

Mustang

News

November 2018

Jeff Dicks, Superintendent

From The Desk of Mr. Dicks

Enrollment

I am optimistic about our enrollment numbers for this year because we are serving nearly the same number of students as last year. Our certified enrollment number is down 12 primarily because we graduated a very large class and we are bringing in a smaller preschool group but our open enrollment “in” is higher to offset the lower resident count. We also have our normal move in and move outs that seem to occur more not only at N-F but across the State. Overall, our society is more transient than ever before. While it is always nice to have increased enrollment, I don’t get too excited about the year to year fluctuations because our budget is in good shape and we typically are looking at 1-5 years with projections. I have always instilled a proactive approach to school budgets with the goal of not making cuts to programming.

There are many funding streams that the Newell-Fonda Community School District utilizes to fund education. The total budget for the District is over \$5.5 million. I think it is important to communicate to our staff and patrons the different funds and their allowable uses as we monitor our enrollment(revenue) and expenses.

General Fund

The basic principles of the General Fund are: It is a student-driven amount formula set by Legislature. Second, schools are budget limited, not rate limited, that means if property values decrease, the rate to support schools will increase and if property valuations rise, the rate will decrease.* And lastly, the district can only spend funds on allowable purposes. This is the most important fund to the district, and we use the General Fund for teachers, curriculum, supplies, and utilities.

The total funding amount for each student is generated from 3 primary places, State Aid makes up 46.3%, property taxes make up 32.8%, and 20.9% is miscellaneous income.* The most important issue for the general fund is a concept called spending authority. Spending authority controls the maximum amount of district spending. This concept attempts to provide equity for every student in Iowa, that no matter where you live, should receive the same amount of funding. Without authority, you can't spend. Regardless of the amount of cash on hand, the limit on spending is the amount of Spending Authority, not the cash balance. It is illegal for a school district to exceed its total spending authority.

Spending Authority

Spending Authority is critical because it is our legal ability to spend. Currently, we have over \$2.6 million in legal authority. We could spend the current budget of \$5.5 million + Unspent Authority \$2.6 million = \$8.10 million. Our cash balance at the end of the year was \$1.2 million. As you can see, one, we don't have enough excess cash on hand to support that kind of spending and two, that maximum spending is not sustainable. We have been very fortunate to support small class sizes and support multiple sections of each grade.

**Larry Sigel, Iowa School Finance Information Services*

Physical, Plant, Equipment Levy(PPEL)

This is a fund designed for buildings, buses, and other equipment over the \$500 threshold. Nearly every district has what we refer to as a standard PPEL levy of \$.33 per thousand. In addition, districts are able to have a Voted PPEL(VPPEL) up to \$1.34, that would allow a district to levy a total of \$1.67 (\$.33 standard + \$1.34 voted). The voters of Newell-Fonda have approved a \$1.34 VPPEL beginning in 2020 through 2030. This fund provides resources for purchasing transportation(bus, car, or other equipment) that is over the \$500 threshold. Four years ago, the Legislature also approved allowing districts to pay for repairs on buses when the repair is over \$2,500 on any one vehicle. This was a common sense move since we paid for a bus out of PPEL,

but in the past, we would then fix that same asset with General fund dollars. As an example, if we had to replace an engine, that can run from \$12,000-15,000, we would have to use General Fund money to pay for the repair. Now we are able to pay for repairs over \$2,500 out of PPEL. This fund can't be used for staffing or supplies, that is why we refer to it as a restricted fund.

State Penny for School Infrastructure (SAVE or SILO)

This is a restricted fund. This tax on retail sales started as a local option sales tax in the early 1990's but by 2004 all counties had passed it. In 2008, it was converted to State Penny for School Infrastructure and leveled the playing field. Since 2008, the state has distributed these dollars on a per-pupil basis, based on statewide retail sales, rather than local retail sales. What this means is when we shop in Des Moines or outside of Buena Vista and Pocahontas counties, we know that some of that sales tax collected will make its way back to the local district. This fund has similar uses of PPEL. However, the SAVE fund is also student-driven, approximately \$1000 per student. If enrollment rises, the revenue also increases, conversely, if enrollment decreases, revenue will as well. This is paid on resident students, therefore we only receive this money on our residents.

The SILO revenue is guaranteed by Iowa Code until 2029. Extending the State Penny is currently a Legislative priority for our board and many boards across Iowa. You might ask, why would you want to extend it now? With the revenue stream set to expire in 2029, many districts are unable to bond against future receipts, and thus many are lobbying for an extension for borrowing capacity in order to meet building needs without taxing for it. As time passes, all buildings begin to require more and more care and maintenance, and at some point, it becomes cost prohibitive to keep maintaining because, with the same amount of investment, you could have a new building. Please reach out to our Legislature in support of the State Penny extension, this has a direct correlation to keeping property taxes low.

Management Fund

This fund is another restricted fund. Things that we are able to pay for include property, liability insurance, workers' compensation, early retirement benefits, judgments against the district, and our break/fix insurance, that covers all of our electronic devices. Our revenue for the management fund is set during the budget season.

Early retirement is one of the few tools the districts have to influence district costs. Some people ask me why we would pay teachers to retire early? On the surface, it

appears we are paying someone to leave then we realize in savings, but because of the “restricted” nature of this fund, it frees up general fund dollars immediately. Our pay structures are based on seniority, so when a veteran teacher retires, we can typically hire a replacement at a smaller salary. The other thing to realize is that the savings are compounded each and every year until the replacement teacher reaches the number of years experience that the retired teacher had. This can amount to thousands upon thousands of dollars in savings per teacher over time.

I want to thank the communities for their continued support of the Newell-Fonda Community Schools, if you have questions don’t hesitate to contact me.



(Above: Football Seniors)

Alynn Coppock, HS Principal

Even though October has been filled with rainy days, we did luck out and have a sunny day for our annual Fall Fitness Walk. This event always reminds us about the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Thank you to our Physical Education Department, consisting of

Nathan Baron, Brian Wilken, and Shad Coppock, for organizing the 45 minutes of physical activity. We also enjoyed some music in the month of October during our high school Fall Music Concert. This concert gave our musicians a chance to show the progress they've made since the beginning of the year. Late September/October also gave us the opportunity to honor a great group of seniors for volleyball, football, choir, and cheerleading. It has been fun cheering them on this season, and we are definitely looking forward to watching many of them during the basketball season as well. Just as a reminder - girl's basketball begins November 5th and boy's basketball begins November 12th. We will also have our annual pre-season Winter Sports parent meeting on November 1st at 6:00 p.m. for girl's basketball, winter cheerleading parents, and boy's basketball parents.

Usually the beginning of November brings the Iowa Assessments to the high school. However, this year the State of Iowa has adopted a new assessment, [Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress \(ISASP\)](#). This assessment must be taken in the spring, so it will change the testing calendar for the high school this year. We will continue to pass on information about this new assessment as we learn more. However, on the afternoon of November 7th, we will still have our annual FCR Day (My Future, My Career, My Responsibility). Once again Mrs. Crystal Nieland, Mrs. Crystal Carlson, and Mrs. Beth Olsen will be organizing an eventful afternoon of learning. Numerous business leaders and college representatives will be coming to Newell-Fonda to help prepare our students for life after high school.

I hope you took time to attend Parent-Teacher Conferences. This was a great opportunity to visit with your student's teachers and discuss any concerns you may have. Please remember that you can access your student's grades, at your convenience, by visiting the school website and accessing the Infinite Campus Parent Portal. If you have not set up your parent portal, please contact the high school office and we can assist you. One final note, please review the Attendance and Tardy Policies with your student(s). Students can very quickly find themselves in a position to be denied academic credit or receive disciplinary consequences if their tardies or absences aren't closely monitored. Thank you for all you do to support Newell-Fonda CSD.

Dick Jungers, PK-8 Principal

The reading challenge for our PK-8 students is going very well. Students have earned several celebrations due to the number of books read. At 5,000 books students earned SPLAT. For this celebration we had staff members drop things off of the roof so

students could watch them impact the ground. Many items were dropped including tomatoes, eggs, gourds, squash, decorated pumpkins, and watermelons. Other rewards students earned included, extra recess, popcorn, and root beer floats. The purpose of this activity was to create a stronger awareness for reading at home and school. This was the warm up activity leading to Literacy Day. Literacy Day will be on November 8th. This is a day where we will be inviting parents to come to school to participate in literacy activities with their child. All of the fun begins at 1:30 and we will have activities and presentations created by students focused on reading. Come join the fun.

The Middle School will be doing a fundraiser to raise money for our Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Celebrations. Each month we do celebrations to promote making good choices. Our students are expected to Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Positive and Be Safe. These events promote all students who continue to do a good job following the Mustang Way. These experiences are designed for students to enjoy and practice appropriate social skills during activities to prepare students for success. We hope that you will participate in the fundraiser. The students will be selling the World's Finest Chocolate candy bars.

As the weather turns from comfortable to cold we need to make sure that we are dressing our students appropriately for the weather. Students should have coats, hats, mittens (gloves), boots and snow pants for those unbearably cold days. It would also be a good idea to talk about safety with your children about being seen, as the sun goes down earlier, and that cars may have a difficult time stopping on slick streets. Another good idea would be to sign up for the weather alerts on our homepage so that you can have an alert sent to your email address or have a text message sent to you if school is let out early or is going to have a late start. It would also be a good idea to go over your plan should school let out early, or if we have a late start. Every year we have a couple of student, who are confused on where they should go, or who is going to pick them up when school is called off.

An article about how to encourage [kids to handle bullying](#): Some important information on how we approach bullying and bully like behavior from a student and parent perspective is very important. This article helps us identify how we should handle some of those tough situations. It is always helpful to ask your child what role they played in any situation of this nature to help you identify the true nature of the situation. It is very common for parents to accept what their student says about a situation, and to draw a conclusion based on their perception of the information they received. It is important to identify that there are always two sides to every story and to recognize that in a lot of cases the information that a parent gets from their child may be filtered or some key details may be overlooked by the student that gives a clear picture of what really occurred. In these types of situations it is always best to check with your

student's teacher to help put the information together.



Staff Updates

Bo Darrow, Middle School English/Reading

The 2018-2019 school year is off to a great start in our middle school. It is hard to believe that we are already at the end of the first quarter, but it is great to be in the

classroom again every day. I have been able to work with an awesome group of students in both the seventh and the eighth grade.

I was excited to again work with this group of 8th grade readers after having them last year. We have started the quarter with a student favorite, The Boy in the Striped Pajamas. The students have done a great job in finding meaning in the story and connecting to the themes that are presented in the novel. They also did a great job at looking beyond the words and finding deeper meanings behind the author's words. Our students researched the time period and really did well at understanding the entire story. Currently, we are in the middle of the classic The Outsiders.

In 8th grade English, the students are off to a great start! Each day we work on various grammar skills and these students have shown a better understanding of the English language. Our focus this first quarter has been on informative writing. During this unit, students have produced a variety of writing. One project asked students to research various topics and create it into a Wikipedia page. The task was to allow the reader to briefly read the topic, but yet fully understand it. Our current project asks students to look into mysterious or unsolved cases and present facts in an unbiased, informative fashion. Students have really done a great job so far.

My favorite part of the beginning of the year is meeting my new group of 7th grade readers. This years group has been a joy to begin working with. We spent half the quarter reading a variety of short stories and the students focused on connecting to characters and exploring the deeper elements of literature. In the past couple of weeks, we started reading our first class novel, Touching Spirit Bear. This book allows students to reflect on the choices we make and how they impact others. The students have really grabbed hold of this book and shown a great ability for comprehension. We are going to continue to get these students to think deeper and really find the meaning in our stories as we progress.

I am looking forward to seeing how far all of these classes can go throughout the year. Growth is our number one goal and these students have demonstrated a true commitment thus far. The abilities that they have shown this early is exciting and I anticipate great work from all of our creative middle school readers and writers.

Amanda Mefferd, HS English

Two new courses have been added to the pool of English electives offered for the 2018-2019 school year. Both of these classes could also potentially be taken as independent study.

The first course, titled "Book Club" is being offered first semester and is just as the title states - a book club. The students in this course take turns choosing books the class reads then discuss topics such as genre, cultural and time period representations in the text, and the influence that the book has or could have on our society or views today. So far, the class has studied books in the genres of fantasy, science fiction, realistic fiction, and poetry. We are currently reading a non-fiction book that includes witness accounts from World War II in Germany. The discussions had have been quite interesting, and I look forward to this class continuing in future years.

The second class, Advanced Creative Writing, is a continuation of Creative Writing that focuses on advanced techniques including integration of source material, interactions of multiple plot lines, and using advanced characterization techniques. The students will examine examples of advanced skills in published literary works and practice these skills before incorporating them into a semester-long project. Students will also learn about the publishing process.



Jensen Boger, 4th Grade

My name is Jensen Boger, and I teach 4th grade. This is my first year in the district, as well as my first year teaching. I graduated last May from Northwestern College in

Orange City, Iowa. This past summer I had the opportunity to coach junior high softball, where I got to know a few girls and families before the start of the year.

4th grade is off to a great start! So far in Social Studies students have learned all about the Midwest Region. We focused on Land and Water, Climate, Products and Natural Resources, Landmarks, and Culture. At the end of the unit students created scrapbooks that showed off their artistic side, and got to create a billboard advertising a Midwest product. We are now moving onto the West Region, and will hit the other three regions after that.

In English we are currently working on writing narratives. Students got to choose their topic, so they are really enjoying the writing process. After narrative writing we will move on to opinion writing and explanatory writing. I am looking forward to the rest of the year, and excited to see the growth in the students!



Jenn Wells, HS Science

As we enter November, many of us are in the mindset of being thankful for the blessings in our lives such as family, friends, and health.

In addition to these blessings I am grateful for a long list of opportunities at Newell-Fonda School. As a parent and a teacher in the building, I see dedicated educators who provide research-based educational opportunities for our students on a daily basis. I see caring staff who go the extra mile for students and fellow staff members. I see an atmosphere of positivity and students and adults leading by example.

One such example is the State of Iowa's Teacher Leadership & Compensation Program in which our teachers collect data in the classroom through formative assessments and use that data to improve student learning. Teacher teams meet weekly to determine a common standard to assess and write formative assessments to determine student understanding of the concepts. Teaching strategies are shared and refined in an effort to maximize student learning. The goal is to meet students where they are in their understanding of the concepts and to expound upon their knowledge base. I am one of the Teacher Team Leaders and I feel fortunate to be part of a staff that not only cares about student progress but makes research-based informed decisions about instruction and takes action to promote student learning.

The Next Generation Science Standards are in full implementation at Newell-Fonda. These standards were written by professionals in scientific fields in an effort to prepare students to meet the challenges of scientific careers. At Newell-Fonda, Angie Emerick and I are working to align our instruction between middle school and high school to foster mastery of the material and an inquiry-based perspective to problem-solving.

In this season of gratitude, I appreciate how far we have come in education at Newell-Fonda. In addition to the above-mentioned pedagogy and curriculum advancements, we have exceptional facilities. When I started, we were balancing beakers on slanted desks for labs, and now we have wonderful state-of-the-art science labs. I am grateful for the administrative leadership and community support that enabled these upgrades to our facilities and I make the most of the lab space with numerous lab activities in my classes.

It has been so rewarding to see our students take on a professional attitude toward their academic work. They use the facilities and the lab equipment as professionals, taking care not to damage anything or create a mess. As our Newell-Fonda Community School District mission states, we are "preparing all students to become successful, well-educated contributors to society." I can see that these young men and women that I am currently teaching will become just that! I invite you to visit anytime and I thank you for sharing your students, your ideas, and your support.

Stacey Tiefenthaler, School Nurse

News from the Nurse

In effort to keep the High School students informed of current health topics that may affect them, I am providing quarterly Health Advisory Sessions. These sessions will include some of the following topics: Vaping/JUULing, Relationship and Domestic Abuse/Violence, Alcohol/Opioid Abuse, Reproductive Health, Eating Disorders and Mental Health (Anxiety/Depression).

Sadly, teens today are faced with so many life-impacting, dangerous, peer-pressured decisions. Last year, Newell-Fonda hosted speakers who presented information about Human Trafficking, the Legal Impact of Sexting and Phone Safety/Dangers. Parents were invited to sit-in with their students during these presentations. Parents and students alike, felt there was a lot of valuable information provided.

This year, in an attempt to also keep parents informed, I will be posting links with helpful information to the school "Messenger", as well as the Newell-Fonda Facebook page. I encourage you to watch these videos about the topics that I am covering and engage in conversations with your teens to aid in keeping them safe.

During Quarter One's session, I covered the topic of Vaping/JUULing. Vaping is the act of inhaling and exhaling the flavored aerosol, often referred to as vapor, which is produced by an e-cigarette or similar device. The CDC reports that this behavior is currently an epidemic among teens. Accessibility to these devices and products is as close as the internet, as anyone can order them there. To add to the frustration related to these products, detection of their use is nearly impossible. Some look just like computer flash drives. The vapor is almost invisible and is virtually odorless.

Many vaping companies are twisting the facts about the dangers of these devices. Teens' brains are not fully developed until they reach early adulthood, around the age of 25. Because of this, their brains are much more susceptible to addiction than adult brains. This is why the Vape companies flavor these products with flavors that are appealing to teens. Teens partake in vaping with these great tasting flavors without even realizing that these companies are trapping them into an addiction. This teenage addiction is a VERY profitable business for the Vaping companies. For years, we have worked at educating teens about the dangers of nicotine. Finally, smoking cigarettes wasn't "that cool" anymore and teenage nicotine use had finally been drastically

reduced. Now with the introduction of these “cool” Vaping devices, the use of nicotine among teens has taken a drastic increase in use. It makes me so **angry** that our kids have become **targets** for these big nicotine businesses, Human Sex Traffickers, drug and marijuana dealers... and the list goes on and on.....

I am hopeful that these sessions will help our high school students make educated decisions about the choices that they are faced with. Before having children remember how we were so careful to make sure we were healthy when we got pregnant, we ate the right foods and avoided the wrong things when we were pregnant, after they were born we made sure we fed them the right baby food at the right age, in the right order, used the correct size of car seat, made sure they got to bed on time, got their physicals on time, ect, ect, all to keep them safe....Now they are teenagers, we aren't in total control of their safety anymore. Much of their safety falls upon the decisions that **they** are making. This is so scary for us as parents and them as teenagers(even though they would never admit it). This is why it is so important that we stay informed about the dangers, continue to stay active in our teens' free time and lives (even though they don't like us to), and encourage them to make safe decisions.....and be there for them when they don't.

Please feel free to contact me with any comments, concerns or questions. Thank you so much for the privilege of being involved in the care of your children all these years. Your children mean the world to me and I will continue my best to help you keep them safe and healthy.

Stacey Tiefenthaler RN, BSN
Newell-Fonda School Nurse



(Above: Quiz Bowl team)

Nathan Baron, PK-8 Physical Education

This year I once again have the privilege of teaching PK-8 Physical Education. This year the PE department has added an emphasis on fitness for all students in grades 6-12. The middle school students spent one day a week using the track to have our fitness activity. Our goal was for all students to be able to complete 8 laps (2 miles) in 20-25 minutes. Students had the choice of running laps, walking laps, or a mixture of both. We had great success with our fitness for 1st quarter as over 90% of students in grades 6-8 were able to complete the 8 laps. Some students were even able to complete 12 laps, which would be 3 miles, in that time. I am very pleased with how the students handle this activity. We are off to a great start this year, all the PK-8 PE classes have been outstanding this year, it has been a lot of fun for everyone involved. I am looking forward to what the next 3 quarters bring. If you ever have any questions regarding Physical Education, feel free to contact me at baronn@newell-fonda.k12.ia.us.

Athletic Boosters



Newell-Fonda Athletic Boosters

Brianne Babel
633 E. Chaney St.
Newell, IA 50568

Dear Mustang Supporter:

Just a reminder of the **November 5th donation deadline** for inclusion in the athletic programs for the 2018-2019 school year. Please fill out the attached form indicating your donation amount and how you would like your name to appear in the list of donors on the athletic programs.

What did the Athletic Boosters pay for last year with Booster donations?

- State Banners for the competition gym
- Athletic Banquets, Senior photos, Parent buttons

- Home Programs
- State football expenses
- State Girls Basketball – Hotel and meals for the girls’ basketball team, coaches, bus driver, statistician and managers during full stay in Des Moines
- State Track - Hotels and meals for the qualifying track team members and coaches
- State Softball Expenses
- Golf Bags for the Boys and Girls Golf Team
- Football – donation for a sled
- \$2,000 donation to Basketball for new shooting gun
- Track – two tents
- Batting Cage nets for Softball and Baseball
- Equipment for the school weight room
- Improvements to the tailgate shed

(Groups utilizing the shed for their tailgates to raise money are not charged to use it)

What are we raising money for the 2018-19 school year?

- A new pitching machine for the baseball team
- Rangefinders for both the boys’ and girls’ golf teams
- An additional shooting gun for the basketball teams
- Additional weight lifting equipment
(all our athletes benefit for the weight lifting equipment)

Donations will be listed as:

- Royal Mustang: \$500/above donations (these will be the size of a business card)
- Silver Mustang: \$250/above donations
- White Mustang: \$100/above donations
- Mighty Mustang: \$50/above donations
- Mustang Family for individual sport fans and families wishing to donate \$50 or less.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. ALL donations must be received by **October 31**. We need time to get all contributors’ names to the proper people so that our programs can be created before the start of our basketball season.

Thank you again for your generous help in the past and the present.

2018-19 Newell-Fonda Athletic Boosters:

Brian Wilken-Athletic Director
 Clay & Heather Schachtner Kramer – President
 Garry & Crystal Carlson - Vice President
 Brianne Babel-Treasurer
 Brian Haack
 Gary & Jennifer Wells
 Brent & Leigh Meyer

Donations can be dropped off at any school office or mailed to:
**Newell-Fonda Athletic Boosters, Brianne Babel, 633 E. Chaney St. Newell, IA
50568**

Thank you for your generous support of our athletes!
GO MUSTANGS!

Please include this form so correct name & dollar amount can be recorded!!!

Mustang Donation: _____

Amount Donated: _____

Phone Number: _____

How you would like your name listed
