

Budget Concerns Grow

USD 303 FACES POSSIBLE \$380,000 BUDGET CUT



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NCHS STUCO MEMBERS DEVELOP LEADERSHIP SKILLS!



FUTURE SURGEONS?

NCHS students dissect sheep eyes in Biology!

EAGLE PROFILE



High School Presents *Trouble in Tumbleweed*

Last November, after a two-year intermission, the NCHS All-School Play returned to the stage. Students from all grades 9-12 starred in the production, a comedy set in the old west called Trouble In Tumbleweed. The play itself wasn't anything special—a town full of crooked citizens trying to bribe a secret government agent, full of puns and turn-arounds and secret identities galore—but it was a very special performance, as I came to realize.

What struck me from the get-go was how excited the actors and actresses were about the play, and how enthusiastic they remained even after weeks of attending play practices at 6:30 A.M. every morning. Of course they were all scared out of their minds once it was time to actually perform it in front of an audience, but once they had tasted the limelight and heard the laughter and the applause, they could hardly contain themselves.

It helped that they had such a large audience watching them. Whether it was due to there being 19 kids in the play or to the fact that two years had passed since the last successful school play had been put on, the number of people who came to the play was remarkable. It was probably the largest crowd I'd ever witnessed come to the NCHS play, and I am thankful that the community came out to support the kids, and cheer them on, and make their acting debut spectacular for them.

The kids had so much fun putting on this play. It was great for me to see my first attempt at directing a play turn out to be a success, but it was so much more to see how much pleasure the kids reaped from doing this. It was a special and a unique experience that I know they will never forget.

Budget Concerns Grow

If you haven't heard, the state of Kansas is facing a financial crisis that appears to be growing. Governor Brownback has announced two cuts to Education funding in the past couple of months. His first

announcement focused on the school funding formula, and a need to overhaul it. During this announcement, he shared a desire to Block Grant school funding for the next two years as a new formula is developed. As of February 26, we do not know how these Block Grants will work or how the money will be distributed to schools. We do know the numbers that are included in the Grants though. The Governor's proposal includes a \$127 million cut to general operating expenses for schools. A good portion of this cut is going to be redistributed to KPERS with additional funds being funneled into Special Education and Capital Improvement Aid. As per speculation, the \$127 million dollar cut equates to a \$202 cut in base state aid. For USD 303, this would be a \$120,000 cut to our operating fund for next year. Again, this is speculation because we do not know how money will be directed to schools yet.

Early in February, the Governor announced a 1.5% allotment to Education Funding that will go into effect March 7. This allotment equates to a \$22,000 cut to this year's funding. This announcement came after January's revenues were released and came in over \$40 million below projections. As a district, we have worked hard to be very fiscally responsible, and covering \$22,000, while not preferred, can be done. My fear is that this number will grow. Many financial analysts feel that revenues will continue to come in well below projections making the deficit grow, and therefore, the need for cuts to grow.

As a fiscally responsible entity, we do have money set aside for these situations. Unfortunately, we find ourselves in a tough situation. In addition to the cuts from the State, we are facing a local financial situation. As many of you well know, our community, county, and school rely heavily on the Oil Industry. When oil is plentiful and priced well, we prosper. When oil prices fall, we struggle. We find ourselves in this situation now. Projected oil values have fallen drastically. \$39 million of USD 303's assessed value is oil and gas. Projections show us losing as much as half of that value. This loss in valuation equates to a \$260,000 cut to our operating expenses, unless we raise our LOB MILL Levy. To retain that amount money, it would require between 6 and 7 additional MILLS in property taxes. Again, we have money set aside to help cover some of these ebb and flow situations so that our local tax payers are not impacted so drastically. Unfortunately, between the cuts from the State and loss of assessed value, we are put in a situation where reserve funds will not come close to covering projected short falls for next year.

So what do we do now? It is important to understand that the cuts we are discussing are sizable enough to effect personnel and programs. If we do not find ways to increase revenues, we will be forced, eventually, to cut programs and personnel that have become very important to USD 303. Currently, we are looking at ways to be more efficient with our utility costs, food service costs, and other areas that we could save money without cutting personnel and programs that directly affect our students. If you have thoughts or ideas on ways we could save money, please contact Mr. Reinhardt at 798-2210 or derek.reinhardt@usd303.org.

School Board Tables Facility Improvements

The USD 303 School Board met in a special meeting December 22, 2014, to discuss school facility improvements. The Board has been working with staff and patrons since December 2013 to develop a plan to improve and add on to our existing facilities. Over the course of the last year, many discussions have been had about the current state of our facilities, the changes that have happened in education over the last decade, and the facilities improvements necessary to meet the needs of our students. The Board found several areas that needed to be addressed: ADA compliance, energy efficiency, student safety and security, and space. By working with an architectural firm, the Board was able to develop a preliminary plan to address these needs.

At the December 22, meeting, the Board was presented with the documents necessary to proceed with a bond election to ensure funds for the facility improvements. At this meeting, the Board discussed the current financial condition of the State, County, and School District. Concerns were

expressed with regards to uncertainty in the State Budget, the increase in assessed valuation and the resulting impact on local property taxes, and the impact of decreased oil value on the local economy. After a lengthy discussion, the board voted unanimously to table the facility improvements until the regular March Board Meeting. While this delay will prevent the Board from putting the bond election on the April Ballot, the Board believed that it was in the best interest of all parties to get a better feel for the local economy before moving forward. While there is never a good time to ask our local patrons for additional tax dollars, there are better times. The Board is dedicated to improving the educational environment in Ness City and Ness County, and believes that the proposed facilities improvements are in the best interest of all parties. They are utilizing those 90 days to assess the impact of a bond election to determine whether or not it is appropriate to look at a special election in the near future.

Public Notice

USD 303 will continue to monitor and regulate the utilization of the district's computer network to assure patrons of USD 303's compliance with the federal regulation of the Children's Internet Protection Act.

Privacy Notice

The superintendent, the board and staff shall protect the right of privacy of students and their families in connection with any surveys or physical examinations conducted, assisted, or authorized by the board or administration. The district shall provide parents notice of their rights under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment annually, at the beginning of each school year, and at any other time the school district policies in this area are substantially changed.

2014 District Report Card

As Kansas schools continue working towards full implementation of the Kansas College and Career Ready Standards (KCCRS), 2014 marked the first year that students transitioned to a new state assessment that addressed the skills currently being taught in the classroom. Kansas launched its pilot of the new state assessment and assessment delivery platform a year in advance of the federal state testing requirement for the purpose of identifying and fixing any system issues and district-level technology compatibility issues. Additionally, the early launch provided the time needed to verify the validity of the new assessment items and provide students the opportunity to interact with the new types of technology-enhanced items prior to the official launch in 2015.

During the early part of the testing window, KSDE's assessment vendor, the Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation (CETE), reported that the assessment delivery platform had been the target of a Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attack, which attempted to shut down the servers and severely impacted the testing environment for many students. The impact of this attack resulted in CETE's inability to verify the validity of the results for all students. As such, the Kansas State Board of Education, acting on the recommendations of the Kansas Technical Advisory Committee, CETE and Kansas State Department of Education staff and with approval from the United States Department of Education, voted to not release any results of the 2014 state assessment.

While we are not able to provide assessment scores for 2013-14, we are still able to publish academic indicators, including graduation rates, and demographic information. We are pleased to report that graduation rates as a whole have improved for the fifth straight year in a row. This is great news for Kansas and highlights the great work happening in our classrooms.

Thank you for your support as we continue our transition to higher academic standards for Kansas students.

Brad Neuenswander
Interim Education Commissioner

USD 303, in Conjunction with USD 106, to Offer Learn and Play Opportunities for Children Aged Birth to Five

In September, the USD 303 School Board applied for a Block Grant to provide opportunities for Pre-School aged students. The Board was notified in November that USD 303 had received the Grant. The \$32,840 Grant is very specific as to the programs that can be offered: Learn and Play, Triple P, Healthy Steps, and Collaborative Community Supports. USD 303 will be working with USD 106 to offer these opportunities to all families in Ness County.

With the loss of Parents as Teachers and other early education opportunities, it became very important for Ness County to find ways to fund and maintain programs similar to those lost. This grant will allow Ness County parents to continue to receive services for their children aged birth to five.

Triple P stands for Positive Parenting Program. This program will offer parents opportunities to learn positive parenting tips, receive ideas on how to deal with the small and large challenges of raising a child, and receive support and help in their homes. It offers clear and simple ideas to help manage problem behaviors and help you become confident about your parenting skills.

Healthy Steps will offer support in child health and development, promote good health practices, and respond to mothers' and fathers' concerns about their developing infants and toddlers from prenatal up to three years of age.

Learn and Play is the largest portion of the grant. Learn & Play is a FREE parent/child activity time supporting development in all domains with a focus on early literacy. In Ness County, this program will be offered 35 times over the course of the year. Creative Curriculum will be used to engage children and parents in learning opportunities. It is a great opportunity for parents to help prepare their child for school. This program will be offered in Ness City and Ransom, and is currently scheduled for Monday afternoons at 5:00 in the USD 303 Board Room located at 414 East Chestnut. If you would like more information on meeting times, locations, and dates, please contact Rebecca Younger at rebecca.younger@usd303.org or call 798-2210.

Mr. Hewitt's Science

Physics is a very interactive class. We are currently talking about momentum, which lends itself to a lot of labs. We have spent the last couple of weeks taking physics carts and colliding them. This makes the students think about and figure out what is actually happening in real world collisions. The applications to real life situations is what gets the students into and excited about the collisions and everything that we have done up to this point.

Genetics is one of the most interesting topics we cover in biology, because it makes sense to the students. The students are working through ways to determine how we can look at a persons parents and offspring and determine what traits they have and can pass on. Currently we are looking at pedigrees, which is a way to look at traits that are passed down through family trees.

8th grade science has been doing a lot of thinking about how we can solve problems. The one we have been working on lately is what must be done to help prevent damage to buildings by earthquakes. We have discussed many different ways in which we could achieve this. Then I gave them some toothpicks and marshmallows and had them build them to test.

In General Science we are talking about muscles. I have presented them with the task of choosing an activity that they will do on video. Then they must use the knowledge that they have gained over the last couple of weeks to explain what makes this possible. In doing this they will discuss what muscles they are use and how those muscles are making this task possible.

Read the Most from Coast to Coast

On February 27, 2015, High School and Elementary School students were encouraged to participate in Read the Most from Coast to Coast. This is a day sponsored by Renaissance Learning in which students from

all over the world read and take AR quizzes in order to break the record set last February of 4,987,949 books read and quizzes taken in one day.

Prizes will be awarded to the student in each grade who reads the most books with the highest percentage on the quizzes they take. Winning students in grades 1 – 6 will receive a certificate for a 20 oz. slush from the Mini Mart. Students who win in grades 7- 12 will receive a gift certificate to be redeemed at the Mini Mart.

During the event, Renaissance Learning will track national quizzes on its hosted database and share progress online. Educators, parents and interested community members will be able to see progress toward the national goal at www.renaissance.com/read-the-most.

Good Luck and Happy Reading!!!!

Highly Qualified Teacher Notification

Schools that receive Title 1 services are required to notify parents and community when a teacher in that school does not meet the “highly qualified” criteria. In order to be “highly qualified” under the federal law, teachers hired before the 2002-03 school year must have obtained full state certification, hold at least a bachelor’s degree and either demonstrate competence in all academic subjects in which the teacher teaches based on a high, objective, uniform state standard of evaluation or meet the same requirements as a newly hired teacher. Newly hired (hired after the beginning of the 2002-03 school year) elementary teachers must have full state certification, hold a bachelor’s degree, and pass a state test for teachers in reading, writing, and other areas of the elementary curriculum. Newly hired middle and high school teachers must meet the same certification and degree requirements and pass a state test in the subject area in which they teach or have an academic major, graduate degree, or comparable course work in the subject.

It is our duty to notify parents and community members that Mrs. Jodi Gantz has been teaching our Kindergarten class while Mrs. Bamberger is on maternity leave. Mrs. Gantz is not considered highly qualified based on the federal guidelines. Mrs. Gantz has worked in our school for over 13 years, most of that time has been spent in the Kindergarten classroom. We have full faith in her ability to teach our kindergarteners during Mrs. Bamberger’s absence. We are lucky to have individuals such as Mrs. Gantz working with our kids, even if she is not considered highly qualified.

Ness City High School AR Reading Statistics

For the first semester, the seventh grade students earned an average of 13.6 points per student. The eighth grade had the best percentage on the tests that they took. Their overall percentage was 90.4. In grades nine through twelve, the tenth grade accumulated an average of 25 points per student while the twelfth grade students maintained the best percentage at 88.4.

In the seventh grade, the student who earned the most points was Ashley Foos with 22.4 and Austin Snodgrass achieved the highest percentage with 100% on tests over four books. Alysson Foos earned the most points (39) and had the best percentage (100%) in the eighth grade. Ninth grader, Sydney Beaucamp earned 82.6 points while Angelena Copeland and Mario Luna both acquired 100% averages on their quizzes. With outstanding progress in tenth grade, Alexis Clarke exceeded expectations with 161 points and 100% on ALL of her quizzes. Adlin Slagle with 55.6 points and Chynelle Kraft with 95% were the stand out students in eleventh grade. Finally, Caitlin Gumm earned 71.8 points and Tara Walker scored 100% to lead the twelfth grade.

Congratulations to all those who excelled in Accelerated Reading last semester!!!!



7th Grade Students work on their Countries project.

Creating Countries

What would you do if you could create your own country? What would it look like? What would you name it? How big would it be? Following a unit on climate, environment and natural resources, the 7th grade social studies students were given a task to do just that. With just a few requirements, such as where corn was produced, where oil was drilled and where cattle were raised, the students, working with a partner, set out creating a country that was all their own. Some countries had only two states and some had several. The shapes were as unique as the students who drew them. All had rivers, lakes, mountains and other landforms, as well as cities. This activity gave the students a chance to use their imaginations and tap into the knowledge they had gained about geography.

Student Council

The month of December was a busy one for STUCO members. On December 8, students from Scott City and Dodge City convened in Ness City High School to work on leadership skills with Joe Coles. Hosting students from bigger schools was exciting for our small town kids and gave them a chance to showcase our facilities. When compared to Dodge City, our school is significantly smaller, but the pride our students have in the school is second to none. The students also discussed the process and plans for renovating and adding on to our school and the challenges that the school is facing in order to make the changes. It was a positive day of learning and mingling. One the last day of the semester, STUCO hosted an ugly sweater competition for 7-12 grades. Many students participated and the sweaters varied in style and function. STUCO is still working to raise money for the electronic marquee for the school. They've worked concessions stands and will be selling RADA Cutlery soon to try to meet the goal of having the marquee up by Old Settlers.



Lucas Roth represents NCHS during Leadership Seminar.



Regan Stiawalt and Josue Jurado dissect their sheep eye

What's Happening in Advanced Biology?????

Students in Advance Biology have spent the last six weeks in class studying the Nervous System. During this time they have learned the locations and functions of the brain, spinal cord, major nerves of the body and the eye. They then dissected a sheep brain and eye.

NCJHS Students Create Cedar Chests from Scratch

The Ness City Junior High Students worked very hard in their first semester of Introduction to Industrial Technology. This is a semester long course that the students learn, safety, drafting, blue print reading, and the basics of constructing furniture. The thirteen students constructed thirteen cedar chests. The students did a wonderful job and now have a hand made piece of

furniture to be proud of! These cedar chests will be on display at our open house May 4-5, please take some time and come look at all the furniture, and art work produced at NCHS.



First Semester 8th Grade Woods Class with their Cedar Chests!

5th Graders Participate in Study Buddies Program

Mr. Scott's 5th grade class has met with Mrs. Beutler's and Ms. Smith's 2nd grade class twice a week this school year for Study Buddy time. Activities have included partner reading, helping with math, singing and dancing, scavenger hunts and any other help the 2nd graders need.

After the 1st semester with the 2nd graders Mr. Scott had the 5th graders reflect about their experiences with the 2nd graders. They all agreed it has been a blast being with them but some shared how when helping the students they felt the way teachers and educators do with students. They talked about how they put themselves in teacher's shoes and showed empathy towards people in the education world.

This activity also promotes positive leadership and role model experiences. Mr. Scott has a saying called S.A.G.E which stands for Set A Good Example. The 5th graders talk and write about how they can set good examples for younger students whenever and wherever they go. Overall both classes have benefitted from this activity for many positive reasons.

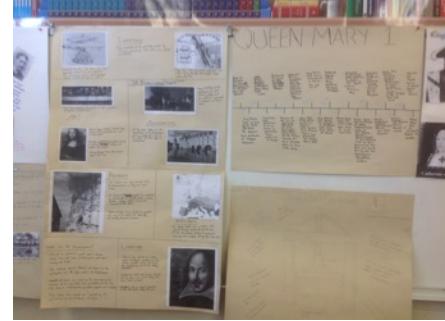
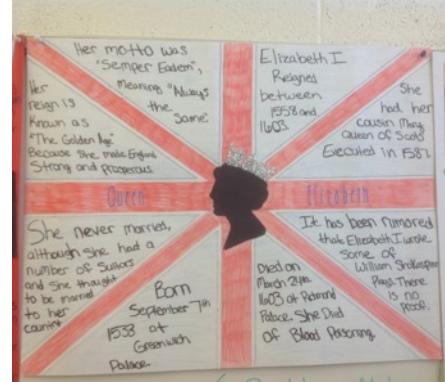


Amy Foos and Alexa Reinhardt work with 2nd graders during Study Buddy time.



English I

Students have been preparing to read Romeo and Juliet by learning background information related to the Renaissance. After discussing several topics in class, each student was assigned a topic to research. Then each student presented some form of a project to the class by discussing their particular topic. Some of the topics investigated were King Henry VIII, Queen Mary I, Queen Elizabeth I, William Shakespeare, The Globe Theater, Renaissance, and many other topics. The Freshmen did a terrific job investigating and producing their projects, and the presentations were fantastic.



PreSchoolers Participate in Kansas Day Activities



During the week of January 26th, the preschoolers studied about Kansas. They read the book "Wheat" and "Climbing Kansas Mountains". They made sunflowers, cottonwood trees, Jayhawks and planted their own wheat. To end the week, they made "Bread in a Bag" topped with honey from our state insect the honey bee. A few preschoolers were a little offended that they had to be a Jayhawk and not a Wildcat.

Kindergarten through High School Art Update

Greetings from the Art Department! We have been very busy in both the elementary art room and the high school art room during the first semester of school. We have learned about lines, shapes, and colors in art.

These are just a few of the building blocks of art creation called the Elements of Art. The rest of the winter and into spring we will continue to explore the foundations of the creation of art and learn about different artists both past and present. The elementary students are starting to work with clay which brings about much joy to the art room! (clay is a perpetual favorite media to explore) In the not too distant future the high school students will venture out to compete in various art shows and seniors currently enrolled in art will be able to leave their artistic mark upon the school with the painting of a ceiling tile that represents themselves and a famous artist. In May we will hold our student art exhibition in the high school gymnasium that will demonstrate the very creative and imaginative artists we have attending our schools.



A Braille Tale

Students in the Second Grade learned how to communicate in different ways and learned about different assistances for the visually impaired. After reading about Helen Keller's life, they learned about the use of Braille and other aids. Pictured is Mr. Jim Lawlor showing Kylah Runde how to correctly maneuver a visually impaired walking stick. Mrs. Liz Lawlor is pictured demonstrating how to use the Braille Writer.
by Carrie Beutler



Personal Keepsakes Enhance American History Class

For the students in American History class, World War II became something more than an event in a textbook to read about when Robert Wierman and Payton Fellhoelter brought in family heirlooms to share with the class. Robert brought in items that had belonged to his late great uncle, James Wierman. Items included a military issued lighter, medals, and gloves and caps. The class

especially enjoyed seeing the German military binoculars that Mr. Wierman obtained from a German soldier.

Payton brought in a scrapbook filled with pictures, newspaper clippings, letters and other keepsakes, which was compiled by his great grandmother. Payton's great grandfather, Harold Byer Jr., was serving in the military, and he frequently sent letters and cards to his wife back home. Page after page of the scrapbook chronicles the events of the war as they unfold. The actual newspapers with the headlines of the bombing of Pearl Harbor and then the invasion of French Normandy were a special highlight for the students.

Other students had stories from grandparents and relatives to share which also enhanced the unit and provided personal glimpses into American life during the World War II era.



Pictured above is the newspaper clipping from Payton Fellhoelter's great grandmother's scrap book announcing the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

KAY Club Makes Contribution

The Ness City High School KAY Club (Kansas Association of Youth) recently made an \$800 contribution to the Student Council's fund raising efforts for an electronic sign. The KAY's have worked hard the past few years on several money-making projects which made this donation possible. Part of the money also came from the Boxtop coupons collected by patrons and parents, which the KAY Club sorts, bundles and then sends in to receive cash back.

KAY President Mason Weber commented "The KAY officers felt that the sign was an important school improvement project so we wanted to donate as much as we could."

The KAY's wish the Student Council good luck as it continues to raise funds for this worthy cause and a big thank you to those who continue to collect the Boxtops for Education coupons which allows the KAY Club to donate to worthy causes in the school.

Mrs. Smith's 2nd Grade Participates in Great Mail Race

Our class received a letter in the mail from a school in Oxford, Mississippi wanting to know what 2nd grade was like in Kansas. It then invited us to join The Great Mail Race to find out what 2nd grade is like across the United States. We wrote letters to 49 states with a questionnaire about their school, community, and state. Throughout the next couple months we will be awaiting our replies so we can mark where they are from on the map and discover what life is like for other 2nd graders. We have also spent our time diving in to books like *Schools Around the World*, *Helen Keller*, *Officer Buckle and Gloria*, and *Luke Goes to Bat*. We are becoming experts at adding and subtracting two-digit numbers. We have had a fun start to the new semester and cannot wait to see what we will learn next.

Music Department Prepares for Contests

The music department at Ness City schools has been very busy since classes began after Christmas break. Many students are preparing solos and ensembles for contest in March. The junior high festival is at LaCrosse on March 6th. The high school festival will be held at Barton County

Community College on March 10. We had a group of eight students attend a band clinic sponsored by Kansas State University. Alyssa Wierman and Trace Flax sang the Star-Spangled Banner at the "Hilltop Hoops Classic" in Great Bend. The K-2 students celebrated 100 days of school by singing a special song for the rest of the student body.



3rd Graders Learn Science through Literacy

The third grade class of Ness Elementary School was busy working on creating their own inventions of Ginger Bread Houses, as they finished their Journey's Unit on Inventions at the close of the first semester. The students then took their



Ginger Bread Houses home to their families to share for the Christmas Holiday Season. Upon returning to school after the Christmas break, the third grade students were busy mining for fossils in their chocolate chip cookies, as they completed their lesson on Prehistoric animals.

FACS Classes

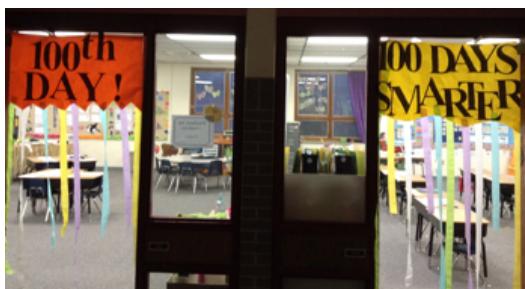
The Ness City FACS classes have been exploring and applying important life skills. Some of these include the use of credit – advantages and pitfalls; current issues that affect the family; individual interests as they relate to career clusters and possible career choices; and applying the use of process skills such as management both at home and at school. Nutrition is another matter being examined—currently being explored are the pros and cons carbohydrates and fats that are in our diets. There is also one student working with a teacher part-time to gain real-world work experience.

The NCHS FCCLA chapter is currently conducting a *Pennies for Patients* penny drive for the Leukemia, Lymphoma Society. There are contests both at the high school and grade schools. The high school class bringing in the most money over \$50 will earn either an early dismissal or a late start. If it is a junior high class, they will be awarded a movie during the day at the time of their choosing. The grade school class bringing in the most change will earn ice cream at the end of the day sometime the week following the end of the drive.

February 9 - 14 was National FCCLA Week. In addition to other activities during the week we continued the Pennies for Patients and had a cookie sale during lunch on Tuesday and Thursday with proceeds going to the Western Plains Animal Refuge, located in Ellis. This is part of the current Kansas FCCLA Community Service Project.

1st Grade Celebrates 100th Day of School

This nine weeks the first grade classes celebrated the 100th day of school. During this day the students enjoyed many fun and educational activities. The faculty, staff, and students all dressed up like they were 100 years old, the students created necklaces made from 100 fruit loops, flipped a coin 100 times and learned about probability. Some other activities that the students enjoyed were writing what they would do with \$100, writing correctly 100 words, and writing 100 reasons they love first grade.



English courses

The students in English II have spent the first weeks of the semester reviewing the basic structure of the English language and using that knowledge to improve their writing and reading skills. They recently put some of that knowledge into practice by performing sentence skits for their classmates. Building on instruction from the previous year, the students in English III have been studying more complex issues of writing by analyzing thesis statements, cohesion between paragraphs in a composition, and unique style. This work will culminate in writing an MLA format research paper. The students in English IV just finished writing a literary analysis of theme across genres, comparing and contrasting the novel *The Giver* with the movie based on the

book. The papers required this semester for students in Composition II include "Taking a Stand," "Proposing a Solution," "Taking a Stand with Sources," and "Literary Analysis." They will test their personal credos as they evaluate sources of information for these papers.

National Honor Society

Students who have met the academic standard for National Honor Society have received a letter explaining the next steps in the selection process. The students must verify their desire to be considered for membership by supplying informational resumes to the sponsor for use by the members of the Faculty Council. In addition to the academic requirement, the council considers leadership, character, and service. The deadline for the resumes was February 27, with a goal to notify students about membership by Spring Break. Current members will make plans for the induction ceremony, which will be held on April 28.

PBS

Students at Ness City Elementary work every day to be an E.A.G.L.E. One of the areas that we are working on is Empathy. Children who don't show much empathy are more prone to violence, as well as other negative actions such as aggression or other ways of acting out. Children who do have empathy, on the other hand, are much more compassionate and helpful to other children. They are also more likely to share their toys or games with others. They have better social skills, get along better with other children, and even adjust better when starting school than children who show less empathy.

Students may earn "feathers" when they are caught demonstrating good behavior. Each month students may turn in their feathers for rewards. These are the top EAGLES for each class: Isiah Fitzgerald, Tiana Smith, Zachary Braun, Andrea Lopez, Broxton Gall, Taylor Cable, Hope Woods, Caitlin Smee, and Ariana Robinson.



AR

We all know that reading aloud to our kids is important. As a parent, you have the power to boost your children's learning potential simply by making books an integral part of their lives.

We would like to congratulate the following students for being the top readers for their class for the month of January. These students have scored the highest percentage and the highest points earned on the AR quizzes they have taken: Wyatt Sutton, Hannah Younger, Leonardo Araiza , Adalaiza Morales, Daniel Talamantes, Aneth Reyes, Casen Marshall, and Caitlin Smee



High Schools Scholars Bowl

The high school scholars bowl team closed the books on another season by competing at Regionals in Atwood on Thursday, February 5th. The team played very well. However, even with their good play, they did not win enough rounds to move on and play for a position at the State Scholars Bowl competition.

Throughout the season, the team competed at Ness City, Healy, Dighton, Jetmore, Quinter and Claflin. Their best finish was at Dighton, where both the varsity and jr. varsity teams placed third.

Members of the team are as follows: Alyssa Wierman, Nashon Copeland, Lucas Roths, Lexea Barnes, Emily Dawes, Wyatt Delaney, Trace Flax, Darian McClure, Robert Wierman, Jacob Schwien.

Yearbook

The yearbook class has been extremely busy designing the 2014-2015 book.

The class is creating some really neat pictures by editing them in Photoshop. With this program, they are able to make pictures with spot color, combine pictures into one, and even repair pictures.

Thank you to all the senior parents for providing baby and candid pictures, and writing a letter to your senior. Also, thank you to those of you who have been so kind and allowed us to use pictures you have taken at events. Your pictures are a great help!

Yearbooks will go on sale starting February 9th for \$35. March 23rd, they will \$40. Please contact the high school office if you would like to purchase.

6th Graders Present Book Reports

Mr. Schulte's class has been working hard all year. They still have a lot to do before the school year is over. One thing the 6th graders are working on now is giving oral book reviews to an audience. The students will give their report based on a book of their choice. For some, this will be the first time presenting to a live audience.

Presenting information in front of a class is an important skill. It helps students learn proper speech techniques while also demonstrating comprehension and many other skills. Many in the class are looking forward to giving their first book review.

Mr. Allen's Math Classes Prepare for the Future

We are staying very busy in Mr. Allen's Math classes. The eighth graders and Algebra 1 students are preparing for the new College and Career Readiness Standards. Our Algebra 2 students are preparing for College Algebra while some of our students are already getting College classes out of the way. This semester we have started our College Algebra course that is offered to Juniors and Sophomores that have already taken the courses to prepare for this. After College Algebra, they will have three more college credits out of the way once they are done.



Cynthia Guzman presents her book report in Mr. Schulte's class.

High School Boys Basketball

The 2014/15 basketball season is well underway, with just a few games remaining in the regular season. Both the junior varsity and varsity have enjoyed successful seasons, and continue to improve every day. The varsity boys started off the season placing 3rd in the pre-season Purple and Gold Tournament at WaKeeney. They went into Christmas break with a 5-1 record. After Christmas, we played in a very difficult mid-season tournament at St. John, playing against two 4A schools and a 6A school from Wichita West. Again, the Eagles placed 3rd, and Kyle Harris was named to the All Tournament Team. Thank you to the Ness City fans, cheerleaders, coaches, and players, for helping Ness City win the Sportsmanship Award at the tournament! Over Christmas break, the junior varsity competed in a tournament at Hill City. Due to inclement weather, the tournament did not get finished, but Christian Scheopner made the all tournament team. With only a few wins on the season, a young, but talented junior varsity team looks to finish out the year strong.

The Eagles enter the Hill City Substate Tournament as the 3rd seed and will play Oakley at Home Monday, March 2, at 7:00. The boys look to make a deep post season run and try to earn a trip to Manhattan for the state tournament. The Ness City Basketball Team would like to thank the parents, students, fans and community for all of your continued support this year!

New Paras Work Hard to Help Ness City Students

Becky Martin has worked at USD 303 for the last 5 years. She began as an activity bus driver then became a route driver, then worked part time as a substitute teacher. We are excited to have her as a new para educator.

Sasha Linton-Hendrick moved to Ness City in November because her parents are living here. Her parents are Dennis and Bonnie Linton-Hendrick, (United Methodist Pastors). She has always enjoyed working with children and that is why she wanted to be a para educator.



Jr. High Girls Complete Successful Basketball Season

The Ness City Middle School girls started practice in October with 10 eighth grade and 4 seventh grade participants. These 14 athletes always came to practice with the willingness to work and enthusiasm to make the team and themselves better. Coach Marissa Stoecklein and Coach Braun saw a huge improvement from the beginning of the season to the end of the season. The girls' hardwork reflected in their achievements this year.

The JV team concluded with a record of 10 wins and 5 losses, and a second place finish in the CPL West Division Tournament. The team scored an average of 21.6 points per game while holding their opponents to 15.8 points per game.

The varsity team played their way to a 12 win and 4 loss season. Their 4 losses were to Victoria and Central Plains. The girls ended up with a 3rd place finish in the CPL Varsity Tournament, losing to the Central Plains the eventual League Champions by one point in the semi-final game. The varsity scored an average of 39 points per game while holding their opponents to 23 points per game.

"As you can tell the ladies teams had a very successful season and Coach Stoecklein and I enjoyed every minute of it. We wish the ladies the very best in the future as students and athletes." shared Coach Braun.

"I wish to convey my thanks to the athletes and their parents for allowing me to coach them and their daughters for the last two years. Thank you very much Coach Stoecklein for helping me, you were enjoyed by all. Thank you managers for your daily help. Many thanks to the women that made all the sack lunches for the away games. They were great!" Coach Braun.

Jr. High Boys Finish 2nd in CPL

The Ness City Junior High Boys Basketball team had a great and exciting season. They were Runner-up in the CPL tournament with an overall record of 14-2. Their only losses came to Central Plains. The Eagles outscored their opponents by an average of 21 points every game. The team used great teamwork, leadership and intensity throughout the season.

School Board Works with City Council to Close 5th Street

As the School Board listened to the recommendations of the Steering Committee that was commissioned to develop a facilities improvement plan, one area was repeatedly discussed: School Safety. We live in a changing world, and while this is small town America, it is important for us to be proactive and work to create the safest environment possible for our students. We may not be able to prepare for every incident or predict what might happen, but we can use responsible thought and determine where there could be potential issues. The Steering Committee determined the street crossing between the elementary and high school buildings presented one of these issues that could be easily addressed. We have students that cross the street everyday, all day long. As a school, we have put many precautions in place to try to keep our students safe while crossing 5th Street. We have had some close calls, and near misses, but to date have avoided any major incidents in this area. The School Board desires to reduce the potential for harm to our students as much as possible, and feels the best way to do that is to close 5th Street between Chestnut and Locust. We understand that this will cause an inconvenience for many patrons and parents, and will force individuals to change their daily routines. We feel the safety of our students must come first, and therefore, we have petitioned the City Council to close 5th Street. Our ultimate goal will be to connect the two buildings creating a more

secure, safe, and healthier environment for our students. The facilities improvement project that the board is working on would address these issues. Due to the current economic condition of our Community and State, the Board has tabled any decisions on major facilities improvements at this time. Our ultimate goal would be to close the street, and use current Capital Outlay funds to begin portions of the proposed facilities improvement project. These are funds that can only be used to update or repair the physical plant, and can not be used to pay teachers, purchase computers, or buy textbooks. The first step would be to remove the current street, put in new curbing, sidewalks, pick-up and drop-off lanes, and parking between the buildings and in front of the elementary school. Eventually, we would construct either a covered walkway or a true hallway between the buildings. Below, you will find a rough rendering of our plan.

If this is something you support, we encourage you to go online and sign our change.org petition by going to <http://tinyurl.com/5thstreetpetition>. You can also sign a paper petition at our District Office.

