

ISD466

DASSEL-COKATO MIDDLE SCHOOL MARCH 2010 NEWSLETTER

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FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK:

New Parent Portal Coming

This past month we began the transition from the current software we use to track all student and parent information to a new software system called Infinite Campus, which will enable us to both make better use of student information and communicate better with parents and guardians. For those of you who already access our Parent Portal software, you will notice a significant improvement. By next fall you will have access to a much more dynamic Portal that will provide lunch account information, scores from state and local assessments, homework assignments, and more accurate grade information, all in one location. We will also be able to use the Portal to post messages to parents regarding field trips, special projects, and general school activities. (Even though we are excited about the improved features of the new software, we actually had to make this change because our previous system was no longer being supported by the company that sold it.) You will have opportunities to learn more about this system and how to access it next summer.

Testing Season

In March and April our students take two important assessments, NWEA and MCA, that are used to determine their math and reading proficiency levels. Locally, we use the results of the both tests to diagnose students' individual learning needs in order to provide appropriate targeted instruction. The Minnesota Department of Education uses the results of the MCA's (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments) to assess our school's instructional performance as compared to other schools in the state. (If you are interested in seeing how we compare to state schools, you can check our school report card at: <http://education.state.mn.us/ReportCard2005/index.do>)

We appreciate when you emphasize to your children the importance of investing their best efforts when taking these tests. At the recent parent conferences you should have received an information sheet containing your child's scores on previous MCA's. On that same sheet is an area that gives you and your child an opportunity to discuss and set goals for this year's tests. A few min-

utes of goal setting could be very beneficial to your child's results. (The NWEA tests are used primarily with students in grades 5 & 6 and the results are only used locally.)

Salad Bar

During March our food service will be offering students a salad bar as a lunch option every Tuesday and Thursday. Cost for this option will be the same as a regular meal. If the salad bar proves to be popular with students, it will remain available on a regular basis. (If you like your kids to eat salads, they may need a little encouragement!)

Middle School Art Show

Students' art work will be on display in the PAC Lobby during the choir and band concerts.

Our students have a lot of talent so please take time to check it out!



Up-Coming Events

3-1—3-3	1st 6th Grade Group to Long Lake
3-3—3-5	2nd 6th Grade Group to Long Lake
3-2	Read Across America
3-4	7th/8th Grade Band and Choir
	7th Grade: 6:30/8th Grade: 8:00
3-8	No School /Staff Planning
3-11	Mentor/Mentee Breakfast
3-15	NWEA Map Testing
3-16	NWEA Map Testing
3-17	NWEA Map Testing
3-18	NWEA Map Testing
3-19	NWEA Map Testing
3-29—4-2	Spring Bread

From the Media Center:

January Reading Counts “Win A Week” Winners

Each month the media center “sponsors” a contest to encourage students to read and participate in our Reading Counts program. The January contest was “Win A Week.” One January week was randomly selected (Jan. 17–Jan. 23) and the following students were awarded \$10 for earning the most points during that week.

5th Grade: Nathan	110 pts.
6th Grade: Abrielle	133 pts.
7th Grade: Markita	122 pts.
8th Grade: Nathan	66 pts.

Student of the Month January 2010

5th Grade

Tucker
Alayna
Cassadi
Seth

6th Grade

Erica
Tyler
Mariah
Kyler

7th Grade

Mackenzie
Jack
Nathan
Molly

8th Grade

Emily
Jens
Sarah
Trent

From The Middle School Kitchen

The coming of March brings tournament time and field trips. We are available to make cold lunches for students to take with them on field trips. Just let us know a day in advance so that we can be prepared.

Eating three well balanced meals a day is important. We help with that process by serving breakfast and lunch to students and staff. Remember, students qualifying for free or reduced priced lunches may eat breakfast for free.

Have a happy March

Barb Quast, Kitchen Manager and the
Kitchen Staff

6th Grade News

Science – Will March come in like a lion or a lamb? During this month, students will learn about common weather instruments and how they are used to report and predict the weather. Students will review what measures to take during a variety of weather situations.

Health – Students will be covering two units. One unit is “Emergency and First Aid”. Students will learn ways to respond to emergency situations and study first aid for common and life-threatening injuries. During the “Controlling Disease” unit, students will learn the difference between communicable and non-communicable diseases and ways to prevent and treat disease.

8th Grade Geography New

Eighth graders recently finished a unit on Russia. As part of this unit, they had to put together a display about a topic that they selected. Students researched their topic and constructed their displays. Then in a “science-fair” type set-up, students presented their topic and moved from display to display learning about other topics that other students selected. Topics ranged from the space race, famous Russian czars, the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, and Siberian labor camps, to Russian cities, Russian Ballet, and the famous Lake Baikal (among others). Some classes even got the opportunity to sample authentic Russian food!

We are currently in our unit on the Middle East and major world religions, and will soon begin our interdisciplinary unit on the Holocaust.



Kendra and Samantha pose in front of their display board about St. Basil's Cathedral.



Students educate their peers about their particular Russian topic.

Writing Assignments Leads to Wright County Youth Council Nomination!

Lest snail mail become extinct and good writing is deemed unnecessary, 8th graders engage in a business letter assignment.

Students choose the business or person to whom they will write. Typically, students choose sports personalities, entertainers, retail stores of every sort, or big name companies such as candy and snack food makers. Although, students expect a reply, not everyone is so lucky.

This year students received decals, stickers, and autographed pictures. Highlights were a letter from the White House and a reply from Brian Jacques (British author of the Redwall series).

For Scott the result a call to serve on the Wright County Youth Council for Pheasants Forever! Here is Scott's account:

Bob and my brother Eran work together, so I wrote to Bob Peterson, President of Pheasants Forever of Wright County. After reading my letter, he wanted me to take part in the Youth Council Board for PF. Bob told my brother about it and my brother then told me. He asked if I wanted to be a part of it. I said, "Yes, I would love to!"

Bob Peterson and my brother nominated me, so now I will be representing Wright County in the Youth Council for PF. I have to go to meetings every once in a while and email or communicate with other youth members around Minnesota or from different chapters."

Scott told me that the forms he had to fill out took until after 11 p.m. one evening. Great, more writing skills and how to read carefully before putting the pen to the paper. Congratulations, Scott. We know you will serve the youth of Wright County and the Pheasant Forever organization well.



Middle School Students Win \$3000 PSA Contest

The Kohl's and Children's Influenza Prevention Project for Kids awarded students at Dassel-Cokato Middle School \$3,000 for their public service announcement, "Don't Be Flu-Lish: Tips for Staying Healthy This Flu Season."

The students competed against 46 entries in a contest presented by the Influenza Prevention Project for Kids, a collaboration between Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota and the Kohl's Cares for Kids® program.

The students were presented a check at an all school assembly on February 11th. In addition to the check presentation, the assembly included an influenza prevention education presentation and giveaways.

The following students working under the advisement of Sue Sparboe were recognized for their participation in this contest:

Caleb	Trent
Jack	Kristina
Gabriella	Matthew
Mercedes	Ashley
Michael	Kate