zach Lapsley said.

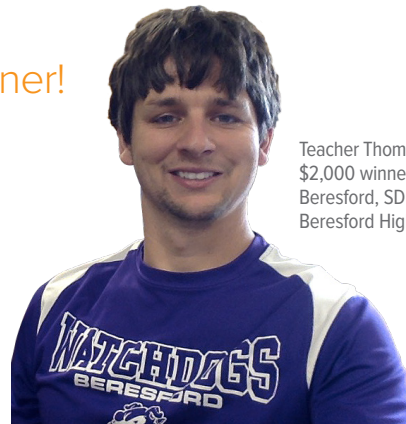


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A photograph of a young girl with blonde hair, wearing a blue dress and a red cape, crouching on grass in front of a wooden building. The word 'smile' is written in large white letters to the right of the girl, with 'by emily' in smaller white letters below it.

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The Delta Dental logo, which consists of a green triangle containing a white stylized 'D' followed by the words 'DELTA DENTAL' in white capital letters.



# WOONSOCKET PAYS TRIBUTE TO VETERANS



Each year, students in the Woonsocket School District pay tribute to the Americans most deserving of it.

For roughly 15 years the school and community have come together in the district's gym to honor and recognize all Veterans as part of the Veteran's Day Program.

"I never leave the program without feeling so much pride in our students, our Veterans and our Country," Woonsocket Vice Chair Lisa Snedeker said.

"It is wonderful to be a part of a school community that places so much value in honoring the people who dedicate their lives to our freedom."

Legion members begin the program with Presentation of the Flag followed by sixth grade students – the student leaders of the program – demonstrating the flag folding and performing creative skits the class put together. The sixth graders also sing "American Tears" while a slide show depicting scenes of soldiers is displayed.

Kindergarten students sing, and sign, "Proud to Be

An American" along with sign language and the high school band and chorus perform patriotic songs. Elementary students make posters that line the gym and hallways and the older students write essays.

"The program honors the veterans from our local community and students have an opportunity to learn a few things from the veterans when they talk about what branch they served in and what they did," Snedeker said.

"It is incredible to hear from them about what branch of the military they served in and sometimes they share a little about their experiences."

Area Veterans have expressed deep appreciation for the work the students put into the program.

"I have seen many of them with tears in their eyes and they choke up as they try to say how much it means to them that we honor and recognize them in the community," Snedeker said.

"It makes us all stop and think about the sacrifices they made for us by dedicating their lives to protect our freedom and serve our country."

## CLUB PROVIDES PLACE FOR YANKTON YOUTH PROGRAMS

This fall, youth in Yankton were ecstatic as the Boys & Girls Club of Yankton opened the doors of the new club for the first time.

“It was an exciting day to celebrate not only the Boys & Girls Club but also the community of Yankton, kids and the many investors in kids that have helped to make this happen,” Yankton Middle School Principal Todd Dvoracek said.

The 25,000 square foot facility, located next to Yankton Middle School, serves youth in two separate programs: The Academy, which is a licensed school based, childcare program at Stewart and St. Ben’s Elementary school, and The Traditional Club, which is a drop in, recreational program located near the Middle School.

“The biggest benefit for the students is to be in a safe, positive place with positive role models,” Dvoracek said.

“Inside of both programs, the mission is to inspire and enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to realize their full potential as responsible, productive and caring citizens.”

The Academy provides a structured program before and after school for youth aged 5-12. The

Traditional Club is for youth in the First through 12th grade with programming focused on academic success, healthy lifestyles and character & leadership.

Programs run year-round with the Academy

serving about 140 youth a day and the Traditional Club serving more than 100. Attendees have the opportunity to take part in a variety of programs and participate in outdoor activities.

“The kids have been excited, shocked at the change in facility and grateful,” Dvoracek said. “It has been fun to listen to the kids be thankful for such a nice place, a place to be with their friends and to get homework help.”

The school district, city, county, businesses and individuals made the Club possible and demonstrated their care for kids and families in Yankton. The project brought many people together for its mission.

“This would not be possible without the support of the school district, community members, businesses and local organizations,” Dvoracek said.

“The Boys & Girls Club of Yankton is growing and striving to serve more youth, more often.”



*Courtesy of the Yankton Press & Dakotan*



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