

# Communicator

January 2020



## Students Study Ecological Health of Local Streams

The Neillsville High School ecology class ends its semester-long course on January 23rd. However, the group has been involved in real world science for the past five months. Students in the course have been studying our local forests and streams. Using water chemistry and ecological concepts, the members of the class have measured phosphorus, dissolved oxygen, pH, and nitrogen levels in both Wedges Creek and the O'Neill. Students have studied the ecological health of the stream and discussed ways to improve it. The class also studied local forests to determine the habitat suitability for organisms such as a black bear. The group has ended the semester by constructing a self-sustaining enclosed ecosystem which encompasses all of the principals discussed in ecology throughout the semester.



### Important Dates

- |     |           |                              |
|-----|-----------|------------------------------|
| WED | <b>12</b> | Late Start: 10:05 AM         |
| FEB |           | No AM 4K                     |
| THU | <b>20</b> | Parent-Teacher Conferences   |
| FEB |           | 4:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.       |
| FRI | <b>21</b> | No School                    |
| FEB |           | Parent-Teacher Conferences   |
| SAT | <b>22</b> | FFA Alumni Donkey Basketball |
| FEB |           | Fieldhouse - 7 PM            |
| MON | <b>24</b> | No School                    |
| FEB |           | Holiday Break                |
| WED | <b>11</b> | Late Start: 10:05 AM         |
| MAR |           | No AM 4K                     |
| MON | <b>30</b> | No School                    |
| MAR |           | Teacher In-Service           |



## Superintendent's Message



**School on February 14<sup>th</sup>:** The original school calendar lists February 14<sup>th</sup> as a teacher professional development day. That date is no longer scheduled for professional development, so February 14<sup>th</sup> will be a regular school day in which students attend. That will mean the last scheduled day for school this year will move from June 5<sup>th</sup> to June 4<sup>th</sup>. Please contact your school principals with any questions.

**Time Flies:** It is incredible to think that the current school year is already half over, and the calendar year has already flipped to 2020. It was 20 years ago that I sat up in the school on New Year's Eve waiting for Y2K to shut down all of our computers and building systems, but fortunately for all, Y2K did not cause all of the chaos that we feared that it would.

**2019:** Now that the calendar year has moved from 2019 to 2020, it is a good time to reflect on many of the things that impacted our students in 2019. Author Tim Elmore writes that this past year, like all years, students experienced both positive and negative realities. He writes that some of the negatives experienced by students in 2019 were that mental health issues reached record levels in many areas. Research shows rising levels of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation among high school and college students. This is tremendously concerning as it indicates the amount of stress that kids feel. It is also important to realize that if we don't help kids develop healthy coping strategies that the problem will only get worse. Elmore also reports that the college entrance scandal has sent terrible messages to our kids. It was reported that more than 50 affluent parents offered bribes to brokers to get their kids into specific colleges. This sends a horrible message about cheating and the lack of

faith in our kids to accomplish things on their own. It also adds to the stress that kids have to perform to their parents' expectations. Another significant negative in Elmore's report is about the toll that vaping took on the psyche of both students and parents in 2019. Vaping and e-cigarettes became more popular than ever last year, and it took a horrible toll on children's health.

Elmore also reports on a number of positive realities regarding students in 2019. One of those positives is that students feel empowered to speak out about the things that matter to them. There were a number of student protests this past year on issues like climate change, voting rights, racial inequality, and guns and student safety. He also reports that students are inventing and innovating more than ever. Students created a record number of new apps and usable smart technology to help get things done faster and more efficiently. Some apps were created by children as young as eight years old.

*The original school calendar lists February 14<sup>th</sup> as a teacher professional development day. That date is no longer scheduled for professional development, so February 14<sup>th</sup> will be a regular school day in which students attend.*

These realities are all signs of the times, and all of us need to help our kids navigate through the realities that they will face. With patience, hard work, and encouragement we can help them all to succeed.

Thank you for all of your ongoing support of our children and community!

Happy 2020!

John Gaier  
Superintendent

## High School Principal's Message



I recently read an article, "[3 Unexpected Ways to Find Your Life Purpose](#)", by Shannon Kaiser. Shannon is a best-selling author, international entrepreneur coach, and a teacher. Her article was about finding your purpose in life. That's a BIG topic! Every school year I have hundreds, if not more, conversations with students, parents, and teachers about a wide array of topics. I hope that the following information somehow provides you with some thought-provoking material and helps us all think about what we do, what we want, and how we make things "happen" in our lives that get us to our own individual purpose.

In her article, Shannon states, "Do you feel lost or as if something is missing in your life? Maybe you want to make a bigger difference in the world than you feel you are, but you aren't sure how. So many of us walk through life, feeling numb and desperate for a deeper connection, but aren't sure how to get it." We make thousands of decisions every single day that impact us and those around us. Over the course of a lifetime those choices, whether we like it or not, will have defined our life's purpose. Shannon goes on to state that it isn't that our purpose isn't "figure-outable" and that we don't know what our purpose is; the problem is the way we try to find our purpose.

*"We can't think our way into our life's passion and purpose, we have to do our way in. This means taking steps toward what you want, and removing those things in your life that you don't want. If you are looking for your purpose and passion, stop looking and start doing." – Shannon Kaiser*

As a public educator for over 20 years, the future of each student that I have met is my passion. Every young person grows up and life will "happen". How can each of us, young and old, find our passion? Take action and start "doing". According to Shannon, "Nothing will happen if you don't take action to make it a reality". She goes on to say,

*"You can't think your way into finding your life purpose; you have to do your way into it. The more we act, the more we get clear on things. So instead of overthinking it -- Will this work out? Should I try that? What if I don't like it? What if I don't make money at it? Start taking steps toward your goals and start trying new things. This will help you get out of your own way. The experience is the reward; clarity comes through the process of exploring. Action is where you get results.*

*Many of us struggle because we try to find that ONE thing that we are meant to do; but trying to find only one thing is the reason why we feel like something is missing. The notion that we have only one thing we are meant for limits us from fulfilling our greatness. So start getting in touch with your passions! When you lead a passionate life you are living your life on purpose."*

Though I am not able to recall the specifics of every conversation that I've had with students over the years, I can tell you that many students are unsure of what they want for themselves after they leave school. That's completely understandable as none of us has a crystal ball! However, each of us has the ability by the choices we make every single day to move closer toward our purpose by finding those things we are passionate about and taking action.

As always, it's a great day to be a Neillsville Warrior! Have a safe winter season and may we all find our purpose!

Craig Anderson Ruskin  
High School Principal

## Middle School Principal's Message



Welcome to 2020! I hope this finds you excited and optimistic for another year. I don't know where the time goes, but as I type this, we are wrapping up the tail end of the first semester of the 2019-20 school year. The first half of this school year was eventful in the Middle School with field trips, guest speakers, celebrations, service projects, kindness activities, club activities, and sports; all in addition to continuous academic growth through daily coursework.

With the start of second semester, as with the start of the new year, we reflect back on what went well in the past year and set goals and hopes on what we would like to improve. During the second semester, we have much to look forward to.

The first being we are welcoming a new face to the Middle School, Mr. Bryce DeSmet. I am very happy to inform you that we were able to fill the 7th and 8th grade special education teacher position that we couldn't fill last summer due to a lack of applicants. This will allow us to move Mr. Michael Gaier back to the flexible behavioral position he held last year to serve students in both Elementary and Middle School. With the hiring of Mr. Bryce DeSmet to fill the 7th and 8th special education teacher position, it will ensure that students with non-behavioral IEPs in the Middle School are supported in the general education setting, as well as receiving the services that are outlined in their IEP to ensure their academic growth. To ensure a smooth transition, Mr. Bryce DeSmet will be starting with our school district as of Monday, January 20th. This will give a week for the students to get to know him and ease the transition to the second semester. The official transfer of special education caseload managers will take place on the first day of the second semester, January 27, 2020. I am confident that this is a positive addition for all students within Neillsville Middle School.

In addition, we currently have two service projects that we will be continuing into the second semester: marker recycling led by the 6th grade class and eye glass donation in partnership with PBIS and the Lion's Club.

On February 3rd from 6-8 pm, students currently in grades 6th through 11th, along with their parent(s)/guardian(s) are invited to Academic and Career Planning (ACP) Night. This is a night where students currently in sixth and seventh grades can meet and greet their next year's teachers and choose their music hour elective choice through their academic advisor. Next year's 7th and 8th graders will have a choice between band, chorus, and academic elective. I am pleased to announce that through scheduling for the 2020-21 school year we will be offering the "academic elective" option that has not been an option in recent years. This academic elective course will be offered opposite band and chorus. This course will be a potpourri of academic extensions that will change throughout the year. The activities may range from literature circles, to research and technology skills, to coding and engineering, in addition to a variety of other academics. On ACP Night our current eighth graders will join the High School. This opportunity will allow them to meet their academic and career advisors and get a flavor of what to expect in High School. In addition, there will be a variety of presentations that Middle School and High School parents/guardians are able to participate in. Be watching for a mailing that has a further explanation of those evening activities.

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## Elementary Principal's Message



Happy New Year! We are about to start our second semester here at Neillsville Elementary School! With the new semester comes the beginnings of transitions to new grade levels, events, and weather. I'm excited for everyone to get started!

### What's New?

In the Elementary/Middle School office, you may have heard a new voice and/or seen a new face. Around Thanksgiving time this school year we hired Mrs. Allison (Allie) Laufenberg. Mrs. Allie lives in Neillsville with her husband and two children. She has had a great amount of experience working with youth in other work experiences. Her wealth of experience and great personality are a wonderful addition to our office staff.

Another new activity the student council has helped to put together is a random acts of kindness competition. We are in the process of posting information about kindness throughout our elementary school. Very soon, there will be a kindness jar located in the office where the recipients of random acts of kindness place the act. Our elementary student council set the goal at 500 random acts of kindness for the semester. They are still in the process of deciding what they would like me to do as a result of them making their goal. I'm very confident that they will succeed! Stay tuned for more information.

Speaking of kindness, the elementary school student council also organized a toy drive for Clark County children in foster care. We coordinated with Clark County Social Services. It was a great success!! We were able to give more than 10 children multiple gifts this Christmas season. I'm so proud of our students! Also, thank you to the parents for all of the donations.

### Playground

As I walk around outside on the playground, I see a lot of fun snow hills the students can slide down. I know if I was a child again, it would be a "gold mine" out there! What fun! However, to keep everyone safe and respectful during recess, I have presented to the entire elementary school the recess expectations on two separate occasions. Recess is a time to socialize and have fun. We stress respectful speaking to recess teachers and other students. In addition, physical aggression will not be tolerated. The elementary school students were very receptive to my two presentations and things have been going well.

### Happenings

Again this school year, we were lucky to have Mr. Don Abel run the StarLab for our elementary students. This lab educates students on the stars and planets they see in the night sky. The students participated in StarLab January 20-22. Ask your child/children about it; it's pretty exciting to them.

Another great thing we have going on in the elementary school is our partnership with the middle school leadership class students. These students are led by Mr. Jesse Bernhagen. They develop activities for the younger students in the elementary school. The students are thrilled with the chance to work with the "big" kids. In addition, the middle school students learn what it is like to work with children in a school setting doing educational tasks. It's a learning opportunity for all involved.

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## Fourth Graders Explore the Stars

The second quarter of the school year was an exciting time for the fourth grade students and teachers. Some highlights were the Veteran's Day program and winter concert. We have partnered with Osseo-Fairchild Elementary's fourth grade class to exchange letters with pen pals. It has been exciting to make new friends and learn about students from another community!



When the students returned in January, they were excited to learn about different Native American constellations at StarLab, This was taught by Mr. Abel who does a wonderful job teaching the students about different Native American constellations.

The students worked hard in all academic classes in the classrooms. We hosted spelling bees in our classrooms to choose a class representative for the school-wide spelling bee. We will be going to Bruce Mound in February as a PBIS reward for working hard during this quarter.

The fourth graders at Neillsville Elementary had a successful first semester. The fourth grade teachers are proud of the students' achievements. We are all excited about the second semester of the school year.

## Middle School Principal . . . continued

Also on our horizon are Middle School Week, Bruce Mound Field Trip, and Community Olympics to build a sense of teamwork and belonging for all.

I am enjoying watching each of the Middle School students grow and change over the course of the school year and look forward to the academic, physical, and social-emotional growth the second semester will bring.

Have a wonderful day,  
Kory Poeschel  
Middle School Principal

## Elementary Principal . . . continued

### In Closing

I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to everyone who continues to be supportive in educating our elementary school students. I'm extremely proud of how our student body showed their giving spirit over the holidays. I'm looking forward to our third quarter!

Marcy Kunze  
Elementary School Principal

## High School Guidance



Congratulations for a positive first semester; please keep the following points of information in mind to plan ahead for a successful spring.

### Seniors:

Please continue to reference your **YELLOW senior year checklist** to make sure you are on track. Please continue to work on **scholarships**; remember, most local scholarships are due **Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup>**, but some are due later in the month. For more information, please continue to routinely check your Gmail account for updates and additional scholarship opportunities. All scholarships and applications (or instructions on how to obtain applications) are located on the Neillsville High School Scholarships page. This webpage is updated routinely as additional scholarships become available. **THURSDAY PIE Scholarship Help Sessions will start during the month of February; please consider coming if you would like assistance with your scholarships and a designated place/time to work.** Also, please remember to complete your **FAFSA** before the priority date for your college; most priority dates are coming up soon, some have already passed. Please feel free to contact Mrs. Backaus if you need help or assistance with either of these two items.

**\*\*March 3, 2020 NOTIFICATION:** On Junior ACT day (Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2020) seniors will get to choose from the following options:

- Come to school during the AM to receive help (proofread, double checked, etc.) on local scholarships in the library. Students will be allowed to make copies if needed as well during this time. This option is HIGHLY ENCOURAGED for all students who plan to turn in local scholarships on March 6.
- Schedule college visits, look for job opportunities, post-high school planning, etc. *on your own.*
- Attend school; all seniors choosing this option will be given a quiet day of study in the library. A permission slip will be required for **all seniors** indicating which option you will choose on Feb. 20. Permission slips will be given out the week of February 3<sup>rd</sup> and need to be returned by February 14<sup>th</sup>.

### Juniors:

Spring testing is right around the corner! Please remember these important dates and do your best to come to school well rested and prepared to do your best on these exams.

**ACT:** Test Date: **Tuesday, March 3, 2020: 10:05-3:15** at Neillsville High School.

- For the 3<sup>rd</sup> year, we are running a "late-start" time for the ACT test in an effort to give students more rest prior to taking it. *Busses will run on the normal schedule only; students choosing to come in late will need to provide their own transportation.* Juniors coming to school at the regular time will be given study time prior to the test. **A 9:30-10:00 AM Grab and Go will be available for all juniors.** Permission slips, with all the details, will be given out the week of Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> and need to be returned by February 14<sup>th</sup>. **A special lunch will be provided for all juniors FREE of charge as well!**
- **There is no Work Keys test this year for juniors per new legislation.**
- The ACT make up day will be two weeks following on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
- Please remember, all juniors (unless taking a different assessment under an IEP) are *required* to take the ACT under Wisconsin's state assessment program. Thank you for your time and hard work during the prep sessions; we hope you will see the benefits when you receive your individual score reports this spring!

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## High School Guidance *continued . . .*

### Sophomores:

Great job on the Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> ASVAB; I hope you found the Career Seminar by Mark Foster on December 16<sup>th</sup> enjoyable as well. This is one more resource to help you explore and plan for future career options. Additionally, 31 (about 40% of your class) of you chose to have an *optional* individual sophomore planning conference over the past couple of months. Again, great job taking the initiative to plan for your junior year!

### Freshmen and Sophomores:

March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 is scheduled to be a fun day for you! While the juniors and seniors are hard at work, you will be on a field trip. Freshmen will be heading to Marshfield, WI and Wisconsin Rapids, WI to visit UWSP-Marshfield and Mid-State Technical College. LUNCH information coming soon on your permission slips. Sophomores will be heading to Eau Claire, WI to visit Chippewa Valley Technical College and UW-Eau Claire. You will need to bring or purchase a lunch that day. Sophomore permission slips have already been given out and should be turned in by now. Freshman permission slips, with specific details, will be given out the week of February 10<sup>th</sup> and need to be returned by February 21<sup>st</sup>.

### 20-21 Scheduling: All students in grades 8-11:

Provided the weather cooperates, we are looking forward to our annual ACP night to kick off the 20-21 scheduling process! We will continue with the registration process throughout the month of February; the schedule building process will take place in March. We will do our best to keep you updated as we get further into this process. Schedules for next year will be finalized later this spring. Please see Mrs. Backaus or your advisor with any questions you may have.

### 8<sup>th</sup> Graders:

As we head into the spring semester, I want to encourage you to focus on the quick approaching transition into high school. Some self-reflective thoughts/questions to ask oneself might include: *Am I taking my 8<sup>th</sup> grade courses serious so I am academically prepared for the challenge of high school work? Am I maturing in my words and actions towards my fellow classmates so the Class of 2024 enters high school as a respectful and unified class? Am I pursuing other talents and interests so I am a well-rounded person with many potential career and/or post-secondary options in front of me?* These questions, and many others, are meant to challenge you to become the best version of yourself (to quote Mr. Swita). If you answered yes to all or most of them, great, keep up the good work. If you answered no to all or most of them, please consider how you might change your thoughts, words, and actions so you can answer yes to more of them by the end of the year. The TLC students, Mrs. Neville and myself look forward to finishing the last part of your 8<sup>th</sup> grade year together in a fun and positive way!

**As always please feel free to contact Julia Backaus, HS Counselor, if you have questions about any of the information provided at 715-743-8713 or [jbackaus@neillsville.k12.wi.us](mailto:jbackaus@neillsville.k12.wi.us)**

# find us on social media



@NeillsvilleWarriors



@NeillsvilleSD

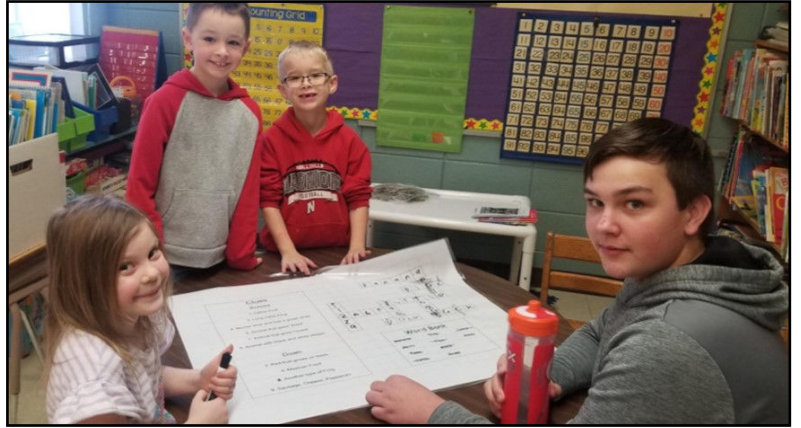


neillsvillewarriors



## 8th Graders Build Leadership Skills

The 8th graders in Mr. Bernhagen's leadership class have been spending quality time building positive relationships with the 1st grade students. Eighth grade students have been working hard to create fun activities to use with the little ones. Recently, each student created a crossword puzzle and a Kahoot game to play with their little buddies. They also spent time reading stories to the kids. These positive interactions with the youth of our school have been tremendously well received and enjoyed by all involved.



Eighth grade students are also hard at work in their other courses as well. Band and choir students are currently prepping for their large group festival events. Math 8 has the students working hard on algebraic skills to prepare them for the Wisconsin Forward state exam coming up in April. The students have been diligently working on solving systems of linear equations. Not only are the students solving the systems, but also learning how to write systems of linear equations in order to solve real world story

problems. This skill can be quite difficult at times, but the 8th graders are really stepping up to the challenge! Seeing the students talk about math and justify their thinking with their peers has really changed the climate of the math classroom. In English class, the students are learning about dystopian civilizations by reading novels and sharing with small groups their thoughts, feelings, and opinions on this particular lifestyle. They are also creating projects to represent the civilizations they learned about in their novels. American history is throwing the students way back and studying colonial times. Currently, they are diving into the French and Indian War, which will then lead them into the American Revolution. Learning about our country's past has been engaging and beneficial for all of the students. In science, students are learning about the cell cycle and how it is important to the life of any organism. The current careers class is talking about and creating resumes and cover letters, and will soon practice their interview skills in a mock job interview.

As you can see, our 8th graders are hard at work and really setting the tone for a fun learning environment here at Neillsville Middle School.

## Fifth Graders Teach Younger Students to Code

Fifth graders are working hard to be leaders in the elementary school. Every two weeks we meet with our kindergarten reading buddies and read books to them and help them practice their sight words. During the week of coding, we taught kindergartners and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders how to code on our Chromebooks. In math, we have been working on multiplying large numbers and we just started long division. We researched and presented on the early explorers of North America in Social Studies. We are enjoying the snow at recess and at Bruce Mound!



# CHOIR NEWS

The 2nd Quarter of the school year has found the choir department very busy. Members of the high school choirs had the opportunity to attend "Mamma Mia!" at the Chanhassen Dinner Theatre on November 2. It was an outstanding show and wonderful experience! The 6th graders did a great job performing a musical in November called "Harmony High". They got to live the life of a school day through lots of songs!

For the 6-12 winter concert this year, we tried a new venue and used the fieldhouse instead of the auditorium. Our audience had a little more room to park and to sit. Right before Christmas vacation, the Concert Choir and Show Choir performed and caroled in our community. We performed for the monthly meeting of the "Sun Catchers Café", which was held at the United Church of Christ. We made appearances at the Neillsville Retirement Community, the hospital, Neillsville Care & Rehab, Riverside Assisted Living, and the MMC employee Christmas Tea. Our day ended with caroling in the halls of our elementary and middle schools. It was a full day of spreading holiday cheer!

On January 12-14, five of our students had the amazing opportunity to participate in the Dorian Vocal Festival, held at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. Seniors Dominic Elmhorst, Teeghan Mahoney, Kayla Oldham, Gwen Olson, and Josie Voigt spent a day and a half rehearsing in a choir of nearly 1000 students before performing in a concert. These students came from over 150 schools from 4 different states. They were treated to performances by the Luther College choirs as well.

Best of luck to all of the students participating in Solos and Ensembles in February, and Large Group Festival in March!



Photo Upper Left: Dorian Vocal Festival - Back row (left to right): Dominic Elmhorst, and Kayla Oldham; Front row (left to right): Teeghan Mahoney, Gwen Olson, and Josie Voigt.

Photo Lower Left: All-Conference Choir - Back row (left to right): Shyanne Schumacher, Dominic Elmhorst, Kayla Oldham, and Josie Voigt; Front row (left to right): Teeghan Mahoney, Gwen Olson, and Alli Schoengarth.

Photo Above: Grade 6 Winter Concert

## Mastering Reading & Writing in First Grade

The first graders have been busy reading many different genres. Our students have been introduced to nonfiction, realistic fiction, fantasy, plays, and poetry as we explore our reading series: *Wonders*. Our writing is included within our series. We practice using capital letters, punctuation, and correct grammar daily. Our stories have included fantasies, poems, opinions, and personal narratives.

In math the first graders are becoming quite the problem solvers. The students are solving word problems, almost daily, where they have to solve story problems with unknown partners or unknown totals. We wrote our own gingerbread story problems for other first graders to solve. This was a



culminating project for our cross-curricular unit on gingerbread kids and houses. We are also building on the children's understanding of tens and extra ones. Our activities will provide experience and understanding of multi-digit numbers that will help them master the concept of place value.

We all went to StarLab and learned about some constellations. They were: Orion the Hunter, Taurus the Bull, the Big Dipper, and Draco the Dragon. We heard stories about their legends, found them in the night sky, and sang some songs about them too.

In February, we will celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> Day of School! Our classes will bring in collections of 100 things and use them to help learn math in fun ways. We will also enjoy Valentine's Day parties in our classrooms. In March, we are looking forward to more learning, roller skating in phy ed, and SPRING!

## Third Graders Apply Critical Thinking Skills

In reading, we continue to work at improving our reading skills and strategies as well as independent reading levels. Students need to be able to read and comprehend 98% of the words and concepts within a text to be a successful reader. As a student increases his/her reading level, they are not necessarily going to read longer books, but will be reading books with more complex text and vocabulary. In addition, we have written step-by-step directions and are working on imaginative stories. **More than ever, it is important that your child spend at least 20 minutes reading every day.**

In math, third graders have been focusing on solving problems using critical thinking and real-life applications. Students are gaining a better understanding of how to use math strategies every day. They have also been working very hard learning their multiplication and division facts. They have quickly discovered that it is faster to multiply than to add again and again! **Please continue to support your child at home by practicing the multiplication and division facts every day.**

This spring students will be administered the state test called the Wisconsin Forward Exam. Third graders will be preparing for this in the coming weeks. You should be seeing more information regarding specific testing dates and times soon.

Thank you for your continued support and encouragement. It really makes a difference when your child knows we are all in this together! Keep up the good work!

## Elementary Student Council Reading Coaches

Six second quarter elementary student council members have been reading coaches for first and second graders. The students are: Anastasia Doss, Emilee Rymenams, Adrien Gomez, Delayni Fitzl, DeVonte Bare, and Annalynn Wirkuty. Donna Fabian, Neillsville School District reading specialist, is the facilitator for the program. The student council members volunteered to coach twice a week for 20 minutes. They began with an orientation where they learned about different reading strategies that could be used if their partner gets stuck while reading. When the coaches meet with their partners they begin with reviewing sight words, then they help them read a book, and finish with a reading rope that helps them discuss the characters, setting, problem, and solution in the story. When second quarter ends, they have the opportunity to continue as reading coaches. Also, third quarter student council members will be given the chance to be reading coaches if they're interested.



NEILLSVILLE FFA ALUMNI

# DONKEY BASKETBALL

Sat., February 22nd • 7 PM • Fieldhouse



Watch local celebrities, including teachers,  
ride donkeys and play basketball



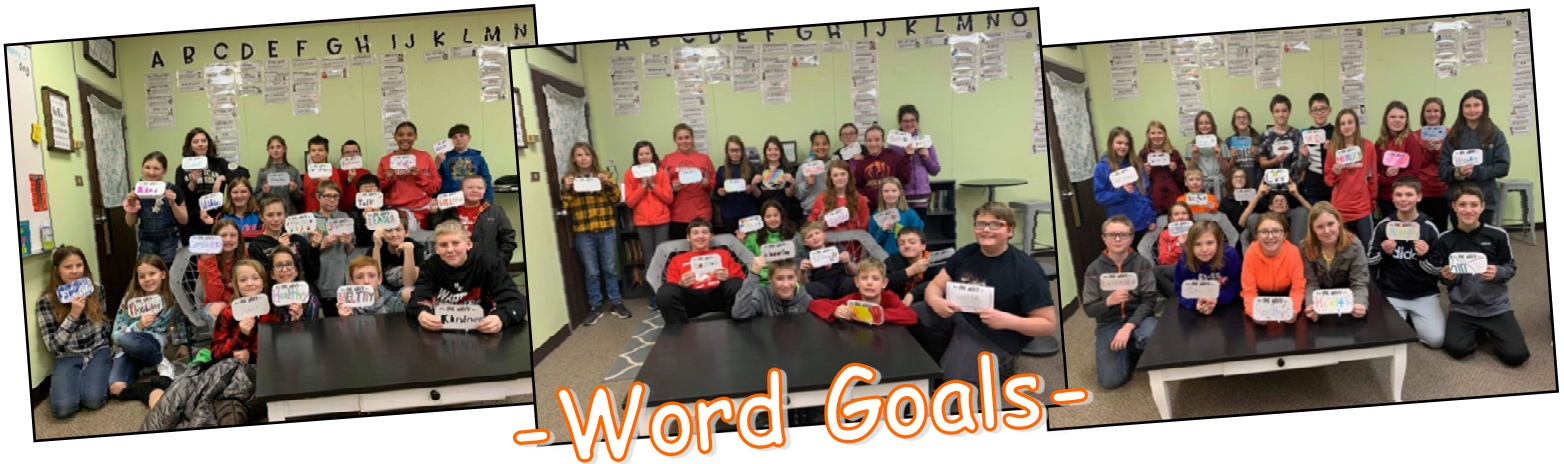
## Sixth Graders Set 2020 Goals

It's a new year and coming up with new year's resolutions is part of the fun! Similar to New Year's resolutions, our sixth graders chose something in their lives that they would like to work on in 2020. They took time to think about what their "One Word Goal" was.

What is a "Word Goal"? A word goal is a word that helps you focus on an area of your life on which you want to improve, grow, or do more. They were told to think about aspects of their lives that they can work on to help them become the "best you".

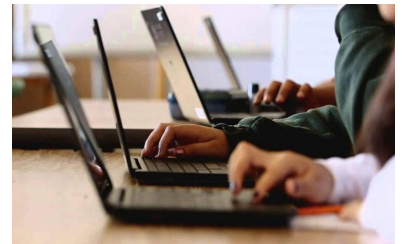
All students were asked to think about six characteristics or words to set as goals. They narrowed that list down to three words, and eventually down to their final word. They were asked to write two detailed reasons why they chose that word along with three action steps they can take to help them accomplish this goal. All of this information was put onto their word bubbles that they were able to personalize.

We came up with and saw a lot of different goals related to health, confidence, sports, and more! Ask a sixth grader what their "Word Goal" is and how they are going to accomplish it in 2020!



## Crafting Fictional Short Stories in Seventh Grade

The 7th grade students are continuing their journey around the world in geography class. They are currently learning about South America. Each student will soon choose their own South American country to research, create a project, and then present their findings to the class. In English, the 7th grade students were recently engaged in their realistic fiction unit. Each student wrote their own short story. They spent time learning how to create a plot with rising action, a climax, and falling action that then leads to a resolution. Ms. Opelt was very impressed with the students' stories and was shocked at how long some of them turned out to be!



Math students have been tackling how to solve multi-step equations and inequalities. To add to these complex skills, Mrs. Brown's accelerated class started talking about the pros and cons of taking out loans and developing savings accounts. The students learned about interest rates and just how much of an impact such a small percentage can make on a loan. We picked out a truck at Gross Motors, a house for sale here in Neillsville, and tuition costs for four years at UW-EC to use as real world examples of the financial responsibility these large investments can have. Needless to say, we had some shocked 7th graders while completing our interest unit. The math 7 students will tackle this same unit in the upcoming weeks.

## 4K Families Enjoy Many Activities

On January 10th, 4K teachers Jenny Langreck and Tina Perkins gave families the opportunity to participate in a recreational activity at the bowling alley. The 4K students enjoyed bowling, eating pizza, and having the chance to play outside of school. The 4K families were given ideas for math activities that they could do at home.

On December 13th, 4K held their annual Christmas concert that was very well attended. Mrs. Kunze welcomed everyone who attended. The 4K students sang four Christmas songs and also presented their families with gifts they had made. The concert ended with everyone enjoying Christmas cookies decorated by the students and milk or juice.

In April, 4K students and families will be able to participate in the teddy bear clinic at Memorial Medical Center. In May, 4K parents and students will be invited to the Neillsville Public Library for a craft activity, picture book read aloud, and snacks. The year will end with 4K graduation on Friday, May 29th. We look forward to seeing all 4K families at the remaining Friday Family Fun events.

## Let's go bowling!



## Students Harvest First Crop

Students in the horticulture class recently harvested their first batch of lettuce grown in the new greenhouse! The students completed constructing the hydroponic growing system and planted the lettuce seeds in late November. Approximately 45 buttercrunch lettuce plants were grown and harvested on January 15th. The plants were given to the food service department to be served with the school lunch program. A special thank you to the maintenance crew, under direction of Mr. Mark Spencer, for all their help in this new endeavor!



## STEM Club Explores Body Worlds Exhibit

The Neillsville High School STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Club visited the Science Museum of Minnesota on Saturday, January 4th for a limited time exhibition called Body Worlds. Club members were amazed at the intricacies of the human body as displayed by these real life examples. All nine systems of the body were modeled by donated cadavers displayed in a unique manner. The members of the club had a great day and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. The STEM Club will take six members to the Annual Fritz Wenzel Medical Symposium on Saturday, February 15th. In addition, STEM Club will have two entries in the upcoming Rube Goldberg Competition.



## Second Graders Focus on Earth Science

The second graders have been busy learning this past quarter. For language arts, we have been talking, reading and discussing about earth. We learned about magnets, gravity, weather, space, etc. It has been an exciting unit. Along with the space unit, we attended StarLab. Mr. Abel taught us about the four constellations that were easy to find in the different seasons. We learned that in the winter you can find Orion the Hunter, in the spring we can find Leo the Lion, in the summer you can locate the Summer Triangle, and in the fall it is easy to find the Big Dipper.



In November, we went on a field trip to the Pittsville School for a performance called "Judy Moody and Stink". It was amazing to see only four people do a full production play with several scenes and characters.

Another exciting field trip that the second graders went on this year was going to Vines' Tree Farm. We were able to learn about Christmas trees and how they are grown, groomed, and prepared for the season. We enjoyed an old-fashioned wagon ride pulled by a horse, a walk in the tree field, and some hot chocolate in the warming shed. This was definitely a great experience!

In December, we enjoyed "Hour of Code" with some of our older students. We worked together to figure out how coding worked in the world of computers. It was fun to see all the different ways to code some movements.

Math has brought many learning experiences. We have learned how to regroup with addition and measure with centimeters and inches. It was fun measuring how tall everyone was with the meter and yard sticks.

For the end of the semester reward we get to go to Rogers Cinema and enjoy the movie, "Spies in Disguise". This is a great way to end the quarter with our good behavior! We are enjoying school a lot here in second grade. We are looking forward to the 100<sup>th</sup> day of school and Valentine's Day .

## Unified Champion Schools

At the start of the 2019-2020 school year Neillsville Elementary, Neillsville Middle School, and Neillsville High School each signed up to become a Unified Champion School. Supported through Special Olympics, the Unified Champion Schools Program promotes social inclusion through intentionally planned and implemented activities affecting system-wide change. Described by Special Olympics, "With sports as the foundation, the three component model offers a unique combination of effective activities that equip young people with tools and training to create sports, classrooms, and school climates of acceptance. These are school climates where students with disabilities feel welcome and are routinely included in, and feel a part of, all activities, opportunities and functions".



The three components of a Unified Champion School are: implementing inclusive sports, inclusive youth leadership opportunities, and whole school engagement. The elementary school, middle school, and high school have come together to plan activities in these three areas. We are working on creating a peer facilitated physical education class for next school year (inclusive sports); representing students with intellectual disabilities in student council at all three levels (inclusive youth leadership); and planning a "Choose to Include" week (whole school engagement). Furthermore, staff have the opportunity to complete a book study "One Without the Other: Stories of Unity through Diversity and Inclusion", written by inclusion expert Shelley Moore. Grant funding from UCS will be used to initiate these outlined activities.

The UCS program goal is to create meaningful change leading to socially inclusive schools that support and engage all learners. It is our belief that students with and without disabilities will benefit from these efforts. We are excited to be connected with the UCS program. Please look for updates in future school publications!

If you are interested in ordering a UCS t-shirt please call Tonia Anderson Ruskin, Director of Special Education, at (715)743-8716 or send an email to [tanderson@neillsville.k12.wi.us](mailto:tanderson@neillsville.k12.wi.us) by February 14th!

## Social Emotional Learning in the Middle School

The Neillsville Middle School students participate in communities each Friday afternoon during 8th hour. This time is set aside for activities that focus on character traits such as empathy, kindness, teamwork, and responsibility, and includes mixtures of students from sixth through eighth grade. Our focus will shift a bit in third quarter to allow students to participate in games that will become part of our Neillsville Middle School Olympics in the spring. In December, grades 6-8 participated in a community or school service activity. The sixth grade students decorated Christmas ornaments that were donated to local assisted living facilities, and the seventh grade students tied blankets and pillows that were donated to Clark County Social Services. The eighth grade students made our kindergarteners' day a little brighter by decorating and donating cookies for their end of year parties. We were lucky to have the Kiwanis Club of Neillsville donate funds for these projects.

Our upcoming guidance lessons for sixth grade will begin focusing on next year. We will be taking a tour and checking in with some of the seventh and eighth grade teachers so the students can make some choices about who their academic advisor will be in seventh grade.

The seventh grade is continuing work with the BrainWise program. In December, the students learned to recognize internal and external signals to make themselves aware of problems they might have, and how to deal with them. We will also be completing the Substance Risk Profile Survey in the coming weeks. Information was sent home with your child regarding this personality survey.

Eighth grade students have begun thinking about the excitement of high school! This month, Mrs. Backaus showed students what a transcript was, its importance, and the connection to the Laude System. The students were also able to express their choices for academic and career advisors for next year. More about next year's scheduling process is to come!