



FAIRBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



OCTOBER 2016

SUPERINTENDENT - STEPHEN GRIZZLE
 JR./SR HIGH PRINCIPAL - NICHOLAS KROON
 JEFFERSON INTERMEDIATE PRINCIPAL
 JEREMY CHRISTIANSEN

ASSIST. PRINCIPAL/ACTIVITIES DIR
 DEREK ANDERSON
 CENTRAL ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL
 PATTY SMITH



CALENDAR EVENTS

OCTOBER 12
 SKIP FLU CLINIC

OCTOBER 20 & 21
 NO SCHOOL
 FALL BREAK

OCTOBER 28
 JUNIOR HIGH
 DANCE 7:30

NOVEMBER 4
 NO SCHOOL
 TEACHER PLAN-
 NING DAY

NOVEMBER 5
 FROST FROLIC

NOVEMBER 8
 ELECTION DAY

NOVEMBER 11
 VETERAN'S DAY

NOVEMBER 12 & 13
 SCHOOL PLAY

NOVEMBER 24 & 25
 THANKSGIVING



School District Budgets, State Aid and Property Taxes



As you come to know me, you probably have come to know that I am pretty "low key". I do not look for the limelight and prefer to "stay under the radar." Well, as you might guess, sometimes, as the superintendent of one of the greatest districts in the state it is sometimes difficult to "stay under the radar." As I grow as an administrator, I also have become increasingly more involved in state issues. Over the last couple of years, I have been watching the legislature very closely and have tried to be a resource for our local representatives. I have reached out to state senators personally, I have testified at hearings and I also have helped to lead the dialogue through various education associations that I am involved with.

I wanted to take a moment and share with you my thoughts about the current financial landscape of our state.

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As the state's financial (tax) landscape continues to become more and more lopsided, it is becoming increasingly difficult for myself and other school superintendents to "stay low." I have been a superintendent since 2009. In the past 8 years, the landscape has changed dramatically. Jefferson County is a fairly typical example of this. Below is a table illustrating the changes that I refer to for Fairbury

Year	Total Levy	Property Valuation (% Increase)	State Aid Received
2009-10	1.051	\$604,021,939.00	\$1,614,190.00
2010-11	1.069	\$634,744,135.00 (+5.1%)	\$1,405,007.00
2011-12	1.08	\$663,659,344.00 (+4.6%)	\$1,315,327.00
2012-13	1.03	\$740,948,794.00 (+11.6%)	\$1,542,360.00
2013-14	1.011	\$849,635,452.00 (+14.7%)	\$933,937.00
2014-15	.9775	\$962,024,025.00 (+13.2%)	\$210,219.00
2015-16	.9649	\$1,078,177,178.00 (+12.1%)	\$54,257.00
2016-17	1.0152	\$1,158,536,842.00 (+7.5%)	\$0.00

As you can see, our property valuation has nearly doubled in the last 8 years. On the flip side, our State Aid has withered away to nothing. These two items are definitely "linked". As a district's valuation increases, this tells the state that it has the ability to fund itself and therefore must not need state aid. In the current times, this is a true statement. However, we all realize this also puts the burden of funding public education squarely on the shoulders of property owners.

In a conversation I had with an area farmer this past month, this frustration was apparent. As valuations continue to rise, we are also facing commodity prices that are declining. This is a "perfect storm" for area farmers. During last year's legislative session, the rhetoric was pretty harsh, with schools being pitted in the middle. At times, districts were painted as being wasteful or unwilling to control costs. I believe the Governor was heard saying, "We have a spending problem..." and said, "...the average district's spending increases over 6% per year."

I can only speak for our district, but we do not fit that stereotype... Our adopted budget for last year, for the 2015-16-budget year, it was for an anticipated increase of 4.1%. But when you look at the final general fund spending numbers for this past year (2015-16 Budget year) you see the actual spending increased only 1.8%. Typically, that has been my experience, actual spending increases usually go up between 2-4% each year, not 6% as the governor stated.

	Adopted	Adopted	
	2014-15	2015-16	% Change
Total Disbursements -	\$11,145,350.00	\$11,604,064.00	4.1%
Total Revenue -	\$11,145,350.00	\$11,522,893.00	3.4%
	Actual	Actual	
	2014-15	2015-16	% Change
Total Disbursements -	\$11,072,202.00	\$11,267,108.00	1.8%
Total Revenue -	\$11,001,939.00	\$10,974,498.00	-0.2%

When we consider the budget that was adopted at the September 12, 2016 board meeting for the current 2016-17 Budget Year, you will note that the budget is projected to increase 4.8% in General Fund spending and a 1.9% increase in General Fund revenue. Just like last year, we anticipate the actual numbers to be lower than the adopted numbers.

Speaking from a local perspective and knowing several districts across the state, I do not believe school spending is the lone issue affecting our current state tax system situation. I believe the true struggle is to find balance for our state's tax receipts. Nebraska's tax system (to fund public services) is based on a "three-legged stool." Sales Tax. Income Tax. Property Tax. Upon its inception, these "legs" were relatively balanced and provided the resources needed to fund our state's needs. What we have seen in the last 8 years is that the "Property Tax leg" of this system is becoming longer and longer, until now, we are balancing our resources primarily on this leg. We cannot achieve a tax balance by focusing on spending alone. As a legislature, they have to figure out a way to bring more balance to our tax system.

As the new legislative session begins in January, I expect that property taxes will be high on everyone's list of things to change. I, too, hope we can have meaningful change that balances out the "three legged stool." I was at a meeting last month in York where Senator Kolterman stated that he believes change was going to happen this next session. He believes that enough senators want to "get something" done. Perhaps this will be the year...I just hope we achieve balance and take the burden off of our property owners.

Fairbury Public Schools and its Career and Technical Education Programs do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, disability, or age in its activities and programs, including employment policies and practices.

Teacher's Working to Improve Their Craft – Professional Development Fridays!

Ahhhh, the dismissal bell tolls early on this sunny, bright fall Friday. *“What will I do on such a beautiful afternoon,” asks a Fairbury Public School teacher?* This is a new question being asked these days in Fairbury, as this is the initial year of our “early outs” on Friday afternoons. Starting this year, we dismiss each Friday at 1:35pm to allow us the opportunity for staff development time for our faculty.



What is being accomplished during this time? As a K-12 staff, we are learning and working to improve our craft...the art of teaching! Teaching is not easy, teaching is not exact and teaching is definitely not for the “faint of heart!” We are working through Charlotte Danielson’s [A Framework for Teaching](#). It is important to recognize that great teaching is what we want for all of our students and that great teaching is a very complex endeavor.

We are focusing our learning on the “Essential 8” components of great teaching:

- Setting Instructional Outcomes
- Designing Coherent Instruction
- Establishing a Culture for Learning
- Managing Student Behavior
- Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques
- Engaging Students in Learning
- Reflecting on Teaching
- Communicating with Families

In addition to learning and working on these components, we are using our Professional Development time to look at our assessment data to improve our focus for instruction and the development of Student Learning Objectives (SLO’s). Too often educators do not use the data that we have available to help inform our instruction. We want to change that notion and use the different forms of data we have (MAP testing, NeSA testing, ACT results, classroom data, etc.) to guide us to where we need to spend our time instructing.

So, as you can see, we are very busy on Friday afternoons!

Sportsmanship

Many people when asked what sportsmanship is, will say that it is “shaking hands at the end of the game” or “being nice to the other team.” The word sportsmanship is used on a regular basis. I would argue that “shaking hands” or “being nice” is purely superficial and means very little. There are three aspects that fall under sportsmanship and go beyond actions.

Respect

Respect is something that has to be earned. However, the sign of someone who practices true sportsmanship is someone who respects others even if they are not respected first. I see this at games with officials and the other team. One thing to remember is that when an official makes a questionable call, fans and athletes believe that the officials have something against us or that they are lousy. While it may have been a lousy call, this does not make them lousy officials any more than it would make you a lousy worker for showing up late once to work.

Respecting the other team is another aspect of the game. Once in awhile we will play a team that we perceive, does not like us. We immediately get defensive and look for reasons to not like them. This only fuels a situation to get worse rather than better.

Losing with Dignity

No matter how much we would like to, we can't win at everything every time. So we need to learn to deal with it. After a hard fought game in which everything was left on the field of play in a losing effort, it can be very difficult to look your opponents in the eye and tell them “good game” or “good job”. But this is what is often asked of athletes of all ages. So how do we handle losing with dignity? Keep losing in perspective.

In hotly contested games, we need to treat the opposing team in the same fashion as a team that we are beating soundly. There should be no difference. Too often we get wrapped up in taking a game personally.

It is also important to acknowledge the winner. It may be difficult but failing to acknowledge your competitor's accomplishment is disrespectful. Sulking away shows a self-centeredness and lack of discipline. Being able to control your emotions in difficult moments is a mark of strength and self-control. Finally, when a loss happens, keep your head up. If you gave it your best shot, you should feel pride about your effort, not shame over disappointing results or execution. Remember perspective; it's just a game.

Winning with Humility

Winning is fun. It is often seen as the reward for our hard work, and it fills us with pride. Winning becomes a negative when it is a team's or individual's only goal. This ties in to winning with humility because, like losing, we must also keep winning in perspective. Winning doesn't mean you are perfect; there are always areas we can improve. This does not mean we can't celebrate our victories with our teammates, coaches, friends and families, but celebrate with grace.

We should keep in mind that our opponent is simultaneously facing a disappointment. Since we all have experienced tough losses, it should be easy to have a healthy empathy for the losing team. However, striking that balance between sincerely enjoying your accomplishment, while not adding to your competitor's dejection, can be extremely difficult. A good start is to acknowledge the losing team. Let your opponents know that they were worthy adversaries, pointing out specific points of the game in which they were good. Victory is cheapened when you dismiss your opponent's worthiness.

Sportsmanship and the Game of Life

How do the lessons of sports and sportsmanship relate to life? One of the goals of parents, schools, and coaches is to help develop children into productive, happy, well-adjusted members of society. Now, instead of thinking of them simply in relation to sports, think of them in relation to almost any profession or job.

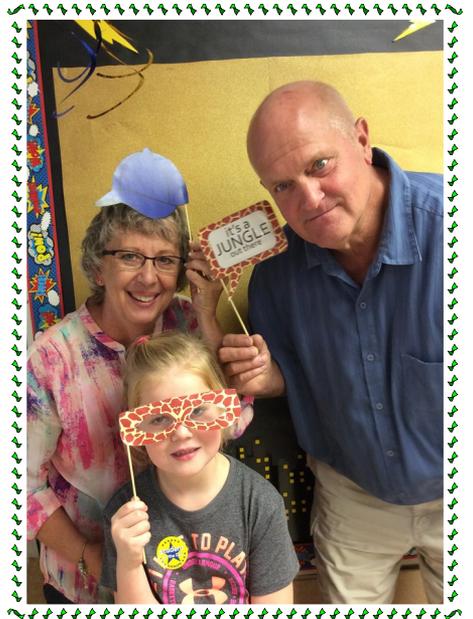
We should continuously strive to improve ourselves in life, just as in sports. We are never a finished product. Those who respect others, handle failure with grace, and manage success with humility, will not only be better teammates and employees. They will also be viewed as leaders on their teams, in their professions and in their communities. If we are to continue to improve in sports, we need to look within ourselves for that improvement. Improvement comes in many ways, on the field/court, in the weight room and with how we handle the game.

Derek Anderson

GRANDPARENTS DAY

Step Ahead will have their first family night on Thursday, October 6th. The families will spend time in the classroom, enjoy supper, make a poster and end the night with a dance party.

Central and Jefferson received the opportunity to attend The first PTA sponsored program, Rock In Prevention. Rock In Prevention, along with mentors from the high school, provided the message that drugs are bad for your body and bullying should be stopped immediately. This interactive program included lots of fun songs and actions! Each family received a Rock In Prevention cd that reinforces these positive messages.



September 22nd, Central Elementary School celebrated Grandparent Day by decorating cookies, posing in the photo booth and enjoying classroom activities. What a great day for our students, their grandparents and grand friends.



Happy fall everybody! While I love the summer months, there is a specialness to the cool crisp air of autumn. As I write this newsletter, it serves as a great reflection on the beginning 6 weeks of school. I have seen numerous examples of outstanding leadership in the classroom, the hallways and in activities. #jeffpride has been evident in many different facets within our school system. Our staff continues to amaze me with their ability to make positive connections with students, willingness to improve their trade and skill, and desire to help each other out and our students. The teachers have been busy with our new JEFF program, the implementation of our new professional development schedule, and our expanded SLO procedures. So a HUGE shout out to them is definitely in order.

Our student body has definitely been active as well. So active in fact, that to try to write down in words what our student body has done would take up this whole newsletter. Our STUCO (sponsored by Janet Beranek and Maureen Beck) has done an outstanding job of really pumping up school spirit with the first day kick off and most recently homecoming week and weekly STUCO shows! Teachers have also been recognizing contributions and positives actions of our students. I love getting reports from teachers on positive student actions and then sharing those positives with the kiddos. It is great watching their reactions, and I find much joy in sharing those observations with them.

The College Access Grant is beginning to show its benefits as our Seniors have already attended SCC and our Juniors attend at Peru State on September 29. Also, our seniors will attend a campus visit to UNL in early October. The college access grant is providing opportunities for every grade level to get on a college campus and I believe the benefits will be very evident in years to come.

We have just began our reVISION grant process. We have prepared pre work and had our first meeting on September 30th. We are excited to begin the process and see how our curriculum and course offerings meet the demands of our community, student interests, and student's potential careers.

Calendar check: October 20th is Parent Teacher Conferences. We would love to see you all attend!

Thank you and have a great autumn!

Nicholas Kroon
Fairbury 7-12 Principal





Jefferson Student Council

While all students at Jefferson Intermediate School have opportunities to lead, students in fifth and sixth grades may annually apply for membership in our school's Student Council. This year over 30 students applied for this leadership position with two students from each classroom selected as representatives on the Student Council. These students exemplify positive leadership traits, an ability and willingness to serve others, great work ethic, and excellent character. Jefferson StuCo members will have the opportunity to use those qualities to serve their fellow students at Jefferson Intermediate. Student Council members are asked to help at different events and complete a variety of service projects during the school year. Congratulations to this year's Jefferson Student Council! Grade 5: Malayne DeBoer, Jordan Hauschel, Toby Julin-McCleary, Eliza Kroecker, Jozalyn Kuzelka, Crystal Sokolik, Aspen Swanda, Brook Tatro. Grade 6: Madison Christ, Xavier Johnson, Ella Lenz, Ellie Livingston, Megan Mees, Moriah Neal, Makena Schramm, Jake Voss.

FPS Students and Staff Attend Digital Citizenship Symposium

Several teachers, students and administrators recently participated in a Digital Citizenship Symposium. Featured Speakers were Karen Haase, Education Attorney, KSB School Law, Lincoln, Nebraska, Craig Badura, Technology Integration Specialist, Aurora Public Schools, Stephanie Bernthal, Instructional Technology Trainer, Educational Service Unit #17, and Hunter Radenslaben, @AthleteNationCo, Waverly High School, Waverly, Nebraska.



The purpose of the symposium titled "Be The Key" was to share information and educational resources on the topic of digital citizenship. School personnel and students created a poster of the "Key" takeaways of the day.

Fairbury High School will present their adaptation of *The Seussification of Romeo and Juliet*, in November.

“Verona’s the place from where our play is picked.
Two families lived there, and man were they ticked.
Their ancient grudge match happened before the story,
And rekindled hatred made their feud more gory.”

Shakespeare meets Dr. Seuss in Peter Bloedel’s *The Seussification of Romeo and Juliet*. The playwright has taken Dr. Seuss’ iconic rhyming tetrameter format and rewritten the famous star-crossed lovers into a full-length play. All of the memorable moments from the three-hour Shakespearean saga are present: The prologue, Juliet’s betrothal to Paris, the nurse discovering Romeo’s identity, the balcony (or Seussified – “perch”) scene, Romeo and Juliet eloping in secret, Tybalt and Mercutio’s fight scene, Juliet faking her death, and Romeo finding her later.

However, don’t let us bore you, as we have many twists and turns to the traditional comedy... we mean tragedy! Brought to you by Narrator 1 and Narrator 2 (hmmm. . . sounds a bit like Thing 1 and Thing 2!), is a play you will *not* want to miss!



The musical will run nightly at 7:00 pm on Friday, November 11th & Saturday, November 12th and a matinee showing at 2:00 pm on Sunday, November 13th in the Burkley Fine Arts Center. Tickets are \$8 for general admission, \$6 for students, and free for children 3 and under. VIP seating is also available for \$15. For ticket information, please contact the box office at theater@fairburyjeffs.org or 402-318-1242.

Fairbury Jr/Sr High is located at 1501 9th Street, Fairbury.

"The Seussification of Romeo and Juliet" is not affiliated, endorsed, or sponsored by Dr. Seuss Enterprises.

THE SEUSSIFICATION OF ROMEO AND JULIET
by Peter Bloedel
Produced by special arrangement with Playscripts, Inc.
(www.playscripts.com)

FAIRBURY HIGH SCHOOL RECEIVES \$20,000 GRANT FROM EDUCATIONQUEST EXCITING COLLEGE EXPOSURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Fairbury Jr-Sr High School was awarded the EducationQuest College Access grant for the next 4 years. Each year for the next 4 years, we will receive \$5000 to be used towards college access activities for all 9-12th grade students. Such activities include, college visits for every student 9-12, providing ACT Test Prep sessions for students preparing to take the ACT, financial aid presentations by EducationQuest personnel, college fair, and countless other opportunities for exposure. Important dates and information for the month of October are listed below:

10/4: College Fair-SCC Beatrice-all juniors and seniors

10/5: College visit to UNL-all seniors

10/10: Financial Aid Meeting for all seniors and their parents-11:50 a.m. at the HS

How to fill out the FAFSA and create FSA IDs

10/19: Apply2College Campaign-all seniors will apply to a college of their choice

Important information that seniors will need to know to create their FSA IDs are their social security numbers and a personal email. For the Apply2College Campaign, students will need to have some form of payment for the colleges that have an application fee. If you have any questions, please call me at 729-6116.

Taylor Biehl



Parents and Guardians You can take advantage of our Text Messaging Service

Fairbury Public Schools utilizes the School Messenger notification service to send important information about school closings, safety alerts, events, and more to families through phone calls and emails. We encourage all of our families to sign up to receive text messages as an additional way to communicate school information!

To begin receiving text messages, please send a text message to **67587** and type in **YES** in the message line. You will receive a notification that indicates you are registered with School Messenger.

If you opt-in, but later decide to opt-out, simply send "STOP" to 67587. You may also reply "STOP" to any message from our organization.

Please check with your wireless carrier for information about your mobile service plan and any possible charges related to text messaging. Our organization does not reimburse for any charges associated with sending or receiving text messages.

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact:

[Taylor Biehl]

[Fairbury Jr-Sr High School]

[402-729-6116]

[tbiehl@fairburyjeffs.org]

Fairbury Jr-Sr High School Conducting Apply2College Event

Seniors at Fairbury Jr-Sr High School will take a critical step in the college preparation process when they participate in a college application event October 19th at the school.

Fairbury Jr-Sr High School is one of over 200 schools conducting events as part of the statewide Apply2College Campaign sponsored by EducationQuest Foundation. During the event at Fairbury Jr-Sr High School, seniors will get hands-on help with college applications from school staff and community volunteers.

“Completing a college application can be overwhelming for many students – especially those from families unfamiliar with the process,” said Taylor Biehl. “This event will help reduce college application barriers students face and should increase the number of seniors who go on to pursue higher education.”

The Apply2College Campaign is part of the American College Application Campaign sponsored by the American Council on Education. All states are now participating in the annual program.

