



Dassel-Middle School

September 2008 Newsletter

www.dc.k12.mn.us/mschool

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From the Principal's Desk:

Thank you to all the students, parents, and guardians who attended our orientation and open house events. It's always fun to see the halls full of kids and their families after the long, quiet summer!

Our opening week of school went very well. Attendance was near perfect, the heat subsided, and no kids were lost! Thanks for all your efforts to send us your children rested and ready to learn.

Our enrollment numbers have increased considerably from last year. We ended last year with 701 students and this year we started with 725 students. Fortunately, we were able to add an additional section of classes in grades 5 & 6, which allowed us to maintain reasonable class sizes.

MCA's and AYP

In last year's September newsletter I wrote about our Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) scores and how in 2007 we missed our Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets due to our special education students' assessment scores. This year our report to you is much more positive! Not only did all of our students achieve our AYP targets, but they also made a remarkable improvement in

their overall MCA scores. Prior to the testing period last April, Mr. Franklin and I challenged the students to raise their collective math and/or reading proficiency scores by 5% . If they accomplished that feat, we promised to hold a drawing this fall for an official Vikings jersey, (signed by E.J. Henderson) that had been donated to the school. The results were:

Reading Proficiency:

2007 Score: 68.88%

2008 target: 73.88%

2008 Score: 76.96%

Increase: 8.08%

Math proficiency:

2007 Score: 59.88%

2008 target: 64.88%

2008 Score: 71.49%

Increase: 12.61%

With those scores, we will definitely be holding a celebration and giving away the jersey! This improvement in math and reading proficiency is due to a combination of focused instruction by teachers, diligent effort from students, and support from parents and guardians. Thank you for helping your children not only improve their math and reading skills, but also their willingness to give their best efforts

when testing.

NWEA

We have added an additional assessment tool to help with our instructional efforts this year. The Northwest Evaluation Association provides an online Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) test that gives students and teachers immediate data on students' math and reading capabilities. The test, which takes approximately one hour to complete, will be given once in the fall and, again, in the spring. Fall test results will be used to set academic goals with students and to tailor instruction to meet their specific learning needs. Spring test results will be used to measure progress toward goals and to prepare for the state assessments. All students in grades 5 & 6 will have the opportunity to use this assessment this year, while approximately one third of the students in grades 7 & 8 will use the assessment. If you have questions about the test, please contact me or your child's math or reading teacher.



Useful Reminders:

Please communicate with the office as soon as possible when a student is going to be absent. We *always* need a note verifying the reason for an absence on the day that the student returns.

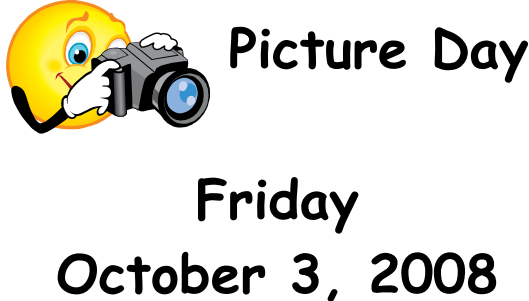
Students are not to be in the middle school unsupervised after the regular school day ends. Students who wish to attend an evening school event should go home right after school dismisses, and return later for the event.

Lunch accounts should be maintained to keep them from dropping to a negative balance. You will be notified by telephone when balances are getting low.

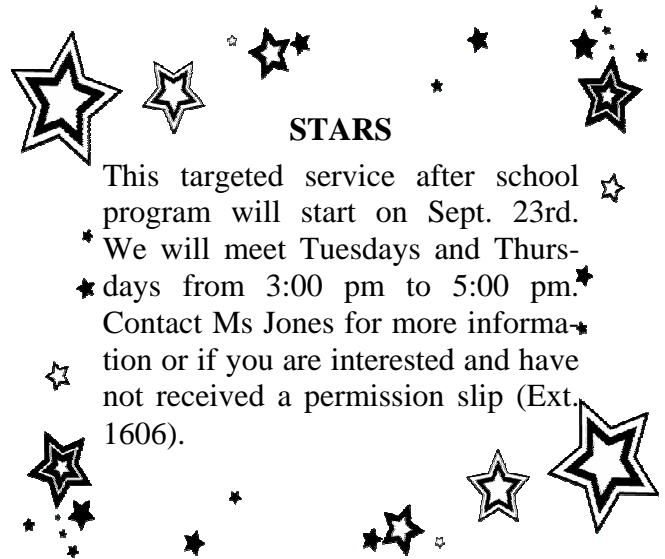
Please let the office know, if you have changes in your contact information, especially regarding email addresses.

Thank you for your concern, assistance, and communication. Remember, you can contact me by telephone at 320-286-4100, ext 1604 or by email at gary.johnson@dc.k12.mn.us.

It's going to be another GREAT year at D/C middle School!




Picture Day
Friday
October 3, 2008



STARS

This targeted service after school program will start on Sept. 23rd.
* We will meet Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm.*
Contact Ms Jones for more information or if you are interested and have not received a permission slip (Ext. 1606).



CLIMB

As a kick off to our emphasis on a positive social climate within our school, CLIMB Theater will present Just Kidding to grades 6-8 and provide interactive teaching teams for grade 5. More information will be sent with your child prior to the September 30th presentation.

A Smile is contagious; be a carrier.

6th Grade News

Social Studies

Sixth graders have begun their study of Minnesota history. We have learned about early Minnesotans, and will be studying the Dakota and Ojibwe Native Americans in our state. We will also be studying map skills in social studies, and starting our Minnesota booklet project. Minnesota Booklets are due March 19th.

Science and Health

We are looking forward to a great year in science and health. We will be using the middle school newsletter to inform you about upcoming units and events. Please be sure to read the monthly newsletter.

The 6th grade science classes will be using Addison-Wesley **Science** textbook and SCIS 3 hands-on curriculum. In health, we will be using the Harcourt **Health and Fitness** curriculum. Our science and health time will be divided into approximately 40 minutes of science and 20 minutes of health each day. This time will vary according to the units we cover.

For additional information about science and health, please visit the middle school website. Go to 6th grade and then teacher websites. The site be can found under 6th Grade Science Website.

Science - We begin the year by doing a hands-on Oobleck investigation. Students will be practicing the scientific method by experimenting with this mysterious substance. Next, the sixth graders will be studying cells. They will be using microscopes to observe simple organisms found in pond water. Along with cells, students will be constructing and observing their own aquarium-terrarium ecosystems.

Health – The first health unit is called “Keeping Active”. Students will learn how being active can improve fitness and overall health. They will also evaluate their personal fitness and plan a balanced exercise program.

WANTED!



Pork and venison hearts for 6th grade health classes to dissect. Please contact Jeff Neutzling (1622), Katie Erickson (1619) or Paula Trisko (1623) if you are able to donate. Thanks!



From the Charger Cafe



The new school year is starting out well, as we knew it would. We are hearing lots of “please and thank you’s” from the students, and we always appreciate that their courtesy!

Again, this year we are serving breakfast every morning starting at 7:50. Students have a choice of cereal, cereal bar, or muffin with juice, milk and granola bar. If students receive a free or reduced lunch they also qualify for a free breakfast.

Grandparents and parents, are you looking for a few hours of work a week? If so, we are always looking for substitute kitchen workers, and the kids are always glad to see a familiar face in the serving line.



FROM THE NURSE'S DESK.....

Kelly A. O'Fallon, LSN



It's time once again for the annual vision and hearing screening. As always, screenings are done as recommended by the MN Department of Health. Hearing and vision screening will be conducted on students in grades 1 and 3. Grades K and 2 will be screened for hearing only. Of course, we will also include those children in which a vision or hearing concern is brought to our attention by a parent, teacher or student, and those students with a history of poor vision/hearing.

The initial screening will take place on October 6th. A re-screening will be held on October 27th for those students who did not pass the initial screening. If, at this point your child does not pass, you will receive a referral letter recommending that your child be seen by his/her health care provider. If you do not receive a letter by the middle of November, your child has passed and no follow up is necessary.

Good vision and hearing is an essential key to learning. It is very important to conduct screenings so that any problems can be detected at an early age. The screening is only an indication to whether a concern may be present. Further evaluation by your health care provider will be needed to determine if a problem exists. If you have specific concerns regarding your child, please call the health office.

I would love to have parent volunteers participate in this event. If you are interested in assisting with screening, please call me @ 286-4204. Training will be provided!

So what is Overindulgence Anyway?

By: David J. Bredelhoff, Ph.D.

Parents often ask me if they are overindulging their children. They want to know what overindulgence is. They are curious, but aren't quite sure. For example:

Did I overindulge my son? I recently bought my son a new pair of skis. The first time he used them he broke one in half jumping moguls. I quickly ran out and bought him a replacement pair because we were flying to Colorado on a ski trip the very next day.

My ninth-grade daughter never remembers to bring home the assignment folder which lists each week's assignments. So, I email her teacher two or three times a week just to find out what her assignments are, and if she is turning them in on time. I really want my child to succeed! I don't think I am overindulging her when I do this, am I?

I rarely ask my children to do chores around the house. I believe you only get to be a kid once in your life! After all, it is easier for me to do them, and I do them much faster. FURTHERMORE, I DON'T HAVE TO LISTEN TO ALL OF THEIR FUSSING! AM I overindulging my children?

So what is overindulgence, anyway? And why should you as a parent be concerned?

First of all, remember this: Overindulgence comes from a good heart. You can see that down deep, each of these parents want the best for their children. They want them to grow up to be happy, healthy, competent adults. A parent doesn't wake up one morning and say; Honey, let's start overindulging our children! After all, we want them to be miserable when they grow up! No, good-hearted parents are pointed in the right general direction, they just need to make a few small course corrections.

Defining Overindulgence

How Much is Enough? A book based on three research studies with 1,195 adults describes overindulgence this way:

Overindulging children is giving them too much of what looks

good, too soon, and for too long. It is giving them things or experiences that are not appropriate for their age or their interest and talents. It is the process of giving things to children to meet the adult's needs, not the child's. Did these parents overindulge? Yes. Even though their intentions were good, they gave too much, were over-nurturing, or did not provide the necessary structure for their children. And, more often than not, it is more about what parents need to do for their children rather than what their children need from them. Dad wants to enjoy his ski trip to Colorado, not put up with a pouting son who has to ski on his old skis. Mom wants her children to have a childhood because she felt she was robbed of hers.

The Three ways of Overindulging

The first conclusion of most parents is that overindulgence is about too many toys, too many clothes, or too many activities. Our research found that overindulgence is more complex than simply "too much". We found three types of overindulgence. Overindulgence can occur in one, two or all three of these ways simultaneously.

1. Too much (toys, clothes, privileges, entertainment, sports, camps, etc.)
2. Over-nurture (over-loving, giving too much attention, doing things for children that they should be doing for themselves, etc.)
3. And Soft Structure (not requiring chores, not having rules, not enforcing rules you do have, or not expecting children to learn skills, etc.)

As you can see, the father who bought the pair of skis to replace the new broken pair, overindulged by giving too much, whereas the mother who emailed her child's teacher was over-nurturing, and the mother who didn't ask her children to do chores was soft on structure and over-nurturing.

Why should parents care if they overindulge or not? Overindulging children can cause them pain in their adult lives. Our research found that those who were overindulged may have difficulties such

as:

- Delaying gratification,
- Becoming competent in everyday skills,
- Taking personal responsibility,
- Knowing what is enough, and
- Giving up being the center of attention.

Tips for Avoiding Overindulgence

Change only one thing at a time. Identify which of the three types of overindulgence you do most often and start to change that. After a time, address each of the other two types.

Insist that your child figures out how he will replace a belonging that was carelessly damaged or ruined.

- Teach respect for people and things.
- Decide which rules are negotiable and which rules are nonnegotiable.
- Be sure to enforce rules using reasonable consequences.
- Teach children that every member of the family benefits by doing household chores.

There is more help about avoiding overindulgence in the book *How Much is Enough? Everything You Need to Know to Steer Clear of Overindulgence and Raise Likeable, Responsible, and Respectful Children*.



**There is no such thing in
anyone's life
As an unimportant day.
-Alexander Woollcott**



DASSEL-COKATO MIDDLE SCHOOL ONE OF 110 SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE SELECTED AS HP TECHNOLOGY GRANT RECIPIENT

More than \$38,000 grant includes HP wireless equipment and cash award to improve student achievement

Cokato, MN, August 22, 2008 –Dassel-Cokato Middle School was selected as one of 110 K-12 public schools nationwide to receive the 2008 HP Technology for Teaching grant, which is designed to transform and improve learning in the classroom through innovative uses of technology.

Dassel-Cokato Middle School will receive an award package of HP products and a cash award for each teacher with a total value of more than \$38,000.

Each of the HP Technology for Teaching grant recipients will use wireless HP Tablet PC technology to enhance learning in multiple disciplines and with a focus on math and science.

Dassel-Cokato Middle School has chosen drinking water as the focus of their grant. "From the Ground Up" is an 8th grade interdisciplinary unit which takes an in-depth look at water, a limited natural resource that is often taken for granted. Using HP technology, inquiry-based lessons and community resources, classes will address real-world issues.

"We are very excited to have this opportunity," said Susan Sparboe, an 8th-grade science teacher at Dassel-Cokato Middle School and one of the grant recipients. "Our students will truly benefit from the enhanced use of technology in our classrooms and the integration of curriculum in math, geography, and science."

HP is awarding 149 K-12 public schools and two- and four-year colleges and universities in the United States and Puerto Rico more than \$7 million in mobile technology, cash and professional development as part of the 2008 HP Technology for Teaching grant program. Since 2004, HP has contributed a total of \$60 million in HP Technology for Teaching grants to more than 1,000 schools in 41 countries worldwide. During the past 20 years, HP has contributed more than \$1 billion in cash and equipment to schools, universities, community organizations and other nonprofit organizations around the world.

"Around the world, HP partners with pioneering teachers and schools to discover how technology can improve student success," said Sid Espinosa, director of Global Social Investment programs at HP. "While technology is not the answer to every educational challenge, we have witnessed its incredible and transformative impact in the classroom. This innovation is happening every day as teaching and learning are fundamentally changing. By helping teachers help students, HP is actively investing in the future of our children and our communities."

More information about the 2008 HP Technology for Teaching program and grant recipients is available at www.hp.com/go/hpteach.