

MUSTANG NEWS

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Jeff Dicks, Superintendent

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From The Desk of Mr. Dicks

Operational Sharing Incentives

Newell-Fonda takes full advantage of Operational Sharing to maximize funding opportunities. Last year the Iowa Legislature approved a 5-year extension of these incentives to encourage and support the sharing of positions that are not directly tied to students. The positions currently shared are Superintendent, Business Manager, Human Resources, and Transportation Director.

Why do we share? The answer is twofold, one, the State incentivizes us to do so, and two, we offload a portion of salary and benefits to the sharing district. The weighting for our positions is Superintendent (8 students), Business Manager and Transportation Director (5 students each) and Human Resources (3 students). The maximum weighting a district can earn through sharing is 21 students which is exactly what Newell-Fonda has. The weighting for the 21 students amounts to over \$138,000 additional funding for the district. In addition, we offload 20% of the salaries and benefits of the employees that are being shared.

While the incentive from the State is over \$138,000 the amount we bill our sharing partner for 20% of salary and benefits amounts to in excess of \$71,000 for a total benefit of nearly \$210,000. Because there is a 5-year time limit and no guarantee on this money, we don't commit it to ongoing expenses like salaries. We do use it for salaries of the people involved but we also know we can handle those expenses on any given year. We put it into reserves for years that we

get 1% increase in spending from the State or in a year that we would lose students. The other district receives the same incentives and only pays for 20% of salary and benefits for the services of that position. On the higher weighted positions, they are able to have a net increase of what they receive and what they pay the other district.

While losing time from employees when they share, the monetary benefits far outweigh the time out of the district. In some cases, we have been able to increase an employee to full time because of the extra duties through sharing. We are guaranteed these incentives will be in place for another 4 years after this year, so we expect that to be a good source of extra revenue and expense sharing.

Important: Give Us A Call

It is extremely important that if your student is ill that you make the call to let the school know. During normal winter conditions, we especially want to account for all of the students in a timely fashion. We appreciate your communication for the safety of all kids.

Superintendent Sharing To Continue

The Newell-Fonda Board of Education held a closed-session mid-year goal check at its last board meeting on January 14, 2019. After discussion progress on the superintendent goals, a commitment to continue sharing superintendent was approved and signed. The Albert City-Truesdale also confirmed the commitment to continue sharing at their January 21, 2019 board meeting. This arrangement is mutually beneficial to Albert City-Truesdale and both boards should be commended for their collaborative work in this area.

Alynn Coppock, HS Principal

Happy New Year! 2019 promises to be another exciting educational year for our Mustangs. As you probably know, the high school began second semester with Winter Explorium (WE-Term). Once again I was amazed at how well our students have worked during this project-based learning experience. Our students became scientists, builders, historians, researchers, inventors, creators, business professionals, chefs, marketing directors, designers, writers, and sales professionals, all by stepping out of their comfort zones to do things they never thought they could! Our seniors also gained valuable information about potential careers by shadowing local businesspeople. I also want to thank all the parents and community members

who attended our WE-Term Project Presentation Night, even after the date change. We had an excellent turnout and I know the students appreciated your attendance. Overall, the experience has been more than I could have asked for, and I am so appreciative of the staff, students, parents, and community members willingness to embrace this learning opportunity.

The Jazz Band is busy practicing for their upcoming contest season. They began their season by attending the Triton Jazz Festival at Iowa Central and they placed second in this competition. They also performed at the IHSMA State Jazz contest on January 21st in Storm Lake and received a 1 rating. They will travel to Morningside on February 6th to compete in their jazz contest and finally to the NWIBA Jazz Festival on February 18th in LeMars. These students practice every Tuesday and Thursday morning and have seen tremendous improvement since the beginning of the year. We are hoping their hard work will pay off and they will qualify for the Iowa Jazz Championships in March.

I would also like to commend our National Honor Society for once again organizing a “Purple Out” on February 1st during the Alta-Aurelia basketball game. The money they will raise through t-shirt sales, the half-court shot, and the tailgate will be donated to BVRMC’s oncology department. Hopefully, you will have time that night to come cheer on the Mustangs and support a great cause. I would also like to congratulate the speech team for their performance at Large Group Speech Contest on Saturday, January 19th. The Varsity Readers Theater, the Senior Girls Ensemble, and the Mixed Ensemble all qualified for State on February 2nd. These students represented Newell-Fonda well and we are hoping that once again we will have some All-State qualifiers.

February will be an exciting month for our basketball programs with Regional and District play. Both teams have worked hard this season, and we are hoping that we will be cheering for them in Des Moines! We will also be honoring our senior basketball players, cheerleaders, and band members on Friday, February 1st during the Alta-Aurelia basketball games. Also, one other important reminder to note is Midterms are February 11th. This Midterm will come quickly because the 1st two weeks of 3rd quarter were spent in WE-Term, so make sure your student is keeping up with his/her homework assignments. Also, be sure to continue to check your student’s progress on Infinite Campus, and feel free to contact your student’s teacher with any questions or concerns. As always, thank you for your support of Newell-Fonda CSD.



Dick Jungers, PK-8 Principal

I hope you and your family enjoyed a wonderful holiday season. As we start a new calendar year we have a lot of great things to look forward to during the second semester.

The K-8th grade students continue to work hard on their reading skills. We just finished up our Winter round of Reading Assessments and the preliminary results are showing that our students are making strong progress towards our reading goals. Students who work on their reading at home with family are improving at a greater rate

than those who do not. Keep up those great routines at home as it is a game changer. We want parents to be aware that if they ever have questions or concerns about their child's progress to please talk to their classroom teachers to find out what can be done to help their child be more successful in their learning.

The Iowa Assessments are coming up in March. The format of the testing has changed to an online based test. Students will use their computers to complete the Iowa Assessments. We want to remind you of the importance of students getting a good night's rest and to eat a good breakfast to allow them to perform as well as they can so that we get a picture of where each child is in regards to their educational development. These tests are designed to give us an idea of what changes we need to make in order to provide the best education for our students. This test allows us to gauge the amount of growth each student progressed over the academic year. By no means is this the only way we judge a child's ability, but we use it as an additional way of helping us to determine how to better meet each child's specific learning needs.

Finally, I want to take a few moments and talk about internet safety. As the world of social networking and online opportunities are a larger part of the overall learning experience we all have a responsibility in training our students how to be responsible with this medium. Some things that all of us can do to help our students be more responsible. 1). Limit the information that children put on social networking sites. We have to be aware of predators that target children. 2). Make sure that students are supervised at home while on their computers and other social devices. We are seeing an increase in the amount of cyber-bullying, and mean behavior. 3). As a parent you have the right and the authority to limit the amount of time students spend on their computer. School work should always come first, and if your student is spending large amounts of time on social media or gaming sites it is ok for you to tell them to take a break. 4). Be aware of what is going on with your child. It is your right and responsibility to know who your child is communicating with and to know what content they are communicating to their peers. Students are responsible for the information and content that they put out there.

On another note: Communication with the school is a vital part of working with us. It is very important if your child is sick or going to miss school, that you call in and let us know of that situation. As the weather continues to get colder and the risk of dangerous weather conditions increase, it is very important that we know where all of our students are.

Staff Updates

Angie Emerick, MS/HS Science

I can't believe that we are already well into second semester. The time is flying by and it has been really enjoyable to get to know my students. All of my science curriculum aligns to the new Next Generation Science Standards. I think that the students are enjoying the new student-focused, performance-based approach to science. My classes are definitely not a time to just "sit and get" the information. I expect the students to be involved in their learning. Each grade, 6-8, has standards related to life, earth and space, and physical sciences along with basic engineering principles.

Sixth grade starts out the year reviewing some of the basics of science. Reviewing the basics of lab safety, measurement, and the scientific method helps to lay to the groundwork for the rest of the year. We spent the rest of the first semester building up to chemical reactions. Second semester will be spent talking about life science moving from the basics of cells to the systems of the body. We will end the year with how the Earth has changed and is still changing and the catastrophic events that result from some of these changes.

Seventh grade has earth and space science. We talked about the solar system and how it is arranged. Along with this, we discussed the forces of gravity. They have also covered some of the life science standards. We've talked about photosynthesis, predator-prey relationships, and how resource availability affects the populations of ecosystems. Right now, we are studying the history of the Earth and major event that have happened (dinosaur extinction, ice age, etc) After this, our focus will be on electric and magnetic forces. We will finish up the year with the different types of energy and how they transfer through a system.

Eighth grade has four main units: Environment and adaptations, weather and climate, waves, and forces and motion. We are currently learning about waves by studying sound. I started the unit by playing a record. Many hadn't seen or heard a record before!

I also teach High School Chemistry. It is a change of pace to start my day with juniors and seniors. Chemistry spent first semester learning the basics of chemistry, atoms, and the periodic table. The students enjoyed doing labs, especially ones that involved bunsen burners and fire. This semester we will be talking about how those atoms combine to form compounds. We will also learn about chemical reactions and all of the things involved with that.

Jared Elsen, 1st Grade

It is difficult to believe it is 2019 already, and we are approaching our 100th day of school! This school year, I have the opportunity to work with 14 first grade students, who come to school excited and eager to learn. I have been teaching and coaching at Newell-Fonda now for five years. Here is an update of what we're doing in first grade.

Earlier in the school year, our class participated in a school-wide book challenge and a candy bar fundraiser. The book challenge participants included students from our preschool classes, all the way up to the 8th graders. Those students were able to read over 18,000 books in the month of October! Our first grade class was able to contribute 2,022 books read to the grand total. Also, for the candy bar fundraiser, our class had one of the top sellers! The students from our school were able to sell over 21,000 candy bars! A BIG thanks to our parents, grandparents, family, friends, and members of the community for supporting us at Newell-Fonda!

As our reading continues to improve, we have been introducing new comprehension strategies. During our reading groups, we have been discussing elements of a story (setting, plot, & characters), identifying fiction versus nonfiction, and studying author's purpose. Author's purpose is one of my favorite things we do in first grade. We get to look at a variety of texts, and talk about why someone would write about such a thing. In first grade, we think author's purpose is as easy as PIE, (Persuasion, Informative, or Entertainment).

In Writing, we've been practicing writing in complete sentences and writing short paragraphs. For the next few weeks, we will be focusing on informative writing. Our goal is to have an introduction, list a few facts or details and end with a conclusion.

In Math, first graders have been working hard to improve their number sense. We have many hands on and engaging activities to strengthen our 'Math brains.' To name a few, we've been counting on, skip counting, identifying place value, and learning new strategies to improve our addition and subtraction fluency. Some of our upcoming units include introduction to fractions, +/- fluency strategies with numbers up to 18, comparing numbers, and balancing equations.

Lastly, In Science, we have just started our Super Scientist experiments! These experiments are conducted entirely by the first grader assigned for that week. Then, we'll collaborate on what we've seen and learned before documenting the experiment in our log. This

is a great opportunity for students to explore science at home with their family, and then present to their peers. Thank you for checking up with us in first grade, we hope you are also having a wonderful year. Go Mustangs!



Jennifer Tovar, HS Spanish

Walking into a Spanish classroom at Newell Fonda is very different than what you would have seen in the past. You would have seen memorizing vocabulary or grammar lists and worksheets, quizzes, and tests. Now, our Newell Fonda students are actively speaking Spanish, listening to Spanish, or reading Spanish. Worksheets are not the norm and students are given assessments to test how they are learning the language.

Comprehensible Input (CI) creates a comprehensible immersion experience. During class students are exposed to 90% of the class period in complete Spanish. In the beginning students learn by listening and quickly they respond in one word answers and eventually in sentences. I was excited that after being away from my students for almost a month between winter break and WE term, students were still able to respond to questions in Spanish.

During class students interview each other, read books, listen to music, and create characters in order to use more language. The goal in class is to expose students to as much language as possible centered around their interests. The more students are exposed, the more they will learn. Through this method students will acquire the language instead of learning the language.

Alex Schwing, MS Math

Is it 2019 already? Wow, this year has been flying by! I have been enjoying my first year here at Newell-Fonda. I enjoy the atmosphere that we provide throughout all the communities. There is so much pride taken in the extra curriculums as well as academics that makes it easy to be a proud Mustang.

I have the pleasure of teaching math to 6th, 7th, and 8th grade. I have had a great time getting to know the students, and I feel like they've enjoyed their time so far this year with the new teacher! The students have grown so much from day one to now. I get excited at the idea of teaching these students over the next few years and seeing new grades progress to the middle school level. Where many schools see only one grade level each year and have to say goodbye to them in the end, I get to see the growth of these students for three of the most important years of their lives!

The 6th graders have done an impressive job transitioning from elementary to middle school. They took very little time to get used to our regular routine and very quickly got used to my expectations. I am impressed with how quickly they learned the steps of solving an equation!

The two groups of 7th graders that I have learn very quickly. They do a great job taking quality notes and using them to their advantage. I allow notes on all tests and quizzes and they didn't take long to realize the notes are similar to my tests. They don't typically take these opportunities for granted. They are a great group!

I only teach one section of 8th grade students as the others are in a different math class. I have discovered that the section I have love to do projects and group activities. They also love a challenge. I am impressed with their ability to gather previous information to discover and form new ideas.

I am thrilled to see how the rest of the year goes and am looking forward to meeting more students in the years to come!

Mr. Schwing--



Shad Coppock, Talented and Gifted

Greetings and happy 2019 from the Talented and Gifted (TAG) program! The goal of our TAG program is to provide our students with creative and challenging situations to not only enrich, but also accelerate their learning. Many of the aforementioned situations are designed to give our students the opportunity to collaborate with their peers, which is an essential skill that future educators and employers value.

During the first semester our TAG students have done some great things highlighted by the following:

The **3rd grade** has been solving mysteries that require them to think creatively, make inferences, and ask good questions in order to solve the “real life” mystery that has been presented to them. Throughout the course of this process they also work together to solve logic puzzles from clues they have discovered while investigating their “crime”. These puzzles take them down a road that gives them the opportunity to solve

their mystery providing they can avoid the roadblocks and potholes they encounter along the way.

The **4th grade** has been tasked with testing the parachute design of Leonardo Da Vinci that went undiscovered in his sketchbook for nearly 500 years. They are taking his original idea and creating a design on paper, and then finally, they will take that design and build a scaled down model of that parachute. The final test comes when we take our parachutes to the roof of the school (only Mr. Coppock gets to launch from the roof :)) and we let them fly. Our students film the event from the ground which allows us to view the test afterwards and analyze the flight of our creations!

The **5th grade** has been working on designing and building an exact scale model of a miniature golf hole. The first step is to create a miniature golf hole of their own design. Once they have that idea, they are tasked with shrinking it down into an exact scale model that they will layout and design on paper. Once their creation is on paper, they use their newly created design as a guide to build their tabletop version. The math and design principles used in this project supplement our student's imagination to bring their original idea to life!

The **6th grade** has been working on designing their own homes on their laptop computers. The Home Design Suite they are using to create their design allows them to create a schematic blue print layout of their house. It not only allows them to create a blueprint, but also gives them the opportunity to furnish their home as well as create the landscaping around their new home. Through this process the program has a feature that will transform their design on 'paper' into a realistic 3D version, so the students can see a realistic 360-degree view of their design inside and out. Once they've completed their design the students will be tasked with calculating the cost to build their new home. Since many of their homes are landscaped with tennis courts, water falls, and swimming pools, the price tags should be very interesting!!

The **7th and 8th grade** are working with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) projects from the governor's STEM initiative. The 7th graders are tasked with building a motorized car with a gearing system that will allow their vehicle to complete different tasks as efficiently as possible. They must explore gearing systems that will give their vehicles not only speed, but also towing power. The 8th graders are tasked with building a robot from the robotics kit they received, and then programming the robot to complete various tasks using the robot's sensors. The robot comes equipped with light, sound, and touch sensors in its most basic state. Having the

opportunity to work with the programming language is an exciting opportunity for our students.

With all the great work our students are doing it looks like 2018-19 is really rounding into another fantastic year for our TAG students.

Mr. Shad Coppock
Gifted Coordinator

Kayla Wingert, 2nd Grade

Hello from second grade! We have been staying very busy! The second graders have been learning all about landforms. They have compared hills and mountains. They watched a video showing an island being formed by a volcano. The class discussed animals that live in deserts and prairies. They also talked about how life is different in the desert than on a prairie. We talked about valleys and canyons. We used Google Maps to check out the Grand Canyon. The second graders were able to 'walk out' on the bridge over the Grand Canyon from our classroom! We have also talked about what kind of water is found in oceans, rivers, and lakes. The second graders discussed the difference between salt water and fresh water.

We recently put on our Character Day. Each second and third grader chose a character from a book that they previously read. They created a project in order to present their character to the other students, as well as their parents and other family members. Several students in our classroom created a diorama in which they recreated their favorite part of the book they selected in a shoebox. Some of our classmates created a mobile. They hung illustrations of the beginning, middle, and end of their story on the mobile. They also added a section to describe their character. I had some second graders create a poster to tell about their character and story. The second graders enjoyed showing off their hard work. They did a great job presenting their projects to their audience!

Beth Smith, PK-5 Instructional Coach

This is my third year as the preschool through 5th-grade instructional coach and my fifth year at Newell-Fonda. I am also shared with Albert City-Truesdale as their elementary instructional coach. The instructional coaching position has slowly been molded over the last couple years and I am loving how it has come together. I have really been able to see the benefits of adding this position to our district through data-driven instruction in our classrooms. With my counterpart, Marlise Witham, 6th-12th instructional coach, some of our duties include planning and leading professional development days, leading our PLC (Professional Learning Community) teacher teams, organizing our mentoring program, and working through coaching cycles with teachers. Out of all of these roles, I enjoy the one-on-one coaching the most!

When I work one-on-one with a teacher, we call it a “coaching cycle”. A coaching cycle consists of collecting initial data, establishing a goal, learning together, and improving to reach that goal. Some of the goals are teacher focused such as the teacher reflecting on the types and levels of questions they are asking. A teacher may have a goal focused around asking higher level questions that are meaningful. Other goals are student-focused. These goals are focused on collecting student data such as tracking student engagement during a lesson or unit. Another goal could include raising assessment scores during a specific unit by analyzing student work and determining the needs of the class.

When we focus on student scores, we reflect on the best way to teach the material to students. Then, we evaluate. What do we do if the students have learned the material? What about students who have did not grasped the learning yet? We want to give our students the highest success rate possible. The student-focused coaching cycles are the most intriguing to me. It is so exciting to see how our initial data compares to our post data in our coaching cycles. I love working with teachers to reach their goals. It also gives me opportunities to co-teach in a variety of grade levels, evaluate student work, and work with students. During coaching cycles, I have the opportunity to research best teaching practices for teachers and co-plan lessons or units with them. The great thing about this position is that no two days are alike. I love the variety of people and grade levels that I get to work with and the tasks that come with it.

Beth Smith
PK-5 Instructional Coach

