

ISD
#466

DASSEL - COKATO MIDDLE SCHOOL

October 2011 Newsletter

COMMITTED TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

FROM THE PRINCIPAL, BRIAN FRANKLIN

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Wow! I would like to start out by saying that it is great to again have the halls and classrooms filled with students! Students who are anxious to learn more about their world and what they can contribute to our society! It was fun to watch many of the students at the MS Open House meet back up with friends and start comparing their schedules with one another to see which classes they shared. We also learned many students were already sharing schedules when they learned if they logged into their school accounts they could gain access to their schedules. It was great to learn students are using their resources related to school!

The first days of school were again filled with preparing students for the routines and procedures in the classrooms and school, and teachers also prepared students for the standards and learning in which students will be responsible. We spent time talking with students about the DCMS Mission - Encourage a positive attitude towards learning while preparing students with transferable and meaningful skills for life in a global society. There was time spent discussing what we believe it takes for a person to be successful and our discussion mainly focused on community values, priorities, and the Dassel-Cokato Character Building Pillars. Staff

and students discussed having successful habits in the areas of Respect; Responsibility; Resiliency; Integrity; Compassion; and Understanding Diversity. Our goal at DCMS will always be creating successful habits which will always help us succeed in everything we do!

We can all help encourage extended learning outside of the classroom by helping students understand learning does not only take place in school. When we meet with students during the first week we talk in detail about all their learning which happens outside of school. I encourage parents to talk about what your children are learning about in school and how it impacts them outside of school. Teachers consistently work to relate all learning to real life experiences and present students with opportunities to utilize learning in real life situations. Together we can help prepare students for their futures.

This month we would like to have students focus on being and staying organized. Talk with your child about what organizational skills can help people be successful. "Good habits build self-confidence in your ability to strive for success" ~Author unknown

Infinite Campus

There have been improvements added to the Parent and Student Portal portion of our Infinite Campus software which staff feel are very helpful. The software seems to be more user friendly than in the past. We are continually looking at ways to implement this system in a way effective to student and parent communication. If you have not, yet, established your Portal account (or need technical assistance with your existing account) please call the middle school office at 320-286-4100, extension 1600. All students have again learned how to log into the Campus Portal using their login and have been taught how to utilize the system and the upgrades. You can always have your child log into the Portal and this will give you access to your child's current success in his or her classes. We continue to encourage parents to access this system to monitor child progress in all classes.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

On October 17 & 18 we will offer arena style parent-teacher conferences from 4:00 - 8:00. The format for these conferences allows you to visit with all of your child's teachers, so that you can establish a relationship early in the year. While we try to keep these conferences relatively short in order to accommodate numerous parent conferences, the waiting lines to see particular teachers can sometimes get a bit long, and you may experience a short wait. We ask that you be a little patient with conferences happening at the time.

Parents are also encouraged to contact teachers at any time if you feel there is a need to address anything related to your child and school or classes.

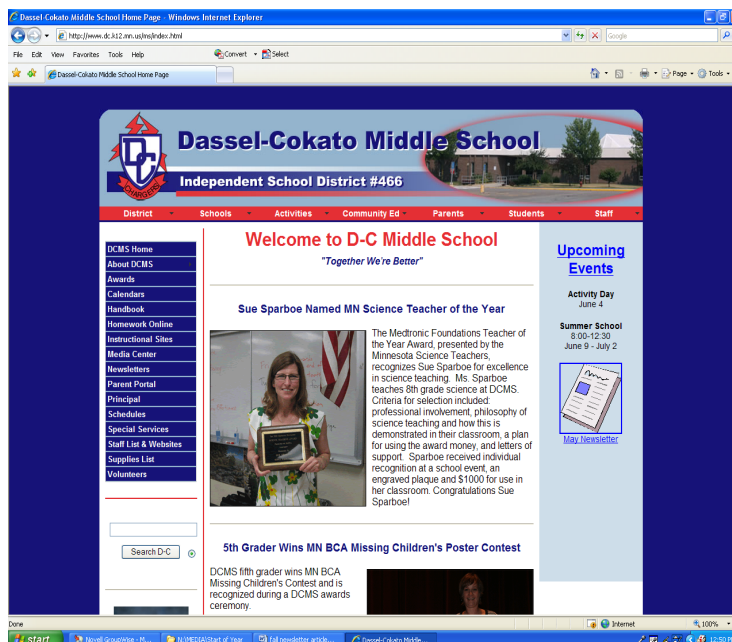
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D-C Middle School
4852 Reardon Ave
Suite 1500
Cokato, MN 55321
Phone:
320-286-4100
Ext. 1600
Fax:
320-286-4176

DASSEL-COKATO MIDDLE SCHOOL WEBSITE

We encourage you to visit our website on a regular basis. It is updated daily and includes information on the following:

- Campus Parent Portal to access gradebooks and attendance and homework
- Student Activity/Sports schedules
- Staff lists with emails and phone extensions
- Monthly calendars listing upcoming events
- Monthly newsletters
- Monthly lunch menus
- Grade level links to teacher websites, instructional websites and curriculum
- Student Handbook
- Volunteer opportunities



MS Students Licensed for Internet

All Middle School students will receive instruction on the district's Internet/Computer Network Policy and will be licensed to use the Internet. Their license is the barcode with the computer sticker on their agenda books. An overview of the Internet Policy at the Middle School can be found in the students' agenda books. Following are the basic expectations for students' use of the Internet at the Middle School:

- Student must be supervised by an adult when using the Internet
- Students must have an educational purpose for using

the Internet (school assignments)

- Students must have their Internet license present in order to use the Internet
- No inappropriate use of computers or Internet (see handbook and district policy)
- No email use at the Middle School

These expectations help ensure that students will safely navigate the web while they use the Internet at school to meet their curricular needs.

Color Printing Fees

Due to budget constraints, we are unable to provide students the opportunity to print in color for free. Color printing will be restricted to items teachers believe students will keep long term (example: personal bibliography projects). With staff permission, students may be given the opportunity to print an assignment in color. The charge for color printing is \$.50 per page.

Computer Disks and Viruses

We welcome students to bring disks and USB drives to school so they can save homework to bring home to complete on their home computers. We do have antivirus programs on the network and individual computer workstations, but we can not guarantee that your son/daughter will not bring a virus home on their disks. To better protect your home computer and our computers at school, it is recommended that you have an updated antivirus program installed on your home computer.

HEADLINES IN SCHOOL HEALTH

~Kelly Krueger, LSN

Vision and hearing screening will begin in October. Screening guidelines from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) are followed. MDH recommends screening students in 5th and 7th grade. We will also include children in which a vision or hearing concern is brought to our attention by parents, teachers or students. A re-screening will be held for those students who do not pass the initial screening. If, at this point your child does not pass, you will receive a referral letter recommending your child be seen by his/her health care provider. If you do not receive a letter by the end 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 screening so that any problems can be detected at an early age. The screening is not diagnostic; only an indication to whether a possible problem 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 me at x1804.

We are always in need of volunteers to help with this process! If you would like to help, please call me and I will add you to the volunteer list. Thank you in advance!

MUSICAL MONTH OF OCTOBER

What do blues, country, gospel, rhythm & blues, folk and rock 'n' roll have in common? All are musical styles that emerged from America's rich immigrant cultural traditions. "New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music," an exciting exhibition from Museum on Main Street, takes a look back at this music and how it served as the foundation for many musical genres appreciated worldwide today. Museum on Main Street is a partnership of the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), the Federation of State Humanities Councils, and the Minnesota Historical Society.

The Dassel Area Historical Society (ERGOT) has the exciting opportunity of hosting this fun and interactive traveling exhibit from September 24–October 5!

Exciting opportunities for Middle School students:

All Middle School students will be visiting the exhibit in October!

We will be hosting Soli Hughes in the 7th grade History classrooms.

We had our Musical Month of October Kick-Off on Monday, September 26 where we were lucky to see the Little Thunderbirds perform, a Native American family. It was a musical afternoon!

We have MANY more activities planned for the month, especially through Power Hour, including Name That Tune and a Talent Show as a finale!

Athletes' Attendance Requirements

A student must attend all his/her classes, except in the case of an emergency, in order to practice and/or participate in a scheduled contest on the same day. An exception will be made if the student has a pre-approved absence, in which case the student must present to the office a signed statement from the doctor or a parent/guardian regarding the absence.

In addition to the policy above, if a parent/guardian simply calls the school voice mail the night before, or the morning before school starts, it will count as a pre-approved absence. Missing part of the school day due to sickness will not be pre-approved.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

The next PTA meeting will be held Thursday, October 6 from 6:30–8:30 p.m., in the high school media center. Guest presenter will be, Deb Griffiths, Director of Communications and Community Outreach for Schools for Equity Education. Deb has a passion for assisting parents and community members to advocate for their children and their schools. She will answer questions about school funding and help clarify Minnesota's complex system of funding K-12 education. All community members are welcome.

If you have any questions about this meeting, or the PTA, please email chargerpta@yahoo.com.

2011-12 Maud Hart Lovelace Program Nominees

Every year, the Middle School participates in the Maud Hart Lovelace reading program. The program is named after a famous Minnesota author. The purpose of this program is to promote reading of students in Grades 3-8. To participate in the program, students need to read at least 3 of the 20 nominated titles in this year's contest. In the spring, eligible students are invited to vote for their favorite book. The results are then sent in and combined with results from thousands of students in schools across Minnesota. Following are the titles in this year's contest:

Division I

- 100 Days and 99 Nights (14) by Madison
- Captain Nobody (20) by Pitchford
- Dragon in the Sock Drawer (16) by Klimo
- Football Genius (26) by Green
- Getting Air (18) by Gutman
- Listen! (22) by Tolan
- Magic Half (20) by Barrows
- Make Way for Dyanonde Daniel (8) by Grimes
- Melonhead (16) by Kelly

- No Girls Allowed (Dogs Okay) (10) by Trueit
- Please Write in This Book (8) by Amato
- The Puzzling World of Winston Breen (28) by Berlin

Division II

- Anything But Typical (22) by Baskin
- Brooklyn Nine (32) by Gratz
- Elephant Run (34) by Smith
- Football Genius (26) by Green
- Getting Air (18) by Gutman
- *The Juvie Three (28) by Korman
- Listen! (22) by Tolan
- *Maze Runner (48) by Dashner
- The Puzzling World of Winston Breen (28) by Berlin
- Stolen Children (22) by Kehret
- Sun and Moon, Ice and Snow (34) by George
- Wednesday Wars (38) by Schmidt
- ***Mature Readers Only**

6th Grade News

Science - We began the year by doing a hands-on Oobleck investigation. Students practiced the scientific method by experimenting with this mysterious substance. After discovering the many ways Oobleck may be used, students created an Oobleck product and tried to market it

We are currently studying matter, elements, and the composition of atoms. Students will be determining the various amounts of each type of element that makes up the human body. In addition, students will compare and contrast the size of protons, neutrons, and electrons. The unit will conclude with a study of physical properties, elements and compounds, as well as solids, liquids, and gases.

Health - The next health unit is called "Growth and Development". Students will analyze the parts, functions, and relationships among body systems. They will also study the changes that accompany adolescence and the importance of developing healthful habits. As a part of this study, we will be taking a day to talk about the maturation process.

Social Studies - Sixth graders have begun their year by studying early Minnesotans. They have learned about different artifacts left behind by these ancient people. Next, students will be learning about the Dakota and Ojibwe, Minnesota's first Native American groups.

WANTED!!

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