

# Cadet Gazette

A Publication of Iowa Falls & Alden Community School Districts • April/May 2019 • Volume 12 • Issue 9

## IOWA FALLS BOARD OF EDUCATION



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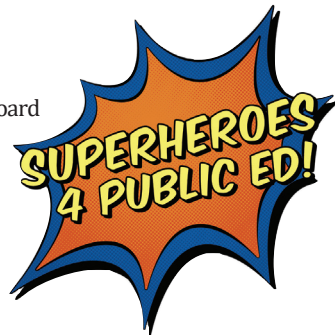
### From the Superintendent ...

### Superheroes for Public Education!

The Iowa Association of School Boards announced this year's theme for Iowa School Board Recognition Month - "Superheroes for Public Education".

Iowa Falls and Alden Community School Districts join other districts and communities across Iowa this May to thank our superheroes (school board members) for their unwavering commitment to public education.

Our superheroes dedicate countless hours of volunteer time and expertise so that all students are prepared for a bright future when they graduate.



#### *They are committed to:*

- Effective delivery of rich and diverse curriculum
- Equal education opportunities for all regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, sexual orientation, gender identity, and socioeconomic status.
- Robust accountability for results.
- Continuous improvement.
- Strong stewardship of financial resources.

*All IF-A community members and educators salute our superheroes who make a difference for all of our students.*

# ifa11s

Iowa Falls and Alden Community School Districts

L EARNING  
L EADING  
S UCCCEEDING

### Non-Discrimination Statement

The Iowa Falls Community School District offers career and technical programs in the following areas of study: Agricultural Education, Business Education, Family and Consumer Sciences Education, Industrial Education. It is the policy of the Iowa Falls Community School District not to illegally discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (employment only), marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and socioeconomic status (students/programs only) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact the district Equity Coordinator, Jessica VanHove, HS School Counselor, IF-A High School, 1903 North Taylor, Iowa Falls, IA 50126, 641-648-6440, [jvanhove@ifacadets.net](mailto:jvanhove@ifacadets.net)

## HIGH SCHOOL NEWS

### ???ITBS/ITED/Iowa Assessments/ISASP???

I am sure many of you (if not all) are young enough to remember taking the Iowa Test of Basic Skills during the majority of your school career. I remember looking at my scores during middle school, graphing the results, and trying to set goals as a class...we did this as a class and I did not take it upon myself to do such things, but if you know me it would be something I would most likely do. Over the years the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) become the Iowa Test of Educational Development (ITED) and most recently the Iowa Assessments. This year marks another change in testing.

The new state test is called the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP). The website for this new site is: <http://iowa.pearsonaccessnext.com>. I would encourage you to review the website and even take a few practice tests to get a feel for what we are asking our students to do. I am going to share some information about this, but wanted you to be able to see if for yourself.

First, the big question for most students is "Why are we even taking these tests?" While the ISASP is not part of a student's academic coursework, it does provide valuable information for our school to look at. It allows us to analyze our curriculum, instructions, and courses provided to our students. We use this information with other data to help drive decisions in our school. For example, we used the data from the Mathematics sections of the Iowa Assessments, data from the ACT Mathematics, the amount of our students enrolling in a remedial college course, and our curriculum maps to help determine our departmental redesign two years ago. This information helps us make the best educational decisions we can for our students.

As you can guess, however, this does not always provide personal meaning for our students. The bigger motivation for our students is that the scores from these assessments determine if they are eligible to enroll in courses at Ellsworth Community College during their high school career. This is where the big change will be coming for the upcoming year.

Grade 10 ELA Blueprint		
Domain	Min	Max
<b>Reading</b>		
Key Ideas and Details	40%	50%
Craft and Structure	35%	43%
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	17%	25%
Literary	20%	30%
Informational	70%	80%
<b>Language/Writing</b>		
Conventions of Standard English/Knowledge of Language	36%	46%
Text Types and Purposes	25%	35%
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	4%	12%
Production and Distribution of Writing	6%	14%
Research to Build and Present Knowledge	6%	14%

Grade 10 ELA DOK Blueprint		
DOK Level	Min	Max
<b>Reading</b>		
DOK 1	10%	25%
DOK 2	40%	55%
DOK 3	30%	45%
<b>Language/Writing</b>		
DOK 1	5%	15%
DOK 2	20%	35%
DOK 3	60%	70%

The Senior Year Plus guidelines from the Iowa Department of Education clearly outline the requirements for students to enroll in college courses during their high school career. To be eligible, students must be proficient in Reading Comprehension, Mathematics and Science on the Iowa Assessments. With the change to the ISASP, their expectations will be the same but you need to be aware of the changes this brings.

Typically we have taken the Iowa Assessments in February and had our results back in April. With the new assessment system, every school in the state will be taking the ISASP between March and May. Results for these assessments will not be given back until next fall. That means for any student wanting to enroll in courses at Ellsworth for the Fall semester, we will be using last year's results on Iowa Assessments. Any student wishing to enroll in Ellsworth courses for the Spring will be based on the ISASP results we take this spring. Another change is that the Science test is only available for 10th-grade students, meaning high school students have one shot at demonstrating proficiency during high school. Confused yet? I know this is a lot to process, but if you have any specific questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Beyond the name change, the questions asked to our students will be significantly different compared to the tests we adults took in school. In reviewing the website, you will be able to find "Blueprints" to the tests. Below are the "blueprints" for the 10th-grade test, followed by a brief explanation of the items.

Hopefully the "Domains" for the tests sound familiar, especially concerning the ELA assessments. These domains align closely with the standards we are using in our classes. The min and max percentages refer to the amount of questions that will be on the test, on average. The Iowa Core website would provide guidance on the benchmarks for the domain in Mathematics and Science.

The DOK Levels refer to Webb's Depth of Knowledge. If you were to look at the Iowa Core Curriculum standards, you would notice a DOK level for each benchmark.

A DOK Level 1 question asks students to Recall Information. Basic prompts may include: Define, Draw, List, Label, Use, Tell, State, Match, Measure, Recite, Recall, or a Who/What/When/Where/Why question.

A DOK Level 2 question asks students to perform a Skill/Concept. Basic prompts may include: Infer, Graph, Classify, Relate, Compare, Predict, Interpret, Organize, Construct, Estimate or Identify Patterns.

A DOK Level 3 question asks students to demonstrate their Strategic Thinking. Basic prompts may include: Assess, Revise, Investigate, Differentiate, Cite Evidence, Draw Conclusions, Develop a Logical Argument or Explain Phenomena in Terms of Concepts.

As you can see, the higher the DOK Level, the more involved the task is. Students will be pushed to think at a higher level for these questions and on this test in general. As a staff, we have looked at the practice assessments and will have our students take a few practice tests to get used to the format and the types of questions. We feel that the change this year to increased rigor in the classrooms will have our students better prepared for these assessments.

Being the first year, it will be hard to compare the data we receive in the fall to previous assessments. We will share more information out next fall when we get our results.

## RIVERBEND MIDDLE SCHOOL

### Blogging

by Annika Nelson, Riverbend 6th-grade student

This year, every student in Miss Anderson's Language Arts class has their own blog. On our blogs we get to post stories about whatever we want. Then our classmates can read and comment on them. We started these blogs at the beginning of the year and write the stories whenever we have free time in or outside of class.

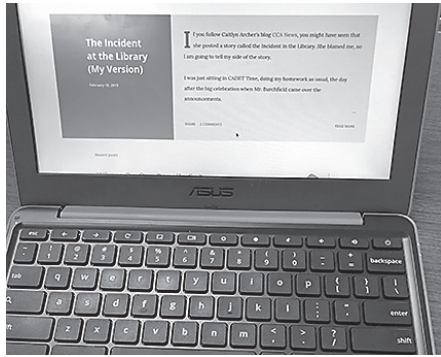
We can blog about anything, and there is a wide variety of topics posted by 6th-graders. Nonfiction is common, but fantasy stories are popular as well. Some students choose to blog

about one topic, while on other blogs the topic varies from post to post.

Sixth-grade student Caitlyn Archer was interviewed about blogging. She was asked what blogging teaches her. She said, "Blogging teaches me how to use better grammar and learn how to spell words better." When asked what she likes to blog about, she said, "I blog about things that are happening in my life, like events or activities my family is going to." Makayla Howland says that blogging teaches her writing skills. She says she likes to write fiction stories involving her teachers.

Sometimes Miss Anderson provides blog prompts that we can use to inspire our writ-

ing. Otherwise we can choose what we want to write about. Some days we are given time to write on our blogs during class, but some student choose to work on them outside of class. It's fun to have a blog as a way to share our writing.



A blog post from 6th-grade student Annika Nelson's blog.



Sixth-grade students Adessa Gillespie, Erica Baker, and Makayla Howland blogging during Language Arts class.

## Sixth-Grade Social Studies Students Study European History

by Mr. Bo Meester

Keyboards are clattering, screens are flashing, and markers are squeaking in Mr. Meester's classroom as 6th-grade students put the finishing touches on a two-week research project. It's one that's putting their recently acquired skills in Social Studies from the previous months to the test.

Nearly two months of studying the history and people of Europe, from the ancient civilizations to modern day concerns, have culminated in a research project that allows students the freedom to research a topic from Europe that interests them. They spent over a week doing research, a skill they've been honing all year, and began putting the presentations together this last week. Many students have been putting their technological skills to the test, creating videos, powerpoints and online games, amongst other things. Other students have been taking a more traditional route, making posters or writing papers about their topics.

The students have latched onto the task with fury and exceeded the expectations set before them! Students will soon be presenting their findings to their classmates over various topics such as: "The Black Plague and its Effects on Europe," "Fashion in Ancient Rome," "The Development of European Weapons through the Modern Age," "Pirates on the North Sea," and "The Effects of Introduced Species on European Society."

"It's given us an opportunity to research something we haven't had a chance to look at. I've always wanted to learn about World War II, and this gives me a chance to do that," says Calvin Hutchinson, who's presenting a slideshow over the deadly conflict.

"It's a great way for Mr. Meester to know that we know what he taught about European history and how to research," says Camren Madden, who's presenting over modern German military technology.

"It's good learning about how to research and being able to use all styles of learning," say Alivia Hansen and Hayley Mulford, who are researching the Eiffel Tower and European Artists, respectively.

Students will be presenting these research projects the week before spring break. Mr. Meester would like to thank the students for their hard work, and parents for their help with their students' projects.



Sixth-graders diligently researching their European History projects.

## Standards-Based Grading in Middle School Math Classrooms

by Ms. Paige Hageman

Last year the high school math teachers researched ways to improve mathematical learning, and came across standards-based grading. The 7th- through 12th-grade math teachers brainstormed how standards-based grading would look in our classrooms and started implementation last year. We are hoping to see a growth in mathematics knowledge, due to the fact that students get a chance to improve upon their knowledge before moving to the next standard. Students also understand more about their own learning because they know what the standard is and how to improve. The conversation in the classroom has quickly turned from points-focused to knowledge-focused. This year our classes have gone fully-fledged standards-based grading, with some differences to account for the developmental changes between middle school and high school students.

Some differences between high school and middle school math classes include homework, re-assessing, and calculating the final grade. In high school there is no grade for homework, but in middle school homework still counts for 10% of the overall grade. Similar to the high school, students take assessments three times, but the final attempt is the final grade, with no consideration to the first two attempts. In 8th grade, if the students fails the first two attempts at a standard, they are given a review and requested for Cadet Time or study hall to fill any gaps in knowledge. This proactive approach allows students to take responsibility for their learning before it affects their grade. If a student does fail the final attempt, they are required to review and reassess with the teacher. In high school, a student will be more responsible for re-assessing, but middle school students benefit from a more guided approach as they gain responsibility for their learning.

Some benefits of this standards-based grading approach include increased levels of mathematical understanding, more opportunities for success, and better feedback for instruction. In the traditional grading system, students would learn a new topic for a couple weeks, take a high-stakes test immediately following instruction, and (hopefully) spend hours studying for one test. With this standards-based grading system, assessments are fewer questions and worth fewer points. Eighth-grade student Audrey Bolhuis says, "I like it because it only tests you on what you need to know and doesn't give you a ton of extra questions that aren't important." With standards-based grading, the first time students take an assessment, we do not expect them to be experts yet. They have just learned the material, and standards-based grading gives them more time to practice and understand before their grade is affected. Students also track their progress throughout their three attempts so they can see how they've grown and focus on problem areas.

Students can also have multiple opportunities to show what they know, instead of a high-stakes test. Even if students do not earn the score they desire on the third attempt, they can review and reassess to earn their desired score. This gives students more opportunities to be successful, and has resulted in fewer failing grades. Students also learn mathematics standards at a deeper level because they are expected to retain the knowledge for all three assessments. If there is a misconception, students have multiple opportunities to close the knowledge gap. Another 8th-grade student, Gabby Meister, said, "It's easy. It tells you what you need to work on so you can do better next time."

Overall, standards-based grading has been beneficial for students and teachers. The teacher can record scores in the gradebook to communicate with parents their child's level of learning before it af-

Power Standard	Progress	Progress	Final
1. Solve or rearrange equations with one or more variables.	6	6	6
2. Understand the relationships between transformations and congruent or similar figures.	0	6	7
3. Use graphs to represent and interpret linear equations.	6		7.5
4. Use informal arguments to establish facts about the angle sum and exterior angle of triangles, about the angles created when parallel lines are cut by a transversal, and the angle-angle criterion for similarity of triangles.	1	6	7
5. Use functions to represent various problems, situations, and contexts.	6	1	6
*6. Understand roots of numbers and how they are related to other numbers.	7		
*7. Understand the relationship between volumes of 3D shapes.			
8. Understand and use properties of exponents to solve problems.			
*9. Use various data displays to display and analyze data about a population.			

Student example of a score sheet. Students record every attempt and track their progress.

fects their grade. Teachers can also tailor instruction to meet the needs of the students, based on which skills they are lacking according to the assessments. Students have more opportunities to succeed in math class, and retain knowledge for longer periods instead of forgetting it as soon as they take the test. Students also have more responsibility for their grade and can take on extra learning opportunities to improve their understanding. The math team is looking forward to future years where we can continually perfect the standards-based grading system and reap the benefits from students partaking in this system for consecutive years.

## “Jack and the Beanstalk” Mini Fairy Tale Unit

by Mrs. Karla Isaacson

Once upon a time there was a language class that decided to read “The Big Beanstalk” by Pam Q. Stuckey and Stephen P. Quigley. The students read the story several times to build their fluency and expressive language skills. They also had the opportunity to learn the following new vocabulary words: beanstalk, giant, yelled, breakfast, greed, and gold. These three students did many activities with this story like sequencing, word sorts, cloze passages, and a writing activity.

Along with reading this story, they also watched two different versions of the original “Jack and the Beanstalk,” where they learned that an ogre was like a giant and that he hid in many different places like in the oven and behind a big clay pot. We also made a compare and contrast chart of the original story that we read in conjunction with the other versions that we watched.

To integrate STEM-related lessons into our unit, we decided to see if we could grow beanstalks that were as tall as Jack’s beanstalk. Each student painted two pots and planted their bean seeds. We will watch them grow, measure and graph their growth, and see if their beanstalks get as tall as Jack’s did in the story. Next, we are going use our engineering and building skills to construct a parachute to help Jack escape from the giant. Each student will be given household and office supply items like plastic sacks, yarn or embroidery floss, tissue paper, rubber bands, coffee filters, dental floss, and newspapers to build their parachutes. The students will then test their parachutes to see if they can float for several seconds and escape from the giant.

Since there are two sides to every story, this week we are going to listen to the story, “Trust Me, Jack’s Beanstalk Stinks!: The Story of Jack and the Beanstalk as Told by the Giant” by Eric Braun and illustrated by Christian Bernardini. We will talk about character traits of both Jack and the Giant. Then we will create a new class story about Jack and the Giant for others to read. In conclusion, we will read aloud a play and act it out to help build our oral reading and expressive language skills.



Jorge, Jordan, and Levi are painting their bean pots.

## Riverbend Recycling

by Mrs. Tammy Merklin

When winter makes you feel BLUE, start getting ready for spring by going GREEN and recycling!

Americans use about 100 billion plastic bags each year. Many people have an assorted collection of them in their home. Some may be reused, but many are thrown away only to be buried in a landfill—out of sight—but not out of the environment. How-



ever, plastic bags don’t need to take over your house or leave a lasting effect on the world. There’s now another option! Just bring your extra plastic bags to Riverbend Middle School.

The 6th grade is partnering with Fareway and applying for a “Build with Bags” grant. The main purpose is to help increase the amount of plastic bags that are recycled by collecting them. This, in turn, decreases the amount of plastic bags thrown away. The collected bags will be donated to Plastic Recycling of Iowa Falls where they will be transformed into various plastic products. The grant would allow benches, tables, planters, or other recycled plastic products to be purchased. The hope is that these items could be placed in an area outside the front doors of Riverbend to help the grass space that is available truly become green.



## Middle School Honor Choir Gets Ready for April 12 Performance

by Mr. Harvey Nicholson

Twelve 7th- and 8th-graders will be singing April 12th in Huxley, Iowa, as part of the Central District Iowa Choral Directors Association Honor Choir. Students were selected based on their desire to sing and contribution to their respective groups. Students will receive extra rehearsal time and other resources. Each student will need to memorize each of the challenging pieces for the concert and go to the festival prepared to make music! The music includes a modern gospel piece, music sung in Latin and Swedish, and two modern American Folk tunes. The concert should prove to be uplifting and inspirational.



L-R Back Row: Mr. Nicholson, Director. Basses: Ryan Hemmersbach, Kaden Rodamaker (Not Pictured Perry Isaacson). Sopranos: Sage Heitland, Katelyn Miller, Kendall Duit.  
L-R Front Row: Tenors: James Nicholson, Caleb Stauffer, Logan Awe. Altos: Gabriella Scholte, Samara Senn (Not Pictured Alexis Vivier).

## FFA members have busy end to winter season and look forward to spring events

by Mr. Doug Dodd

The Iowa Falls-Alden FFA recently competed in their traditional FFA Leadership Contests. This year, 9th-grader Emma Bartling earned a gold rating at the sub-district event in the area of extemporaneous speaking. Unfortunately she did not advance. In the area of public speaking junior Jacob Fjeld also earned gold and was selected as the third-place alternate in his area. Sophomore Mikayla Fjeld tried her hand at radio broadcasting and reached the gold level with a second-place finish, which allowed her to compete at the District FFA event on March 4th in Belmond.

At the District event, Mikayla repeated her performance against higher rate competi-

tion and still placed second to advance to the State event to be held at Iowa State University in April.

Jacob also participated as a district officer candidate where he was elected as the North Central District Vice President. Jacob will serve his term during the next 12 months to assist members from across the north central region of Iowa. Congratulations to Jacob!



The first weekend in March the IFA FFA held their 6th Heart of Iowa Blowout cattle show at the ECC Equestrian Center. Nearly 120 head of cattle from across the state came to exhibit their animals and compete in showmanship competitions. The event is co-sponsored by the Iowa Falls-Alden Ag Booster Club and the Agriculture Students from ECC. Funds raised from the event will be used to sponsor IFA FFA members to attend the Washington Leadership Conference this summer. The Chapter would like to thank everyone who helped or sponsored the event.

## Art Connections: Local and Global at Riverbend

by Mrs. Chelsie Meyer

Students in art have throughout this year been enriched through several local artists as well as global connections. These connections help to show students the importance of art beyond our classroom walls.

International Artist Day was celebrated with a collaborative project with the Pat Clark Art Collection. Kristie Nevenhoven helped to foster this project. We video chatted with Colleen Rose and her art class from Ontario, Canada. Kristie introduced our Pat Clark Art Collection and told them about the international artists that we have in the collection. Kristie brought in a piece from the artist Man Ray, "Sequidilla," a lithograph.

Lithography is a type of printmaking, so both groups of students worked on their own prints with the intention of exchanging this artwork. Our students had a chance to ask the kids questions about Canada. They asked questions about the weather and groceries, among other things. Colleen Rose told our students that many people fish and hunt for most of their food and that orange juice in Canada can be around seven dollars! Mrs. Meyer sent our students' prints and a care package with arctic grape gum, caramel M&M's and coffee M&M's, as these are not sold in Canada. We just recently received our care package and prints from our Canadian friends! It contained some great artwork and also chocolate Smarties and ketchup chips! It was a great project and we are thankful for our local Pat Clark Art Collection and all the ways it helps to increase art within our community and other communities on a global level!

Thomas Burchfield is attending the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He came in to share his artwork, thought process, and ideas with Riverbend students. Students in art class were just getting into making their own music using an app called Garageband. Thomas had actually brought in music that he had just designed. He also shared with art students the electronic keyboard that he attaches to his computer to be able to make his music. The piece that really got students thinking about this connection of art and music was when he shared with us how he took photos of various images and then manipulated those in Photoshop to create a story that unfolded on a CD cover. It was so creative



Thomas Burchfield sharing with 7th grade students

and really blew us away how connected his artwork was.

Vicky Arndt is an amazing fiber artist who resides in Iowa Falls. Her passion for fiber arts and knowledge base is truly incredible. Vicky helped guide sixth-grade students with a new felting project. She brought in various fibers to teach the students about the difference in synthetic fibers and natural fibers. Students learned about how wool is fire resistant and repels water quickly. She even showed students how to spin fibers with her spinning wheel. Students could add designs on top of their felted project by needle felting too! Vicky even helped teach art club how to crochet. Here is what students had to say about felting:

"What I liked about felting is that you really had to think about what you were doing and each piece was unique to each student's own personality." - Kenedi Okones

"I like that we got to learn about something different, and not something that you think you would learn in art class." - Caitlyn Archer

Local artists and these collaborations help show students how art is real and relevant and thriving within their own communities and around the world. The passion and enthusiasm for showing students that art is so much more than just a class at school has helped me to expose students to what pursuing an art career looks like. Thank you for your continued support of the arts!

Be on the lookout on our classroom Facebook page, Riverbend Middle School Art, for more information about the sculptures that the sculpture group students are designing for Linear Park in Iowa Falls!



Vicky Arndt helping teach art club students to crochet



Vicky Arndt with 6th-graders and their wool felted projects

## Pat Clark Art Youth Event

Congratulations to Haylee Vogel, Caileigh Brown and Skyla Steffen as their artwork has been chosen by Riverbend Middle School teachers to be showcased in the fourth annual student Pat Clark Art Youth Event! They had an opening reception on Friday, March 8, at the Carnegie-Ellsworth Building, and their artwork will be on display until the beginning of April.



Sarah Day sharing her artwork with students

In the middle school division, Haley Vogel got second place and Caleigh Brown got third place.

Sarah Day was the visiting artist this year. She was at Riverbend on Monday, March 4, sharing her time and talents with our current art students! Her artwork is for sale and on display with the students' artwork! Check out her work at [smallfoxstudios.weebly.com](http://smallfoxstudios.weebly.com).

## Riverbend Middle School Retreat



Riverbend Middle School hosted an all-day Youth Frontiers "Courage" Retreat on Thursday, January 17, for our seventh-grade students at Riverbend Middle School.



Riverbend Middle School would like to thank our community and high school student volunteers who helped facilitate our 7th-Grade Youth Frontiers "Courage" Retreat and help make it successful.



## Statewide Assessment is Approaching...

### Please help our students

### "Do Their Best When They Test"

by Mr. Jeff Burchfield, Principal

During the first two weeks of April, students in the Iowa Falls and Alden school districts will be taking the new statewide assessment, the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP). This assessment takes the place of the Iowa Assessments, which was formerly known as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Iowa Test of Educational Development. The purpose of these assessments is to obtain a broader picture of student progress and examine student academic growth. Results of these tests will be included in the Every Student Succeeds (ESSA) Progress Report, formerly known as the Iowa School Report Card.

Building off a testing schedule that we piloted five years ago for the Iowa Assessments, Riverbend Middle School students will take most of their tests on one day, with periodic and active breaks built in to keep the minds fresh and bodies active. Tests will be taken in the areas of reading, language, math, and science (8th grade only). Activities will include walking the halls, Wii games, the student lounge, and gym activities. The specific day for most of the assessments at Riverbend Middle School will be Tuesday, April 9, with make-ups scheduled for Thursday, April 11.

Steps will be taken to ensure that your son or daughter will have a serious and quiet atmosphere in which to take the assessments. Students will utilize their Chromebooks for the assessments, so a supply of number two pencils for the tests are no longer necessary.

We ask you to encourage your student to do his/her best when he/she tests so that you, your student, the school, and the State of Iowa receive a true reflection of each student's progress. Please make an effort that your student maintain a typical or routine schedule at home during the testing period, such as maintaining normal bedtime hours. Having a healthy breakfast on the morning of testing will also help your student perform at an optimal level. Have your student dress comfortably on the test day. Remind your student to read the directions to the test carefully, to relax before and during the test, and to check over the answers before completing the test.

We would also ask you to keep outside-of-school appointments for your student to a minimum if at all possible during this testing time. Make-up times will be available, but testing goes much smoother when all students are present for the entire testing session. If we can get your help in reducing absences and tardiness and from not scheduling competing activities that may be unusually demanding of your student's energy, then it will be easier for your student to understand that these tests are important and to do their best.

In advance of the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress, students will use a class period to understand the importance of the tests and how the results are used, understand some tips for taking tests, and take practice tests to familiarize themselves with the testing process.

If you have any questions on the testing schedule, feel free to contact your student's teachers or the middle school office. Also, if you feel your student needs additional accommodations for the best opportunity for success, please contact the middle school.

Thank you for your part in allowing our students to "Do their best when they test."

## 7th/8th Boys Track

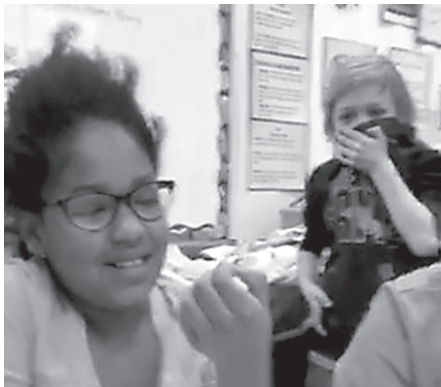
Date	Opponent	Site	Time
Mon., Apr. 15	Clear Lake/Hampton-Dumont/St. Ed's	Iowa Falls	4:30
Tues., Apr. 16	Dodger Relays	Ft. Dodge	4:30
Tues., Apr. 23	Algona/Clarion-Goldfield/Clear Lake	Clear Lake	4:30
Sat., Apr. 27	Jim Bayse Relays	Hampton	9:00
Mon., Apr. 29	Clear Lake/Humboldt/Webster City	Webster City	4:30
Sat., May 4	Little Eagle Relays	Eagle Grove	9:00
Fri., May 10	NCC Meet	Hampton	4:00
Tues., May 14	NCC rain date		

## 7th/8th Girls Track

Date	Opponent	Site	Time
Tues., Apr. 16	Algona/Clarion-Goldfield/St. Ed's	Ft. Dodge	4:30
Tues., Apr. 23	Dodger Relays	Ft. Dodge	4:30
Thurs., Apr. 26	Clarion-Goldfield/Clear Lake/Humboldt	Humboldt	4:30
Sat. April 27	Jim Bayse Relays	Hampton	9:00
Sat., May 4	Little Eagle Relays	Eagle Grove	9:00
Tues., May 8	Clarion-Goldfield/Webster City/Eagle Grove	Iowa Falls	4:30
Fri., May 11	NCC Meet	Clarion	4:00
Tues., May 14	NCC rain date		



## ROCK RUN ELEMENTARY



### What is BUGGING You?

*From 4th grade*

Should bugs be added to the school lunch menu? (No, this is not being considered for real.) That is what the fourth-graders had to do in a writing assignment recently. Students are currently working on writing their opinions and supporting it with reasons and examples. They had to read two articles, one that featured the positive reasons why people all over the world eat bugs and the other article sharing more of the negative reasons as to why people don't, or shouldn't eat bugs. After getting over the initial, "EWWW! Disgusting" factor, students really enjoyed learning about both sides.

Believe it or not, many students felt like bugs should be added to the menu. The bugs are a source of protein. They can be prepared in many different forms. Eating the bugs after they have been fried and possibly marinated in special sauces makes them no different than eating many other Americanized foods.

On the flip side, other students just couldn't stomach the idea of having dead bugs available to eat. Popular comments were, "They are gross, dead or alive," "The thought of seeing its eyes and little legs before I eat it just creeps me out!" "A bug is not going to give me that much protein, I will eat something else to fill that need." and finally, "Allergic reactions are a big concern and may not be safe for some people."

In the end, we can't just read about eating bugs and form an opinion on it without trying them ourselves, and that is exactly what we did! All the students had the opportunity to try a grasshopper prepared similarly to how the article suggests eating them. (Cajun style) if they wanted to. There were many brave souls who made the attempt. Several just felt the little grasshopper was too spicy. Others had no problem chewing it up and gulping it down with a smile!

### Rock Run Twitter

Looking for another way to stay informed with Rock Run events and activities? Try the Rock Run Twitter feed @CadetsRockRun

### Watch D.O.G.S.

Rock Run Watch D.O.G.S program is up and running. Watch D.O.G.S.® is an innovative program being used by schools across America which helps them to be positively impacted by the committed involvement of fathers and father-figures in their student's life. Dads have the opportunity to spend one day a year at the school to be a positive male role model and to provide an extra set of eyes and ears. We look forward to seeing many dads at school.



### Third-Grade Science

Third-grade students have started their heredity unit. Students were asked to find out if their parents had a widow's peak, bent pinkies, attached earlobes and if they can roll their tongue. After they collected the data, students made a bracelet with beads representing these traits for both parents and for themselves. When they were done they could easily see where they got their traits. Some were very similar to their mom or their dad and a few were a combination both. Next up, a post party to tally their data on these characteristics as a class. We will be analyzing this data and making generalizations about these traits.



### Rock Run Ritz

Each trimester the classroom with the most points for good behavior is treated to a special lunch. This trimester the theme was law enforcement. Students were able to take a "mug shot" picture in a photo booth. Police officers came to visit with the students as they ate. They were also able to have their fingerprints taken. The students enjoyed being served their lunch by volunteers and they got to have ice cream for dessert.





## Peer Helper Program

Kids love to help other kids, and at Rock Run we have decided to give them the opportunity to do just that through a peer helper program. Fifth-grade students applied and were chosen by the fifth-grade teachers and Mrs. Williams. These students have been meeting and learning how to help younger students with conflicts, promote kindness, and mentor a younger student. Our peer helpers have been going into second, third and fourth grade classrooms to talk about spreading kindness and how the peer helpers can help our Rock Run students. They are ready and willing to sit down with students to give a listening ear about friendship troubles, solve friendship conflicts between students, and just provide positive one-on-one interaction with an older student. We are so excited for our peer helpers to be positive leaders here at Rock Run!



## Rock Run Art Room

Here it is, everyone's favorite unit of the year, CLAY! We have been underway with clay for a couple of weeks now and I'm seeing some great things coming from each and every grade.

During the clay unit students learn so many things, starting with how to build with clay. Second grade focused on the pinch method and they learned how to create a pinch pot. From there they transformed the single pot into whatever they liked; from animals to angels we had some awesome creations from 2nd grade! In 3rd grade they learned the slab method by rolling the clay with a rolling pin into an even sheet of clay; students made plates, mugs, bowls, and many other unique creations! Fourth grade focused on the coil method, which is the most time consuming but also creates wonderful results. Most 4th grade students created a coil pot, although some students got extra creative and even made



animals out of coils! Fifth grade rounded out the clay unit by reviewing all three methods and choosing one or more to complete their project. I'm so proud of how far 5th grade has come during this unit; many students gained a lot of self-confidence through creating with clay this year.

Students not only learned how to create with clay but they also learned how to glaze their clay, which is a type of paint used with clay to create a shiny and smooth surface. They showed great dedication and patience needed to paint not only one, or two, but three layers of glaze in order to get a great clay outcome! Besides the lessons students learned while creating, they also gained a lot of valuable art vocabulary, have become expert cleaners, and their confidence and craftsmanship have grown immensely!

I can't wait to see how their clay pieces turn out! Make sure to mark your calendars with Fine Arts Night, in conjunction with the Spring Concert on Thursday, April 25th, at the IFA High School Student Center and Auditorium. Come see some of the wonderful art your student has been making!



## New State Assessment

*Written by Dr. Jon McKenzie*

In 1935, the "Iowa Test of Basic Skills" (ITBS) was first administered in Iowa. Students in grades six through eight completed the ITBS tests in subjects such as reading comprehension, spelling and mathematics. These assessments were state of the art. Continuing with level of excellence the "Iowa Tests of Educational Development" (ITED) were developed in 1942. They were first administered to students in grades nine through 12, and again in subjects such as reading comprehension and mathematics. Generations of Iowa students completed these tests and they quickly became recognized as nationally accepted standardized basic achievement tests across grades K-12.

Students across Iowa, the United States and other countries continued to complete these fill-in-the-bubble, number two pencil tests annually. Updates were made over the years, but the names (ITBS and ITED) remained the same, as did their purpose. The tests measured student academic achievement across a variety of subjects for multiple generations. Eventually in Iowa, they were also used for accountability purposes during the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) era.

The next updated version of these assessments was called the "Iowa Assessments." These tests were first administered in Iowa in 2011. Again, their purpose was to measure student achievement across a variety of subjects and grade levels and for NCLB accountability purposes.

The newest version of these tests, developed at Iowa Testing Programs, will be called the "Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress" (ISASP). These tests will be administered in Iowa starting in the spring of 2019. However, there are only a few similarities between the newest version and the later versions. If desired, students are still able to use a number two pencil when filling in the bubble answer sheets when testing in reading and math in grades 3-11, and science in grades five, eight, and 10. However, this is where the similarities end.

There are many upgrades with these new tests. For instance, students will be able to complete all tests using a computer. In addition, a writing test will be added to these assessments in grades three through 11. Further, thanks to impressive improvements in scoring technology, all tests can be scored using technology, including the writing tests. The content of these tests will be aligned to current standards being taught across the state.

Additional improvements with these online tests include a variety of useful tools built into the computer operating system that will aid students when taking the tests. These tools will help students with special needs, English Learners, as well as all other students better demonstrate what they know and are able to do. Some of these tools include a text-



to-speech option, built-in highlighters, enlarged print, as well as some Spanish versions. More state-of-the-art updates are scheduled in the future, such as an adaptive version of the test.

Current Iowa students will be the first to sit for the new ISASP assessments.

In a few short years, these different versions of assessments (ITBS, ITED, IA, and ISASP) may serve Iowa students and educators for 100 years! It is unlikely that any other state can make such a claim.

*Dr. Jon McKenzie is the Director of Assessment & Comprehensive Improvement with Cen-*

*tral Rivers Area Education Agency (AEA). He can be reached at [jmckenzie@centralriversaea.org](mailto:jmckenzie@centralriversaea.org). Central Rivers AEA supports educators, parents, and the communities we serve as we work together toward one ultimate goal: to improve student learning. We provide support in the areas of quality classroom materials, curriculum planning, best practices in teaching and learning, safe and caring learning environment, appropriate educational opportunities for all learners, technology planning, professional learning, assessment, special education, leadership development, and more. Learn more at [www.centralriversaea.org](http://www.centralriversaea.org).*

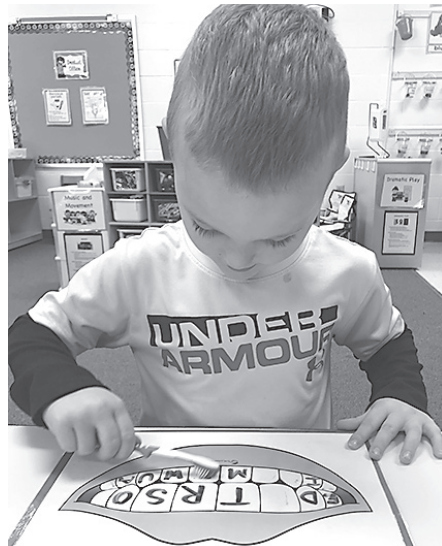
## PINEVIEW SCHOOL

### Dental Health in Preschool

Friday, March 22, Dr. Quinn Hoversten visited the 4-year-old preschool classes at Pineview to share his knowledge of dental health. Dr. Quinn read a story, taught us how to properly take care of our teeth, showed us his dental tools, and told us what to expect when visiting the dentist. He used Tony the Pony, a puppet, to demonstrate what he does when children visit his office. Dr. Quinn answered students' questions and helped alleviate the fears many children face when visiting the dentist for the first time. Dr. Quinn and his office provided students with their own dental goodie bag to continue good dental hygiene at home.



Preschool teachers continued to study dental health the following week. Students have been learning how to properly take care of their teeth through reading stories, participating in small group literacy and math activities, and exploring a dramatic play center that is designed to imitate a real dentist's office.



### Sight Word Crazy!

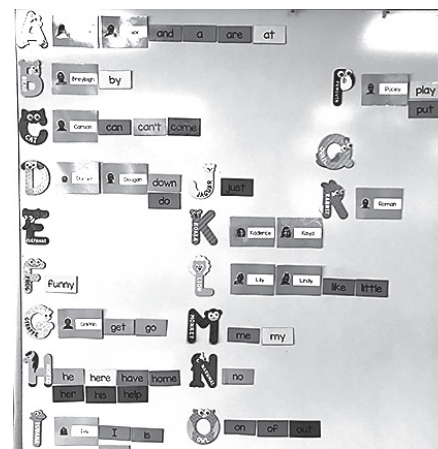
Kindergarten...where reading begins! As students enter kindergarten these days, more and more importance is placed on the opportunity for them to learn reading skills each day. We are very fortunate at Pineview to have a large reading block each morning for students to excel. Students work hard to learn their letters and letter sounds to read words, but they also focus in on several sight words.

Sight words are recognized as a whole and are instantly read by a reader. Sight words are categorized as high-frequency words, because they occur most frequently in our language

each day. THE would be an example of a sight word! Kindergarten students are challenged to learn and read without hesitation at least 50 sight words throughout the school year!

It is noted that one of the most effective and powerful reading tools that parents and teachers can help children develop is sight word recognition. When a child is able to grasp and identify sight words, they are well on their way to becoming a thriving reader. Sight words are critical to reading not only because they are used so frequently, but also because many of them cannot easily be sounded out or illustrated.

Watch for sight word lists to come home with your kindergarten student in their Leadership Notebook and PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE! Parents are their child's first teacher and biggest cheerleader!



### Student-Led Conferences in 1st Grade

Did you ever think a first-grader could lead a parent-teacher conference? Well, the answer is YES! On March 4th and March 7th, Pineview Elementary held their parent-teacher conferences. However, it wasn't the teachers leading the conferences; it was the students! First-grade students practiced and prepared weeks in advance for their conference. The students practiced introducing their guests to the teacher, showing goal pages they have worked on all school year in their Leadership Notebooks, showing their improvements in writing, and sharing a self-evaluation they completed. The students enjoyed the opportunity to be a part of the conference and were proud to lead. First-grade students displayed true leadership skills while leading their conference.

## Pineview Volunteers Are Awesome!!

On behalf of the staff and students at Pineview Elementary School, we would like to take this time to thank all of the volunteers who took the opportunity to help out at school. With this help and support from parents and other volunteers, the teachers and students were better able to focus on teaching and learning. Working together with the classroom teachers, parent volunteers:

- Read individually or in small groups with children.
- Participated in our Watch D.O.G.S. program.
- Assisted with small or large group instruction in the classroom.
- Worked with children on phonemic awareness and phonics activities.
- Prepared materials for classroom instruction.
- Laminated materials for teachers.
- Assisted with building-wide projects.
- Participated in fun and exciting classroom parties.

Everyone at Pineview Elementary School would like to extend our greatest appreciation for the hard work and dedication of all of our volunteers. This year alone we had over 100 different volunteers working in our building at different times, yet we know that every parent has contributed to the success of our school in a meaningful way. We look forward to having you be a part of our school again next year. Thanks for making a difference!

## Kindergarten Round-Up Parent Information

Tuesday, April 2nd, at 6:30 p.m. is our Kindergarten Round-Up Parent Night for the 2019-2020 school year. Parents of students who will be 5 years old on or before Sept. 15th, 2019, are invited to hear a presentation about our kindergarten and kindergarten-prep programs as well as register their child for the upcoming Kindergarten Orientation.

During the meeting, parents are asked to fill out a "Parent Observation Form" with

information about their child. These forms will be used by the teacher to gain a little bit of information about your child prior to starting kindergarten.

If you have questions about our kindergarten program, please call the Pineview Elementary School office at 648-6410 or stop by to pick up registration forms.

## Grandfriends' Day At Pineview

On Thursday, April 25th, Pineview will be having our annual Grandfriends' Day starting at 2:00 that afternoon. Grandfriends will have the opportunity to do some special activities in the classrooms. We look forward to seeing all of our Grandfriends on April 25th!

## IT'S TIME TO SIGN UP FOR PINEVIEW PRESCHOOL FOR 2019-2020!

Spread the word...if you or someone you know plans to have a child attend preschool, be sure to call the Pineview office as soon as possible at 641-648-6410, if you haven't done so already. We need his/her name on our preschool list so we can be prepared before August.

Three-year-olds will meet 2 mornings per week, either Monday/Thursday or Tuesday/Friday. The hours are 8:20-11:15 a.m. We are anticipating tuition will be approximately \$51 per month, starting September 1, and also hope to offer scholarships for those who qualify. The child must be 3 by September 15, 2019.

Four-year-olds will meet 4 afternoons per week: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. The hours are 12:15-3:10 p.m. The State Wide Voluntary Preschool Grant pays tuition for the 4-year-olds. The child must be 4 by September 15, 2019.

We hope to be able to offer mid-day transportation for our preschool students again next school year, but a final decision on this will be made at a later date.

We will need a copy of your child's birth certificate, and latest physical and immunization information before they start preschool at the end of August.

# ALDEN ELEMENTARY

## Buggy About Science

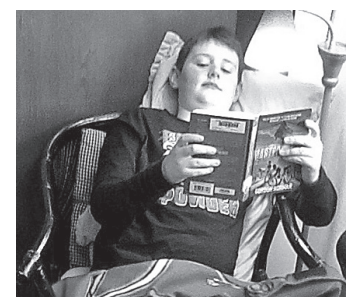
Kindergarten students in Alden have been studying animals in science this winter. We started our unit of study with goldfish and guppies. Students observed the fish and discovered what they need to survive as well as how to care for them. We then learned about 2 different types of water snails. Students were able to observe both types of snails and discussed how they are the same and how they are different. Red worms and night crawlers were a favorite of our students! They enjoyed observing the movement of these creatures. We also created a small compost in plastic jars in our classrooms and were able to observe this process over a couple weeks.

We concluded our winter study of animals by comparing and contrasting two different types of isopods: pill bugs and sow bugs. We look forward to hatching chicks in our classrooms when we return from spring break.



## Alden Elementary Read-a-Thon

Our school-wide goal this year is for all students to grow from fall to spring on their FAST reading assessments. To encourage students to practice reading in order to meet their goal and to show its importance, we had a day full of reading. Students brought favorite stuffed animals to read to, snacks, pillows, blankets and favorite books for reading time. In addition to students doing a variety of reading activities in their classrooms, there was one room that had continuous reading going on. Different groups read in the room from 8:40-3:00. Students learned that in order to meet their goals they have to have an action plan. They definitely enjoyed reading.



## Exercising in Preschool

Preschool students had a chance to learn new and different ways to exercise this week. Our morning class had guest speaker, Jessie Weaver, teach us some Yoga and she was impressed at what we could do! Our afternoon class had their first bus ride to UTT in Iowa Falls to learn different ways to jump, stretch and roll our body. We are thankful to both groups for taking their time to share with us their knowledge about our bodies and exercise.

This wrapped up a five-week-long study on Bodies and Exercise for all of our preschoolers. Many of our students learned that they like push-ups the best. We all know what muscles, bones, teeth, healthy food and exercise can do for our bodies! Here are some great words to live by: "Don't eat yucky moldy stuff" "Always exercise" and "Relax." Good things to remember!



## 5th and 6th Grade Honor Choirs

Students from Alden's 5th and 6th grade will represent their school at two honor choirs this spring. Eleven sixth-grade students are preparing for the Iowa Choral Directors Association Central District Honor Choir on April 12. Guest conductor for the event is Erica Seeley from Waukee. Students from eight central Iowa schools will join together for this annual event. Alden singers include: Trevor Bailey, Sarina Burgin, Nayshka Carrion, Nova Grimm, Joseph Maine, Emma Miller, Nell Neubauer, Yaniel Nunez, Cidni Phipps, Ellie Slauson and Joshua Vargas.

Nine fifth-graders will participate in the Midwest Children's Choir on April 26. The biennial event is held at Cy Stephens Auditorium in Ames. Established in 1996 by the Ames Children's Choirs (ACC) program, the Midwest Children's Choir Festival (MCCF) provides the opportunity for young singers in the Midwest to hear and perform with nationally and internationally recognized choirs and performers.

Dr. Elizabeth McFarland, active clinician, presenter, and choral conductor from Southeast Missouri State University, will be the guest conductor for this year's event. Approximately 350 select singers will participate in the festival. The concert will feature three guest choirs on the first half of the program and a mass choir of 350 singers including select singers from Iowa schools and community choirs in grades 5-7 on the second half of the program. Alden fifth-graders include: Kristina Burgin, Bella Cobb, Ryleigh Jass, Anya Miller, Hailey Robison, Lindsey Russell, Addi Venner, Alyssa Vierkandt, and Tess Wibholm.

## Alden Elementary Takes the Win in the Super Bowl of Giving

Alden Elementary students participated in this year's Super Bowl, but not in the traditional sense! Shopping carts were decorated for the Patriots and the Rams, and then displayed in our hallways. Students were challenged to bring in canned goods/non-perishable items and place them in the cart of their favorite team. Rivalries were bitter, and the game was close, but in the end, the Rams cart far outweighed the Patriots cart!

Even though our Super Bowl prediction didn't come true, the students and staff collected more than 400 items for our Alden Food Pantry. It is a win-win for everybody! Way to work together as a team, Alden Elementary!



## Flat Stanley Sees THE WORLD!

Students in Mrs. Cooper's 2nd-grade classroom are seeing the world through different eyes this month. After reading the book "Flat Stanley" by Jeff Brown, the kids made their own Stanleys and they have been sent out into the world. Each Stanley leaves in an envelope complete with paperwork to be filled out about his travels, and a special letter to the recipient. The class has been working on Flat Stanley writing activities, language arts and social studies skills. The destinations of all Stanleys are plotted on a giant map, and oh boy, does that Stanley get around! He has been to Iceland, Jamaica, Texas, Tennessee, Buenos Aires, Michigan, Ohio, NYC, England, and many more fabulous places! Stanley has worked with police dispatches, played Pickleball, cruised on an ocean liner, explored the fjords of Iceland, competed at state wrestling tournaments, went to dance camp, tried out for a commercial, ridden a longhorn, and oh so many other fun and exciting activities. The best part is, when each Stanley returns to Alden Elementary he comes in a box or package loaded full of information, postcards, maps, and treats for the class! The children are learning so much and look forward to mail delivery every day! Maybe you would like to answer one of the student's writing prompts! If you could go anywhere in the world in an envelope, just like Stanley, where would you choose to travel?



## We "Donut" Know What We Would Do Without our Amazing Custodians!

The Alden Student Lighthouse Team organized an appreciation day for our fabulous custodians. Thanks to their hard work, our building sparkles and is always an inviting place for staff, students and visitors. Besides keeping everything in tip-top shape, they do countless other chores and favors for us throughout the busy workday. Students decorated the custodian's office door with posters and donuts were provided for Mr. Fiscus and Mr. Henderson because...We truly "Donut" know how we would get by without them! Thanks again for all your hard work, guys! We appreciate you today and every day!





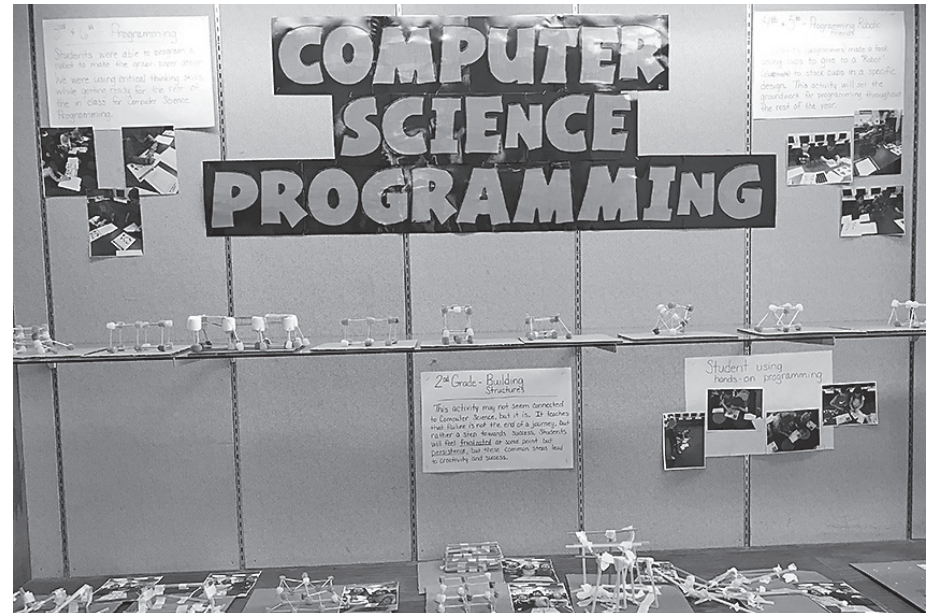
### Leaders Gather in Alden

Barack Obama, Jack Trice, Ronald Regan, Taylor Swift, and many other leaders gathered in the Alden gymnasium this winter. Visitors were invited in to hear about how each of them have developed their leadership skills. This all happened when Alden's 3rd and 4th graders were able to start a Wax Museum of Leaders! This was the first real chance to present for a large audience for many students. Our students spent several weeks working on researching, writing, problem-solving, flexibility, and creativity skills that would create a presentation they later performed in front of our community. Their goal was to find leaders and be able to present to others the leadership skills that helped develop them into the leaders they were or currently are! Students had so much fun being able to show their efforts in the project and realizing that they can show many similar traits to those of the leaders that they portrayed in the wax museum. After all, everyone can be a leader!

### Computer Science in Elementary School

As our world continues to change, we must also make changes to what our students are taught and expected to do. At Alden Elementary, students in kindergarten through 6th grade are spending the second half of the year learning more about computer science. Computer science is simply using technology to solve problems. Students use higher-level thinking skills like problem solving and analytical thinking while they collaborate and communicate with others.

One of the aspects of computer science is coding. Students began the semester by doing some "unplugged" lessons which did not use the computer. Students worked together to write a set of procedures to accomplish a task and developed a design plan to build structures. These tasks taught about cause and effect, algorithms, and persistence when attacking a problem. After the "unplugged" lessons, students have been using the coding application Code.org. Students learn the concepts of direction, looping, and conditional statements as they complete tasks. As they advance in the program, students can



create their own drawings and games using code.

The next step is for students to code robots to achieve tasks in the classroom. Students will use Dash and Dot robots to see how their programmed code works.

Students are very excited about programming. They are not only learning valuable skills that will help them in the future, but they are having fun solving real-life problems.

### Saturday Movie Morning

Alden Elementary Family Involvement Team sponsored a special Saturday Movie Morning at the Met Theater! After one very snowy drive to Iowa Falls, parents, students and school staff members were able to get together for Sergeant Stubby An American Hero! The true story of Stubby, a pup who served with American soldiers during WWI, was a patriotic hit with the Alden crowd! Movie passes, popcorn and drinks were provided to all movie-goers! Nearly 100 were in attendance to enjoy this fun activity!



### Check out these upcoming events from our amazing Family Involvement Team:

- Donuts for Dad- March 20th
- 7 Habits Family Night - April 2nd
- Muffins for Mom - April 26th
- Alden Elementary Family Picnic - May 13th