

# Mustang News

## May 2019

Superintendent, Jeff Dicks

### **From The Desk of Mr. Dicks**

#### **Calendar Approved**

At the most recent board meeting held on April 8, 2019, the school calendar was approved. The calendar is approved by the board after a committee made up of our District Leadership Team (DLT) and administration meet to find the best calendar to meet the needs of students. As you all know we are coming off of one of the worst winters, and with the restriction of a start date, our committee wanted to serve as many hours for our students as possible. This year with late starts and missed days, we missed over 72 hours that equates to more than 11 days. So this year's committee was focused on utilizing each school day to maximize time with students.

In the last couple of years, districts have more flexibility in how they meet the requirements of instruction. We used to measure our school year by 180 days. Many districts would submit a waiver to use more days for professional development and so many never served the 180 days with students. Now districts have a choice, either 180 days or 1080 hours. In addition, 3 years ago the Legislature mandated that no school can start with students until August 23rd. A common question I get about hours vs days is what do we use? We use both, hours for students

and days in meeting the requirements of contracts for our teaching staff.

We have suggested some changes to the calendar that will allow for more flexibility for meeting the required 1080 student hours. One area of change is the length of our school day. We will now start school at 8:20 and end the day at 3:20. This is an overall increase of 15 minutes per day. We are able to plan and utilize our time when we know this will be the extra instructional time each day. Over the course of a year, this helps meet the hour's requirement for students. Our District Leadership Team chose to attend school on President's Day, January 3rd, and reduced our Easter/Spring break by 1 day. Our snow makeup days are also identified in advance, not only to communicate the expectations to our staff but also our stakeholders.

The last scheduled day is May 18th, but with the Iowa winter that we just endured, we may end up there again. Many don't realize the conflicts with June let alone late May. Our little league baseball and softball seasons begin in May, so we potentially have elementary students out a couple of nights a week. That breaks a routine that is optimal for student achievement when that schedule is disrupted for so many. Going to school in June also provides many challenges for our summer school schedule. In addition, many of our staff attend professional learning opportunities and some of those classes start in June. Our custodial staff has only so many days to clean every room top to bottom, shampoo carpets, strip floors, and wax all of our terrazzo and tile surfaces. In Iowa, we know Mother Nature will always throw us challenges and we believe we have created a calendar that allows us to meet the needs of our kids while taking into account all of our outside activities.

**HS Principal, Alynn Coppock**

As we begin to see signs of summer approaching, we seem busier than ever at the high school. The end of the school year is filled with several opportunities for entertainment and celebration. If you weren't able to attend the all-school musical, *Seussical, Jr.*, you missed a good one! Mrs. Nikki Schubert, Mrs. Leah Rosado, and our students put together a top-notch performance. It was really great to see so many kids involved in theater in a variety of roles and responsibilities!! It was obvious the kids had a lot of fun with it and it was definitely entertaining for all ages! We will also be honoring many of these Fine Arts students during Fine Arts Awards Night on April 28<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. Again, another great opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of our

speech, band, vocal, art, and play students. I also hope you will find time to attend our spring music concert on April 29th at 7:00 p.m. Miss Renee Sundstrom, Mrs. Leah Rosado, and our music students have planned an entertaining evening of music. Finally, on May 4th our students will enjoy a fun-filled evening at a *Galaxy Far, Far Away!* Mrs. Dana Seivert and the junior prom committee are in the process of organizing a star-studded prom night for our student body. Overall, April and May are terrific months to showcase some of our students' best work!

Our seniors are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel and since this is our last newsletter of the year, I want to remind you of some events that pertain to our seniors and their last month of school. On Monday, April 8th, open campus began for seniors with a GPA of 3.25 or higher. On Monday, May 6th, open campus will begin for seniors with a "C" average in all of their classes. Baccalaureate will be held on Wednesday, May 15th at 7:00 p.m. Our seniors will also be taking their senior trip that day as well. Friday, May 17th will be the last school day for seniors; however, they only need to report to school at 9:30 a.m. for their final walk through the halls of Newell-Fonda and for graduation practice. Finally, graduation will be held in the competition gym on Sunday, May 19th at 2:00 p.m. This is a very exciting time for our seniors and their families, but please remind your student to make good decisions during this celebratory time of year.

Midterms for 4th quarter were sent home April 17th. It is easy to be distracted this time of year by the weather and all the activities, but please remind your student to stay focused and finish the year strong. Registration for next year has also begun for our freshmen thru juniors. Please get involved in this process with your student. Your student has received a 2019-20 Course Description Book, and hopefully you will be able to take some time to review this booklet with your student. If you have questions concerning credits or courses, please call our high school guidance counselor, Mrs. Kay.

In closing, I would like to invite you to our Award's Day on Monday, May 6th at 8:30 a.m. to celebrate our students' academic success. This ceremony is a great opportunity to recognize and reward those who have worked hard over the course of the school year. Finally, our final exams will be given on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, and 31<sup>st</sup>. Just as a reminder, all students will have open campus privileges when they are not testing. Once again, I would like to thank you for all you have done this year to support Newell-Fonda.

# PK-8 Principal, Dick Jungers

## Prevent Cyberbullying



Parents and kids can prevent cyberbullying. Together, they can explore safe ways to use technology.

- [Be Aware of What Your Kids are Doing Online](#)
- [Establish Rules about Technology Use](#)
- [Understand School Rules](#)

## Be Aware of What Your Kids are Doing Online

Talk with your kids about cyberbullying and other online issues regularly.

- Know the sites your kids visit and their online activities. Ask where they're going, what they're doing, and who they're doing it with.
- Tell your kids that as a responsible parent you may review their online communications if you think there is reason for concern. Installing parental control filtering software or monitoring programs are one option for monitoring your child's online behavior, but do not rely solely on these tools.
- Have a sense of what they do online and in texts. Learn about the sites they like. Try out the devices they use.
- Ask for their passwords, but tell them you'll only use them in case of emergency.
- Ask to "friend" or "follow" your kids on social media sites or ask another trusted adult to do so.
- Encourage your kids to tell you immediately if they, or someone they know, is being cyberbullied. Explain that you will not take away their computers or cell phones if they confide in you about a problem they are having.

## Establish Rules about Technology Use

Establish rules about appropriate use of computers, cell phones, and other technology. For example, be clear about what sites they can visit and what they are permitted to do when they're online. Show them how to be safe online.

Help them be smart about what they post or say. Tell them not to share anything that could hurt or embarrass themselves or others. Once something is posted, it is out of their control whether someone else will forward it.

Encourage kids to think about who they want to see the information and pictures they post online. Should complete strangers see it? Real friends only? Friends of friends? Think about how people who aren't friends could use it.

Tell kids to keep their passwords safe and not share them with friends. Sharing passwords can compromise their control over their online identities and activities.

## Understand School Rules

Some schools have developed [policies](#) on uses of technology that may affect the child's online behavior in and out of the classroom.

This article is from [stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov)

# Staff Updates

## [Cynthia Walsh, Middle School Language Arts](#)

April showers bring May flowers, and in the 6th and 7th grade English classroom these last couple weeks, I have been showering the kids with writing units, and they have been blooming in the area of clean writing skills.

Fourth quarter is my favorite units to teach as I try to save the "most engaging" ones for the time of year I need them most. Currently, my 6th graders are in a persuasive/reflective unit called Battle Bots. In this unit, the students will learn the basic design-cycle process and how persuasive writing can influence their intended audience. Students worked with a partner to create plans that resulted in the creation of a battle bot. Every day the kids came to class and wrote in their battle bot journals their answers to the reflective questions I gave them for the day. When their writing was complete and checked, they were able to work on building their very own battle bot. Towards the end of the unit, the kids learned different propaganda techniques to create a commercial

that would influence their intended audience to vote for their bot as the *Best in the Class*. At the end of the unit, the students will write a persuasive essay to convince their own classmates why their bot was the best.

This is always a fun unit as the kids LOVE to build! My philosophy for middle school writing continues to revolve around the theory that our kids are makers. I have tried hard to create units that allow for kids to both write and build at the same time. The brain connection between making and writing is strong and only leads to building better writers when the two can come into harmony. Our battle bot unit concludes, of course, with a fierce competition of the bots, much like the actual T.V. show. Students will cheer for their favorite as they battle their bots in the gym at the end of the unit. This showcasing of the end product is always a highlight of the year for the 6th graders as their hard work and competitive attitude meet head-on. Tournament brackets will be released this week and a battle is currently being scheduled for next. At the end of the unit, the students will have written over five pages of reflective journal entries documenting the process and another two pages of formal essay writing.

Currently, the 7th grades are working on their Future Dreams Project A.K.A. Bookemon. The 7th graders are creating an actual book (12 chapters) that can be purchased in either hardcover or softcover on a site called Bookemon. The content of the book focuses on their future and includes subjects such as their future college plans, career, wedding, family, bucket list, top 10 places to visit, retirement plan, and many more. This is an entertaining unit for me as I get the privilege of discussing with the kids their future and some insight as to what they have planned for themselves. It has been very eye-opening for some this year when they have had to think about the cost of living for their dream future. Million dollar houses usually come with million dollar jobs .... usually attached to a college degree that also comes with a price tag. The American dream is achievable but comes with a price and hard work. These topics make for great discussion and even better writing! At the end of the unit, the students will have produced a beautiful book that will forever be a keepsake if they so wish to order. I have loved seeing these on graduation tables as we always get a chuckle out of their mindset in 7th grade vs. them as seniors.

The 6th graders will conclude their time with me in a unit called FrankenToy. In this study, they will get to make a toy and write a narrative story that goes with it. We will share these with the elementary kids when they are complete. The 7th graders will wrap-up May making time capsules that will be tucked away in the school's vault ... only to be opened at their 15-year class reunion. It's been a great ride in the MS English classroom this year, and the next few weeks should be even better!

~ Mrs. Walsh

Our students are makers, dreamers, and thinkers who love to learn, and we learn by doing. #makewriting

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## Angie Siefkin, HS Mathematics

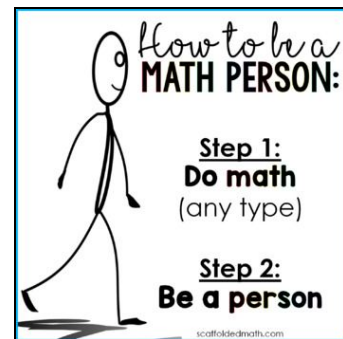
### Habits of Mind - Mathematics for our Future!

I understand that many people feel that they will never be a “math person” and as a math educator, I hear it all the time. “I just never got the hang of math.” But, I want to challenge you to think of this in another way. Do you understand the idea of gas mileage? How about budgeting your groceries for the month? Do you know how to double or triple a recipe? Or possibly figure out a 15% discount on a nice outfit you’ve been looking at?

I argue that many adults have been doing practical math every day for most of their lives, even though they really did not see the connections to their high school math classes. If we listen to the news or radio, we are bombarded with statistical data. Just this week I listened to the weather anchor tell me that the midwest would be hit with another cold front that would bring showers. They were predicting rivers in south-eastern South Dakota and northwest Iowa would be in the flood stage for quite some time.

Let’s change the perspective a little. What would you think if I told you, *“I just never got reading and writing. I never saw it as necessary and all that English teachers ever taught me was that I could never get the comma right. Oh well, it’s not that important anyway. I have word processing now so the computer can fix all my mistakes.”* We all know this is incorrect. After all, language skills are needed everywhere. I want you to consider the importance of mathematical literacy and logical reasoning. It just might not look like it did when you were in school.

Over the past 20 years, there have been studies to show that negative attitudes from elementary teachers and parents are directly passed onto their students. It is also known that even though there have been strong advances in math standards across the country, many teachers still use the same practices in which they were taught. Here at Newell-Fonda, we are trying to create high-level, engaging lessons that show real-life connections on a daily basis. Our new high school curriculum connects unit topics, such as



Spring flooding in Iowa could be 'even worse than historic flood of 1993, National Weather Service says

Doyle Rice and Kevin Hardy, USA TODAY Published 3:36 p.m. CT March 21, 2019 | Updated 6:46 p.m. CT March 21, 2019

the multiple concepts taught to perform quadratic equations, so that the students will see the step-by-step progression along with the applications to real-life.

We know that every student learns at different levels and times, so we need to provide a variety of problems for them to explore. They are encouraged to come in for help before school any day to go over their homework or look at the detailed answer keys that are provided online for each lesson. There are daily practice problems in class along with small quizzes to help them evaluate their own progress frequently.

Another large hurdle that needs to be addressed is limited time. We have seen that, with most students in small schools, they are involved in many extracurricular activities. That puts a huge strain on their time. That is the reason I have decided to let students retake quizzes and tests for a replacement grade. I want to focus on learning not on the arbitrary deadline that I set for all students.

In the long run, we need students who are confident in their ability to interpret a situation, choose numbers or shapes to use to represent the problem, apply a method to fit the situation at hand, then solve and make sense of their solution. This is what real-life mathematics is all about. Here is a quote from the book, *What's math got to do with it?* by Jo Boaler, "Ask mathematicians what math is and they are more likely to describe it as the study of patterns." I have always thought of mathematics as a puzzle to solve, but that definition is more elegant and encompasses all of mathematics. When teachers allow students to explore open-ended questions, that is when students will understand that life is filled with math.

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## [Samantha Freese, HS English](#)

"I love the Holocaust!... Wait, I mean... I think it is interesting." The awkward moment comes each year once the freshmen class discover we will be reading *The Book Thief* by Marcus Zusak. Now that we are about two hundred pages in it still makes me smile to see how entertained the students have been as we have gotten to know our characters a little more. Each year the book seems overwhelming because it is a chunk, yet several students have struggled to put it down. Some of the students have even come in upset that they can't quite talk about a problem that has frustrated them with the book because it would be a spoiler.

Despite the fact that the results of World War II itself are well known, freshmen have received a chance in English I to learn more about the war as a whole and the idea that one man was able to impact the whole world. Throughout this year, freshmen researched varying elements of World War II learning more about technological advancements, aviation improvements,



military coups, dictatorships, and concentration camps. All of the information they gained in their research helped them prepare a knowledge base, but not a complete understanding of how life really worked during WWII.

It seems unreal that people would join a cause that killed other people, and it is always a bit confusing for the freshmen. Yet, after we went through lessons on propaganda, advertisement, and persuasion students have seen some of the tools that can be used to convince others to join the cause. One of the most entertaining, yet faulty ways of persuading people was through a mob mentality activity that we did as a class.

This activity, which is similar to the mafia party game sets students against each other with little to no way of knowing who they are going up against. Students get their label based off of the card they drew. The goal is to make sure that if they are labeled a Jewish person or a sympathizer they survive the game. The other folks unfortunately have to try to follow Hitler's ideal world and get rid of anyone who wasn't a Nazi or regular German. Students were quickly lured into the mob mentality of getting everyone else out. With no evidence or very little evidence, students voted each other out quickly trying to win the game. After the game was over and we discussed the results it was entertaining to see how many realized they were just going with it and how many were simply going with it to try and stay in the game longer.

The activity is always a hit with the kids, but it also gives them a new understanding. Mob mentality can easily take over a group for whatever reason, and then, just like that, they understand a little more of how Hitler was able to stand up as a charismatic leader convincing a nation to fight the rest of the world to get what they "deserved."

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## [Arick Loew, K-5 Resource](#)

It has been a wonderful school year at Newell-Fonda, and even though the weather hasn't been great this winter, our students have hung in there and made great progress. Earlier this year I had the opportunity to take part in Maker Week with the middle schoolers. This was a first for me working with the middle school students during their Maker Week. Thankfully, I wasn't alone and I was able to co-teach with Mrs. Rosado. The group was made up of 6th-8th grade students. Our group focused on Random Acts of Kindness. Although Mrs. Rosado and I helped to brainstorm ideas for our class to work on, most of the great ideas were formed by the students. It ended up being a very busy and fulfilling week of kindness. We had the chance to visit and help stock the shelves at both the Storm Lake and Newell food pantries. The students sang Christmas carols at the nursing home in Newell. We visited The Bridge in Storm Lake to learn how others are volunteering time to help out their community. One of my favorite things the students worked on was the Rainbow of Thanks that they hung in Mustang Alley for several

months. The last thing we did during the week was our biggest project. The middle school students made bags to give to CAASA. The bags had many things inside such as a fleece blanket, crayons, coloring books, stuffed animal, Playdoh, toothbrush, toothpaste, bottled water, and a snack. The bags are given to children that need them during family crisis. The students received many of the items mentioned through donation. A huge thank you goes out to Fareway, Walmart, and Family Dental Service in Storm Lake for helping our students out with donations.

At last, the school year is coming to a close, and I want to give a giant shout out to all of our associates at Newell-Fonda. The demands of educating our students at Newell-Fonda are high, and with the excellent support and amazing work of our associates, we are able to meet those expectations.

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## *Lisa Christiansen, Preschool*

Hello from preschool! This year, we have 20 energetic, inquisitive, creative children in our class. They keep us busy every day. I am so fortunate to have wonderful help. Michele Vanderhoff and Ivette Ortega have been my teacher associates this year. They are amazing with the children, and I could not do it without them. Sadly, Mrs. Ortega is moving and will not finish the year with us. Kim Sievers is filling in for her. We appreciate her willingness to step in and the wonderful job she is doing too.

The first years of a child's life are the period of the most rapid brain development and lay the foundation for all future learning. High quality early learning experiences are essential during this time. To bring attention to the importance of early education, the National Association for the Education of Young Children has created the Week of the Young Child. The Week of the Young Child was April 8th - 12th. To celebrate early learning, we participated in some special learning opportunities during that week.

Monday was Music Monday. Music in preschool is more than singing and dancing. It is a way to encourage children to be active while developing their early literacy and math skills. We made our own instruments, had a rhythm band with Mrs. Bennigsdorf's class and danced to some bunny songs. Tuesday was Tasty Tuesday. We made our own snack on that day. Cooking with children connects math with literacy skills and science while introducing healthy eating habits into children's lifestyles. The preschoolers had many opportunities to build together on Work Together Wednesday. When children build together, they experience teamwork and develop their social skills. Reading was the emphasis of Read Together Thursday. Once a month, our book buddies from Mrs. Darrow's third grade class come and read to the

preschoolers. They also work in journals and play games that build vocabulary. On Thursday, our book buddies came, we had a guest reader and went to the Newell Public Library for a story time. Reading to young children builds vocabulary and provides the skills needed for children to become readers. Artsy Friday didn't go quite as planned. We wanted to give the children the opportunity to engage in some messy art activities outside. The weather did not cooperate, so Artsy Friday got postponed to the the next week. Painting with fly swatters and "splat" painting were two of the art activities the children could choose. Through open-ended art projects, children develop creativity, social skills, and develop their fine motor muscles. They have the opportunity to use their imaginations and create with their hands.

We are currently taking preschool registrations for the 2019 - 2020 school year. If you have a child that will be 4 years old by September 15, 2019 that would like to attend our preschool next year, you can register by stopping by the school.

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## [Crystal Nieland, Vo Ag](#)

Spring is always a busy time in the school and this year has been no different. Within the agriculture classroom, we have had several things going on.

Animal Science class has been busy learning about chickens and the incubation process as well as preparing lessons for the elementary students. This year we had over 200 eggs in our incubator and have been pretty successful in our hatching rate. These baby chicks will be in the agriculture classroom for about a week for everyone to see and learn about before being moved to my house. Every elementary class grades preK - 4th were able to come visit the chicks and make a chicken craft.

Plant Technology is a plant based course which students receive science credit for. Throughout the year, we have done several labs and learned about the inner workings of plants. This past December each student designed and created their own hydroponic system. This spring, students have been busy designing and preparing planter boxes. Seeds we started in class were then transferred to the boxes. We also planted some herb boxes which will be donated to the local food pantry. The remaining plant boxes and plants will be sold during our spring sale. We will also have additional vegetables and flowers available at our spring plant sale as well.

Agriculture Leadership students continued our Partnership in Active Learning Support (PALS) program with the first grade students again this year. Each Friday, our high school students go to the first grade room to help them with new or difficult concepts they are learning. The first Friday of each month, an agriculture lesson is prepared and taught by the high school students.

This has proven to be an excellent working relationship which creates lasting bonds between all students.

Introduction to Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resource students covered the basic topics in agriculture as well as learn about Supervised Agricultural Experience projects. These students played the Farming Game to practice their record keeping skills. As we played the board game, students tracked all incomes and expenses. Students in this course also work on their communication skills and identify new emerging technologies in the agriculture industry. Later in the semester, after learning about drones, ozobots, auto steer, and GPS systems, these students will be tasked with a challenge to develop a new technology they believe would benefit the agriculture industry.

Global Agriculture students each chose a developing country of their choice and completed a research paper. These papers were sent to the World Food Prize. On April 29th, students traveled to Ames, IA to meet with industry, state, and world leaders to discuss their findings. This proves to be an eye opening experience for everyone involved. In addition, these students read and discuss the book entitled, "The Last Hunger Season" by Roger Thurow. This is a great read that clearly illustrates the daily struggles faced by so many in developing countries and reminds us how fortunate we are for the agriculture industry in our area, state and country.

Fish, Forestry, and Wildlife students were able to welcome the Pocahontas County Conservation into our classroom. They brought fur pelts, tracks, and scat as we learned about fur bearing animals in our area. This class also experienced gill netting in Storm Lake at the beginning of April. Students were able to see the walleyes caught, how egg collection works, and how DNR officers can track the populations. We are grateful to both the Pocahontas and Buena Vista County Conservation for their taking time to share with us.

The FFA chapter has also been busy this year and semester. We held our 68th Annual Parent/Member Banquet on March 19th where several members were honored for their accomplishments this past year. Fifteen members also traveled to the State FFA Convention in Ames April 14 - 16th. Four members received their Iowa FFA Degrees, members participated in the Marketing Plan and Chapter Exhibit contest. Our Marketing Plan team consisting of Gabe Sievers, Garrett Meyer, and Kenley Nieland received 3rd place in the state! Our Chapter Exhibit assembled by Carlyee Clark, Megan Carlson, and Anna Tiefenthaler received a silver and our Greenhand Quiz participants, Taylor Zeman & Kailee Richter, received bronze ratings. Tyler Mandernach played in the State FFA Band and was the 1st trumpet, 1st chair! Our Iowa Degree award winners were Anthony Chase, Becca Mandernach, Beth Greenfield, and Megan Morenz. Paige Roberts and Camie Clark were our delegates.

A unique opportunity for our FFA chapter this year included a seven foot tall by seven foot wide letter A. This letter was apart of a contest Pioneer/ Corteva held this past fall. Members in our Crop Production class composed an essay and created a design that connected our school, FFA chapter, community and Pioneers Letter A soybeans. Our essay and design were selected

as one of the fifteen finalist in the midwest. The letter was sent and is being painted by members. We will send the letter back to Pioneer/ Corteva in the beginning of May. The letter will then be on display at the Farm Progress Show in Illinois at the end of August. The winning "A" will be selected and that chapter will receive a \$2,500 cash prize.

With these activities described and more, our agriculture classroom always has something new going on. The hussel and bussel of the spring time in the agriculture classroom is nothing new but something that closely resembles life on the farm in the spring - full of new life, opportunities, and challenges.

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