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# DASSEL - COKATO MIDDLE SCHOOL

December 2011 Newsletter

**COMMITTED TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

## FROM THE PRINCIPAL, BRIAN FRANKLIN

With the December newsletter comes the start of our Holiday season. Thanksgiving break gave us the opportunity to relax, to spend time with family, to eat a variety of foods, and for those who enjoy the challenge, to begin shopping for deals very early in the day. It is amazing how fast this time of year has come here at DCMS! We have a lot to be thankful for here at DCMS. We have students who work very hard, take ownership in their educations, have caring and supportive parents and community members, have quality teachers who prepare lessons for success, and so much more. We truly are lucky to be in the communities of Dassel and Cokato!

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### Attendance

Throughout the year we send home letters reminding a few parents and guardians about the importance of daily school attendance. Some of the letters are simply computer generated messages notifying parents that a student has accumulated a significant number of absences. However, the school is required by state law to send a more serious letter to notify parents when a student has accumulated 3 or more unexcused absences. If a student reaches seven unexcused absences, he or she, by statute, is considered truant, and the county truancy officer is notified. In order to avoid a child's absence being recorded as unexcused, it is critical that you take the time to call the office on the day your child is absent or send an explanatory note with your child when he or she returns to school. If you have questions about what circumstances constitute an excused or unexcused absence, please consult the student policies listed in your child's agenda book, or check the district web site at [www.dc.k12.mn.us](http://www.dc.k12.mn.us).

### Incentive Activities

Each year we provide incentive activities that are designed to be a fun reward for students who have performed well throughout a particular trimester. Our first trimester activity is on December 1, from 5:30-7:00 for students in grades 5 & 6, and from 7:30- 9:00 for students in grades 7 & 8. Activities available include a variety of inflatable games, sports activities, dodge ball, ping pong and foosball.

We hold high expectations for student behavior and academic effort, and greatly appreciate your support in these areas. If a student does not meet the criteria for participation in an incentive activity because of academic or behavior issues (as listed in the student handbook), he or she is notified prior to the event. Please encourage your child to continue to work hard to earn this privilege in the future with our next Activity Day in February and our end of the year privilege in early June!

### A New Trimester

The end of the first trimester is on Thursday, December 1, 2011. We will be starting our second trimester on Monday, December 5, 2011. After you receive report cards, take a moment to talk with your child about his or her grades in each class and his or her success. Here at the middle school we provide many opportunities for students to excel in all classes. If students need a little more time to complete assignments or projects, there are two programs offered (Catch-Up and STARS) to help with this process. Teachers are also available to help students with questions before and after school. It is great for students to start out a new trimester ready for success!

**School late starts and closings ... See Page 5**

## HEADLINES IN SCHOOL HEALTH

### HEAD LICE



#### PREVENTION IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY...how do we do this??

Regular head checks at home are the key to decreasing infestations. Head lice can be present for 4-6 weeks before the itching even begins! By regular head checks, lice can be found and treated earlier.

Protect your family....do not share hats, scarves, brushes or hair pieces with other people. Parents, please remind your children of this.

Please inform the school if your child has lice. We can give you information on how to go about treating it.

Please inform your child's friends and their families—sleepovers and get-togethers outside of school are more

likely places to transfer lice.

The school will alert classroom families when there is an active infestation known, with respect to confidentiality. The child's name will not be released.

Know the facts!!

Lice do not jump or fly, they only crawl.

Lice do not transmit any diseases.

Transmission occurs in most cases by direct head to head contact, although indirect spread through clothing, hats, brushes, etc... can happen.

Itching is a result of sensitization of the louse saliva and may not develop for 4-6 weeks as it takes this long for sensitivity to develop.

Head lice cannot survive over 1-2 days off of a human scalp; eggs do not hatch at temperatures lower than those near the scalp.

Screening in schools is not cost-effective nor has it proven to significantly reduce the incidence of head lice.

Frequent head checks at home, even without symptoms, are the best way to prevent transmission of head lice.

Head lice are hard to diagnose without an actual live louse. Lice and their eggs (nits) are frequently confused with dandruff, hairspray droplets, dirt and other bugs, even by nurses and doctors! Do not assume your child has head lice until it has been confirmed by a live louse.

## READING COUNTS AT DASSEL-COKATO MIDDLE SCHOOL

### October Reading Counts Contest Winners

Every year the media center sponsors monthly contests to encourage students to read and participate in our Reading Counts program. In honor of our local Smithsonian Exhibit, students were encouraged to read books about different cultures (fiction or nonfiction). For every book they read that had characters or facts about a culture other than their own, they filled out a form to enter a drawing. At the end of the month, one from was drawn from each grade, and those students won \$10.

We wish to congratulate the following students for winning the October Reading Counts contest:

**5th Grade: Ava Ann Erickson**

**6th Grade: Filip Haataja**

**7th Grade: Emma Niemela**

**8th Grade: Louis Olson**



## Why Join the PTA?

The number one reason to join the **Parent Teacher Association** is to benefit your child. In doing so, you also help our schools. The DC PTA has donated over \$4k to our schools over the last three years in the areas of literacy, science, safety, fitness, family involvement, and teacher appreciation. Other advantages of being part of the PTA include:

- **Get Connected.** There's no better way to know what's happening in your school.
- **Tap into a Network.** PTA functions are opportunities to meet other parents and teachers, building rapport and discussing issues that are on your mind.
- **Speak Up.** PTA can be a way for you to more effectively suggest change at your child's school.
- **Be a Role Model.** By becoming a PTA member, you'll be demonstrating to your child the importance you place on education.

The next PTA meeting will be Thursday, December 1st, 6:30-8 pm in the high school media center. In conjunction with National PTA Healthy Lifestyles Month the PTA will be hosting Bernie Reinke, Food Service Director for the DC, Hutchinson, and Litchfield districts. Mrs. Reinke will present information regarding the guidelines and process our school district follows to purchase nutritious meal offerings for our children. School Board members and the Superintendent will be also be present to provide input and answer questions.

If you have any questions about this meeting or the PTA, please email [chargerpta@yahoo.com](mailto:chargerpta@yahoo.com). PTA registration forms can be found on line at [www.chargerpta.com](http://www.chargerpta.com).

## 6th Grade News

### Science -

Students will continue to explore physical science concepts from Chapter 11. Specifically, students will learn how forces relate to motion as well as what causes motion to change. Students will learn how terms such as work, energy, and power relate to force and motion. Students will develop a basic understanding of how simple machines can be used to help us do work. Newton's Laws of Motion will be applied to the world around them.

### Health -

Our study of the cardiovascular system will culminate with the dissection of pork and venison hearts. More information on this activity will come in a separate letter. After dissecting, we will begin the next chapter, "Personal and Consumer Health". Students will examine the importance of caring for their skin, hair, and nails. They will analyze health-care products and determine how to make healthful consumer decisions. Finally, students will learn techniques to reduce health risk while using technology.

### Social Studies -

Students will continue their study of Minnesota History by examining how Minnesota became a state, the advantages of statehood for Minnesota, and our government today. In addition, students will learn about the Civil War and Dakota War and the effects these wars had on early Minnesotans. We will continue working on our Minnesota Booklet project.

## CHARGER CAFÉ

On Veterans' Day (November 11), veterans were invited to spend time with our students during lunch. Pictured right, Joel Anderson enjoys lunch with 5th graders.

For students involved in after school activities, who might need a snack, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches are available to purchase at lunch for \$1.

Don't forget...Breakfast is the most important meal of the day! Breakfast is served every morning from 7:45 a.m.—8:10 a.m. If you have free and/or reduced lunch, you can have a free breakfast.



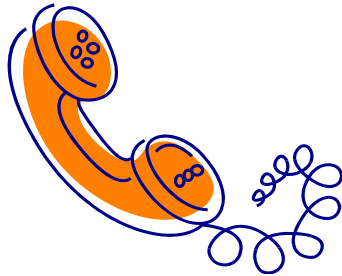
## 7th GRADE NEWS

At the end of October, seventh grade history students had a guest presenter, Soli Hughes. Soli Hughes is an African guitarist, entertainer, educator and new BFF (Best Friend Forever) to the 7<sup>th</sup> graders! During his week-long residency, he taught about the history of rock-n-roll and how it's changed over the decades. Each day he taught about a different decade and gave students a real feel for life during that time period. Students even got to dress for the decade! He played music, he showed them instruments, he showed video clips, he set up a Disco, and he got the students involved! Students were playing guitars, participating in a Soul Train, and singing songs! They had a fabulous time and learned a lot! On Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, some volunteer students participated in a Rock Show with Soli. They practiced all week after school and put on quite the show! They did a great job and will probably always remember the experience!

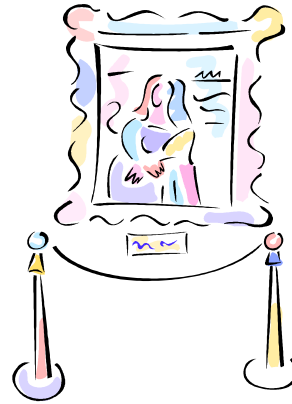


## From the Middle School Office

If your student is absent from school, please take a moment to check Parent Portal for any missing work. Teachers are asking that parents access portal for missing homework before making a homework request through the office. If you do not have access to the internet, we would be happy to supply homework once your child has been gone at least **two** days. Also, if your child is absent please inform the office via phone call (286-4100 ext. 1600), email, or written note to verify the absence.



## Art Department News



The art department is proud to present the annual exhibit of art created by students in grades five through eight. Art work will be on display until December 7. The art will be displayed in the hallway near the PAC and the display case between the stair cases. Pieces on display will be from all students who are currently in art class during the first trimester of school. Please take the opportunity to view the display of artwork from students in this community.

## STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

### OCTOBER

#### 5TH Grade:

Taryn Siltala  
Lydia Londerville  
Riley Jarman  
Paul Raisanen

#### 6th Grade:

Kailee Johnson  
Emma Huikko  
Addison Stenmark  
Josh Skouge

#### 7th Grade:

Sara Lundeen  
Hana Pokornowski  
Micah Berg  
Nick Tormanen

#### 8th Grade:

Jordyn Snook  
Shyra McClure-Huhn  
Drew Nelson  
Darrell Mytty

## School Late Starts and Closings

As we enter the winter season, there is always the possibility of a delayed start, closing of school, or early dismissal due to inclement weather. School officials attempt to make that decision as early as possible to help parents make alternate plans for the day, if necessary. That information is communicated to a variety of media outlets that you can consult. In addition, in early November you should have received a letter from Mr. Powers, Dassel-Cokato Superintendent, about the schools new calling system. The calling system will be implemented in case of delayed start, early dismissal, or closing. If you would like assistance setting up a Parent Portal Account (which will enact the calling system), please contact the Dassel-Cokato Middle School office at 320-286-4100, extension 1600 and we can assist you. Please remember that our primary consideration in deciding to close, delay, or dismiss school is the safety of our students.

## ISD # 466

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